

INSPECTION REPORT

St George's Primary School

Harrow/Middlesex

LEA area: Harrow

Unique reference number: 102234

Headteacher: Patrick Morrissey

Lead inspector: Diane Lever

Dates of inspection: 16 to 19 May 2005

Inspection number: 267780

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary school
School category: Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils: 4-11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 432

School address: Sudbury Hill
Harrow
Middlesex
Postcode: HA1 3SB

Telephone number: 020 84221272
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Neil Rands

Date of previous inspection: 18 January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St George's is a voluntary aided primary school with 432 pupils aged between 4 and 11 years on roll. As such, it is much bigger than the average primary school. Pupils' home backgrounds reflect broadly average socio-economic circumstances. The nature of pupils attending St George's has changed in recent years. Pupils' attainment when they enter the school, whilst now broadly typical for their age, is lower than this in terms of their language skills and personal, social and emotional development. Although the majority of pupils come from white British backgrounds, the overall pupil population represents a broad ethnic mix. The number of pupils whose first language is not English has doubled in recent years to nearly 12 per cent, which is high compared with the national picture, but below that found in other schools in the area. The number of pupils with special educational needs is below that found nationally, as is the number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need. Most of these pupils have either moderate learning difficulties or need support with speech and communication. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual time is typical of the national picture. The school has recently achieved Healthy Schools, Artsmark, Investors in People and Basic Skills Quality Mark awards, as well as the Football Association Charter Standard for Schools. The Gaelic football team were national

champions for 2003/4. The school offers daily out-of-school care. Links with St George's church and the parish are strong.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--|
| 13132 | Diane Lever | Lead inspector | Foundation Stage Music Physical education Personal, social and health education and citizenship |
| 9173 | Sarah McDermott | Lay inspector | |
| 2758 | Ian Jones | Team inspector | Science Information and communication technology Art and design |
| 32505 | Michelle Coles | Team inspector | English History Geography English as an additional language |
| 32614 | Marion Hunter | Team inspector | Mathematics Design and technology Special educational needs |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This popular school is very well regarded by parents and pupils. Standards are high by the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall and much practice is better than this. The curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy school. Their attitudes are very good and their behaviour is good. The school is competently led and managed and provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards attained by older pupils in English, mathematics, science and physical education have been maintained at a high level for several years
- Standards achieved by more able pupils in mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 do not always reflect pupils' capabilities
- Standards in art are unsatisfactory overall
- Under the leadership of the headteacher, the school's strong ethos of care and support is evident in all aspects of school life
- Systems for monitoring and evaluating standards and teaching do not give a sufficiently clear picture of where improvement is needed
- The highly effective teaching found in Years 5 and 6 provides a very good model for practice throughout the school
- Teachers' marking and day-to-day assessments of pupils' progress are inconsistent
- Pupils' very good attitudes to learning and good behaviour make an important contribution to their progress and overall achievement
- The very good out-of-school activities enrich the curriculum effectively
- The school is very successful in seeking and acting on pupils' views
- Pupils' attendance is very good but not all pupils arrive at school on time

Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching has improved. Strategic planning is better. The accommodation is much improved. Procedures for the day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress and for the monitoring and evaluation of standards and provision lack rigour. Standards in art remain unsatisfactory. The school recognises that further work is needed if these issues are to be remedied.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | all schools | | | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2004 |
| English | B | A | A | A |
| mathematics | A | A | A | B |
| science | B | B | A | B |

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2

Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In recent years, the attainment of children entering the reception classes has declined significantly and is now typical for their age, apart from their skills in language and communication and personal, social and emotional development which are below the standard normally found. Children make satisfactory and sometimes good progress, and are likely to achieve the goals expected by the end of the reception year other than in language and communication.

From a below average starting point, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in writing, reading and communication skills, achieving well and attaining average standards. Standards attained in mathematics and science are broadly average. Achievement, whilst satisfactory overall, is occasionally insufficient for more able pupils. Overall, work seen in Years 3 to 6 shows that pupils are making satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science. The standard of work of Year 6 pupils is currently above average and many of these pupils are on track to attain well above average standards by the time they transfer to secondary education. These pupils entered the school seven years ago with above average attainment. Their achievement is satisfactory.

Pupils' **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good**. Pupils' spiritual awareness is very good as are their attitudes and attendance. Pupils' behaviour is good. Very good relationships reflect the school's strong Christian ethos and creation of a caring and harmonious community. Despite the school's efforts, punctuality is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school and very good in Years 5 and 6. All pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds or for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory progress and their achievement is sound. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive from all teaching staff.

Assessment practice is unsatisfactory. Inconsistencies result from the lack of a whole school system for the ongoing assessment of pupils' progress. Although pockets of good practice exist, assessment overall is insufficiently precise to help teachers to plan future learning and to provide a basis for determining individual pupil targets. Teachers' marking does not always tell pupils how well they are doing or how to make their work even better.

The curriculum is satisfactory. Its breadth reflects the importance the school gives to providing an all-round education. The curriculum is very richly enhanced by extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are good. The school provides good levels of care, support and guidance. Arrangements for seeking and acting on pupils' views are very good. Links with parents, the community and other schools and colleges are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher's leadership is satisfactory. He and the newly appointed deputy headteacher are an effective team. The headteacher and governing body have established a climate in which all pupils and staff feel valued and supported. Management of the school is satisfactory. Recent improvements to systems for the monitoring, evaluation and assessment of standards, teaching and learning require further strengthening in order to provide a clear picture of where improvement is needed. The governance of the school is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils and their parents are very positive about the school. Parents are very supportive and appreciative of what the school provides. Pupils enjoy school and feel valued because they are very well consulted and involved in decisions about school life.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- raise standards in art
- raise the achievement of the more able pupils in mathematics and science by the end of Year 2
- strengthen even more the recently improved monitoring and self-evaluation system*
- establish procedures for the day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress in order to ensure its consistency and quality¹
- continue to work with parents to ensure all pupils arrive at school on time

¹ This issue was identified at the time of the last inspection

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement overall is satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Standards in English, mathematics and science are consistently above average by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Years 5 and 6 as a result of consistently good teaching.
- Good support for pupils with special educational needs enables them to make good progress.
- Standards are above average in physical education but below in art and design.

Commentary

1. The attainment of children joining the reception class has declined significantly since the last inspection and is now broadly typical for their age, but below that in language, literacy and personal, social and emotional development. At the end of the reception year, pupils are generally working at the level expected for their age in all areas of learning, with the exception of language and literacy where they are below the expected level. Children achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development due to good teaching and support. Achievement is satisfactory in all other areas of learning.
2. From a below average starting point, the pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in developing their writing, reading and communication skills, achieving well and attaining average standards. Their achievement in mathematics and science is satisfactory. Overall, the standards attained at the end of Year 2 are broadly average, although more able pupils do not always reach the standard of which they are capable.
3. The year-on-year decline in the attainment on entry to the reception class is reflected in pupils' work and in the downward trend in the national test results in Year 2. The school has recognised that its practices and procedures, so successfully employed in the past, are less effective in fulfilling the learning needs of the pupils now entering the school. The school has responded to its changing circumstances by seeking external advice and guidance and implementing some well-considered improvements but there has been insufficient time for these changes to become fully evident in pupils' work and in national test results.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 16.5 (16.3) | 15.8 (15.7) |
| writing | 14.8 (14.9) | 14.6 (14.6) |
| mathematics | 15.8 (15.6) | 16.2 (16.3) |

There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. Overall, work seen in Years 3 to 6 shows that pupils are making satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science. The rate of progress increases considerably in Years 5 and 6 because the teachers are more effective in stretching the more able pupils whilst providing good support for slower learners. The standard of work of Year 6 pupils is currently above average, but many of these pupils are on track to attain standards well above the average by the time they transfer to secondary education. These pupils entered the school seven years ago with above average attainment. Their achievement is satisfactory.
5. The Year 6 national test results in English, mathematics and science show that pupils attained standards in 2004 that were well above the average for all schools and above the average for similar schools. This indicates an improving trend, although the change in the school population is resulting in fewer pupils working at the higher levels than in previous years.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 29.2 (28.8) | 26.9 (26.8) |
| mathematics | 29.1 (28.6) | 27.0 (26.8) |
| science | 30.7 (29.3) | 28.6 (28.6) |

There were 62 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

6. Standards in information and communication technology are average throughout the school and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Recent improvements in the ICT provision are starting to have a positive effect upon pupils' progress and the standards they attain. Standards in physical education are above those expected for pupils aged eleven, due to the successful use of a specialist teacher. In art and design the standards attained are very variable, but below average overall. This variation results from the lack of a scheme that effectively guides teachers in their planning. Music was only sampled during the inspection and this provided insufficient evidence on which to base a judgement about the standards attained. Religious education was not included in this inspection. In all other subjects, standards are average.
7. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well due to the effective support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. All pupils, irrespective of their individual learning needs, are fully included in all aspects of lessons. Pupils from minority ethnic groups or for whom English is an additional language achieve as well as other pupils and attain similar standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are **very good** and their behaviour is **good**. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. The attendance of the pupils is **very good**, but their punctuality is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are keen to learn, showing interest in and enthusiasm for their work.
- Behaviour is invariably good and often very good in lessons.
- Rates of attendance are very high because pupils and parents are very happy with the school

- Too many pupils miss the important start to the school day because parents drop off their children late

Commentary

8. Pupils’ positive attitudes to their work are evident in most lessons. Pupils want to learn and respond enthusiastically when lessons are relevant, challenging and taught in a stimulating and exciting way. In such lessons, pupils co-operate, behave very well and make good gains in their learning. In the few lessons where the management of pupils is less effective, pupils do not concentrate on the work and their conduct and respect for the teacher declines. This has a detrimental effect on their progress and the standards they achieve.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|--|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| White – British | 170 | 1 | |
| White – any other White background | 30 | 1 | |

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

9. The school is very effective in promoting a climate in which pupils feel secure and valued. The development of pupils’ social skills, spiritual awareness and self-knowledge is very good. This, together with the encouragement teachers give pupils to respect the views of others, to see themselves as members of a community and to take responsibility for their actions, contributes significantly to the harmonious atmosphere evident in the school.
10. Attendance is well above the national average. Pupils are very keen to come to school and are reluctant to have days off. Unauthorised absence is rare because parents are conscientious in letting the school know if their children are missing school due to illness. However, an increasing number of parents are taking their children out of school for holidays in term time. The school has very effective systems to track trends in absence and to support those pupils whose attendance starts to deteriorate. Nevertheless, it is not rigorous enough in following up unexplained absence on the first day, particularly for the older pupils who walk to school unaccompanied by parents. Attendance has improved further since the last inspection and makes a significant contribution to pupils’ achievement.
11. Many pupils do not arrive at school punctually. During the inspection, well over 30 pupils turned up late each day for the start of lessons. This is unsettling for all pupils and does not make for a calm and orderly start to learning. The school does not keep a sufficiently accurate record of lateness, so it is difficult to tackle the issue with parents.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 95.7%

| Authorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|
| School data: | 4.2 |
| National data: | 5.1 |

| Unauthorised absence | |
|----------------------|-----|
| School data: | 0.0 |
| National data: | 0.4 |

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education. Teaching is **satisfactory** throughout the school and **very good** in Years 5 and 6. Pupils make **satisfactory** progress and their achievement is **sound**. Assessment practice is **unsatisfactory**. The curriculum is **satisfactory** and is **very richly** enhanced by extra-curricular activities. The school provides **good** levels of care, support and guidance. The school's arrangements for seeking and acting on pupils' views are **very good**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent but **satisfactory** overall. It is **very good** in Years 5 and 6. The quality and use of assessment vary but overall are **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when 12 per cent was unsatisfactory.
- Instances of very good and excellent teaching represent a standard to which all staff can aspire.
- Day-to-day assessment and marking by teachers are inconsistent and is not used sufficiently as a basis for planning future learning.
- Weaker teaching results from ineffective management of pupils' behaviour.
- Opportunities for pupils to gain independence as learners are too varied.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 2 (5%) | 9 (23%) | 15 (38%) | 11 (28%) | 2 (5%) | 0 | 0 |

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

12. A significant number of changes of staff have occurred in recent years. The headteacher and governors have shown enterprise and determination in maintaining staffing levels. Through provision of external training and consultancy they have given good support to all staff. The overall quality of teaching, as judged by lessons seen and pupils' work, remains satisfactory, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching has reduced by more than half. Two thirds of the teaching seen during the inspection was of at least good quality and almost a third of this was very good or excellent. Examples of good teaching were seen throughout the school, particularly in English and in the work of a specialist teacher employed to teach physical education. Teaching of very high quality was concentrated in a reception class and Years 5 and 6. Evidence of the quality of teaching over the longer term, as seen in pupils' work, indicates that it is satisfactory with some good features in the reception year. It is mainly satisfactory in Years 1 to 4 and of good and very good quality in Years 5 and 6. The inspectors confirm the

school's judgement of its overall quality, but note the inconsistencies in practice and excessive range of quality.

13. Planning, to a consistently used common format, is detailed and well structured in all classes. Although it frequently addresses the needs of pupils who find learning difficult, its use to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils is less consistent. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and make effective use of good resources. The very high quality teaching seen results from teachers' enthusiasm and understanding of how to make learning exciting, stimulating and fun. These lessons are briskly paced, expectations are high and no time is lost managing behaviour because pupils want to learn and so behave very well. Well-chosen resources of high quality reflect pupils' needs and interests. Activities are chosen to ensure that they allow pupils to learn what is intended. Open questions challenge pupils' thinking and probe their deeper understanding. Teaching is business-like, purposeful and dynamic. The very best is inspirational. Teachers make focused assessments of what pupils have learned, often involving pupils in the process, and adjust their future lessons accordingly. Relationships, based on mutual respect, are very good and the highly successful climate for learning is evident in the enjoyment and engagement of all pupils.
14. The inconsistency of assessment practice throughout the school is unsatisfactory. In the absence of a whole school system for the day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress, teachers are free to do as they see fit. This results in a variety of methods being used, some more successful than others. In some classes little to no assessment takes place and teachers plan lessons based on what a published scheme indicates pupils should be learning, rather than on pupils' identified needs. Better practice, seen mainly in the reception classes, occurs when group assessments are used to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. The best practice is in the upper years of the junior stage, where assessments are individual to pupils and are used to set personal targets. Marking is similarly varied, ranging from a mere tick to helpful comments that tell pupils how they have improved and how to make their work even better.
15. Despite focused and extensive support from the headteacher and staff within the school, teachers' relationships with pupils are insecure in Year 4 and expectations of pupils' behaviour are too low. As a result, pupils do not respond well in lessons and time that could otherwise have been spent on teaching and learning is used to manage their behaviour. The strategies used to do this are largely ineffective and prolong the unsatisfactory situations, resulting in pupils not learning as much as they should.
16. Practice in relation to engaging pupils in investigation work and problem solving is inconsistent, as are opportunities for pupils to develop independence as learners. In some classes pupils are given both responsibility for organising themselves and also choices in how they complete their work. Older pupils benefit from topic work requiring them to carry out research using books, the Internet and other materials. Elsewhere in the school, opportunities for pupils to investigate are limited by teaching styles and methods that too often keep pupils dependent on the teacher for their knowledge and understanding. The use of homework to reinforce and extend learning is similarly varied because there is no whole school policy to guide teachers' practice.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall. Enrichment activities are very good. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's broad and balanced curriculum is readily accessible to all pupils.
- A range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum very well.
- Accommodation additions have significantly improved all pupils' learning opportunities.
- Well chosen resources of good quality support pupils effectively in their learning.
- Provision in art is unsatisfactory.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their investigative and research skills are insufficient.

Commentary

17. Statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and areas of learning in the Foundation Stage are fully met. The breadth of the curriculum reflects the importance the school gives to providing an all-round education for all its pupils. The development of pupils' personal, social and health education is firmly established throughout the school and includes provision for sex, drugs and alcohol awareness. A successful innovation is the use of a computerised curriculum package that effectively supports teachers' planning within and across year groups. In addition, curriculum leaders can monitor planning more effectively because it is always available online. The scheduling of a wide range of music enrichment activities outside the school day ensures that the many pupils taking advantage of these opportunities do not miss other lessons in order to take part. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers plan the curriculum to make sure that the work for these pupils is closely matched to their needs. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language enables them to make progress at a similar rate to their peers.
18. There are very good opportunities for pupils to learn and take part in a large number of stimulating extra-curricular activities. These include sports, music, dance and French, as well as before and after school clubs and a holiday club. All are popular and very well attended by pupils of all ages who, with their parents, appreciate what is provided. The school makes very good use of visits to places of interest and visitors to the school to provide pupils with rich and challenging experiences that make their learning often exciting. Pupils in Year 6 were able to develop their geographical skills on a residential trip to the Isle of Wight and several of the younger classes deepened their understanding of life in Tudor times by visiting Hampton Court.
19. A rolling programme of school refurbishment has seen the opening this year of a new and well-resourced school library that helps all pupils develop positive attitudes towards literature. The recently opened computer suite, with a computer per pupil, gives pupils more frequent access to programs and learning. Since the last inspection, the outside area adjacent to the reception classes has been much improved, considerably enhancing these young pupils' opportunities to develop their physical control and skills. Imaginative redesign of the former school kitchen provides a large room capable of housing a range of activities including class and year group discussions and school council meetings. The purchase of new books for the library, together with the ongoing renewal of classroom resources, ensures that materials and equipment are interesting, attractive and appropriate to pupils' needs. These significant improvements to the school's accommodation and resources are having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

20. The curriculum for art is unsatisfactory and as a result pupils make insufficient progress and attain standards that are too low. Their work is limited in its range and is of varying quality. This is due in part to the absence of a scheme of work to guide teachers in their planning. Currently year, term and weekly plans do not ensure that pupils develop their skills and knowledge systematically as they move up through the school.
21. Opportunities for pupils to use and extend their skills in working independently, undertaking their own research and solving problems are not embedded in curriculum plans or guidance. As a result, provision is patchy and inconsistent overall and pupils' investigative and research skills are not well developed.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils are **good**. The school supports and guides the pupils **well**. The involvement of pupils by seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are valuable members of the school community and have a strong voice in the running of the school.
- The school looks after the medical and first aid needs of the pupils very well.
- The safety of pupils arriving at school is jeopardised because the school, working with the local community, allows parents to bring cars onto the school drive.
- Pupils feel comfortable in school because they have very trusting relationships with school adults.

Commentary

22. St George's gives pupils a very wide range of opportunities to air their views and contribute to the school community. Of particular note is the Children's Development Plan Group, which allows older pupils to influence many aspects of school life. Recently they suggested a 'craze of the week', for which the school provided equipment so pupils are productively occupied at break times. The class and school councils are democratically organised and feed well into school decisions. However, there is still scope for pupils to take the lead in charring and recording the meetings to develop their independence and maturity. The library monitors are very well involved in tidying, sorting and checking books in and out. Year 6 'buddies' provide very good help, not only to the new reception class children but also to their parents, through guided tours of the school. The introduction of 'playground pals', to take responsibility for sorting out problems in the playground, goes well. Pupils offer their ideas confidently because they know they are listened to and taken seriously.
23. The administrative and medical staff have very thorough systems to ensure that pupils' welfare needs are well met. The accident book is monitored effectively and action taken to remedy hazards if a trend of accidents is apparent. A list of pupils in each class with particular medical and special needs ensures staff are aware and prepared in the case of an incident. In practice staff know what to do should they be suspicious of child abuse, but the school is not yet up to date with the strongly recommended guidance that all staff be trained in child protection procedures.

24. Health and safety procedures are good and ensure the site is safe and secure during the school day. The school works effectively with the local education authority and consultants to guarantee it has effective systems to remedy potential risks. The governors, headteacher and site manager work well together to check the premises and make certain the pupils can learn free from harm. Since the last inspection the school has improved the safety of pupils at the end of the day by preventing parents from driving onto the school premises. However, despite the erection of dividing railings and the marking of crossings, it is still too hazardous for pupils arriving in the morning. Parents persist in driving their children right up to the school building, causing a log jam at 8.55am and putting the safety of pupils rushing to arrive at school on time in peril. The school is working with the police and local community to try to resolve this issue, which was first identified in the last inspection.
25. The school is a very caring and friendly place. All staff have particularly good relationships with the pupils, who feel at ease and know they can turn to any one of them if they are sad or worried. The school keeps a close eye on pupils with personal concerns and makes sure they are given sensitive and effective support so that they learn just as well as their peers. Pupils also have access to a teaching assistant specially trained to counsel, listen and sort out problems. The tracking of personal development is informal but effective since staff communicate well about pupils' requirements. However, the academic support for pupils is not sufficiently matched to their needs because the systems for assessing how each individual pupil is progressing are not detailed enough. The governors and headteacher place great emphasis on caring for children beyond the school day. Their vision has resulted in the very successful extended care provision of breakfast, after school and holiday clubs. Overall the care, guidance and support of pupils remain as good as at the time of the last inspection.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **good** partnership with parents. Links with the community and with other schools and colleges are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very appreciative and supportive of the school.
- Very strong links with the parish are a positive asset in promoting the pupils' personal development.
- There is a strong partnership with St Mary's College to train teachers and source new staff for the school.
- Reports do not give a clear enough message to parents on how their children have progressed in each subject over the year.
- The school is not giving sufficient weight to the views and suggestions of parents.

Commentary

26. St George's is a popular and over subscribed school. Parents continue to be very strong supporters of all the school does for its children. They turn up in good numbers to school events and to see their children perform in plays and concerts. The very successful Parent Staff Association raises remarkable amounts towards improved resources. Parents appreciate the regular information they receive on school activities and successes. They are kept well up to date on what is being taught in the classroom

and find the information evenings on subjects such as mathematics and reading very useful. All parents receive an overview of homework expectations in each class, but they are justified in their concern, as they were at the time of the last inspection, that homework is sporadic and relies on the importance that individual teachers place on it. At the regular meetings with teachers parents have a good chance to find out how their children are getting on. However, the annual reports dwell too much on what has been covered in lessons, rather than giving parents clear information on how their children's learning has improved over the year in each subject. Parents' uncertainty about what their children need to do in order to improve their learning limits the support they are able to give at home.

27. The school is making a start in gauging parents' views on a regular basis. However, the questionnaire results are not analysed or fed back to parents sufficiently quickly to allow them to have a meaningful voice in the school. Currently parent governors have an effective say in future plans for the school, but this opportunity is not being sufficiently extended to all parents. On a more personal level parents feel that they are listened to and the school deals with their individual concerns well. A positive move is the monthly coffee morning when parents can meet and share views with their child's class teacher. However, the school still has some way to go to ensure parental views influence the school's future.
28. The school has a very mutually beneficial link with St Mary's College. For several years the school has provided practical experience for training teachers. Several students, once qualified, have joined the staff, proving to be valuable assets to the school team. Elsewhere the school continues to have good links with a range of primary schools for music, dance and sport. Of particular note is the well established 'twinning' with an Irish school to promote Gaelic football and extend the pupils' understanding of the Irish culture.
29. The parish and school work very well together to promote the education and care of the children in the Catholic community. The foundation governors have been proactive in developing the school's extended care service with the mission of close service to the community. Regular parish meetings between the senior leadership team and church leaders underpin the strong Catholic ethos in the school, where pupils' attitudes and personal development thrive. The headteacher is an active member of the Harrow Catholic Schools cluster to share good practice and provide useful professional development for the staff. Beyond the Catholic community local links are less well established and not as strong as at the last inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The leadership of the headteacher is **satisfactory**. Management is **satisfactory**. The school governance is **satisfactory**. The school provides **satisfactory** value for money.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and newly appointed deputy headteacher are an effective team.
- Key staff and governors have a shared view of the kind of education they want the school to provide for its pupils.
- Monitoring and self-evaluation procedures lack rigour and consistency.
- There is no whole school system for the day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress.

- The headteacher and governors have established a climate in which all staff and pupils feel valued.
- The team structure allows all members of staff to take a full part in the decision making process.

Commentary

30. The headteacher and governing body have shown enterprise and determination to overcome the difficulties in recruiting staff in recent years. Nevertheless, this instability, at both class teacher and senior staff levels, has reduced the rate of school development and improvement. However, the headteacher and newly appointed deputy headteacher now represent a strong team. They provide clear direction and focus to the school's work and have the determination and drive needed to bring about the necessary improvements.
31. The school curriculum gives importance to all subjects and sees pupils' achievements in all areas of school life as equally worthy of celebration. This reflects the clear vision of senior staff and governors in seeking to provide a broad and all round education for pupils. Parents very much appreciate and support the school's approach. The school's success in this respect is evident in the wide range of awards and trophies it has gained.
32. The system of monitoring introduced some five years ago and since the last inspection yielded sufficient evidence of standards, quality of teaching and provision to enable appropriate evaluation of pupils' performance to take place at that time. Changes in the performance of pupils entering the school in recent years have shown that deeper and more rigorous analysis of data is needed if emerging issues are to be identified and dealt with before they become real problems. This more robust system is at an early stage of development and has yet to give the school the detailed picture of its performance needed to bring about improvement. Similarly, although observations of teaching have taken place for some years, it is only in the past few months that they have been sufficiently focused to provide a clear picture of where improvements are needed. Since the last inspection, the role of subject leaders has extended to include monitoring of time allocations for their subjects by checking class timetables. By checking plans they ensure that statutory requirements are met and in most subjects have gained insight into standards by looking at pupils' work. Lessons observed in some subjects have yielded clear evidence of the quality of teaching. As an outcome of their monitoring, all subject leaders have created relevant improvement plans.
33. The absence of a whole school system addressing the day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress results in varied and inconsistent practice. Overall, this does not give teachers the picture of what each pupil has achieved that they need in order to plan for pupils' future learning. Only teachers in Years 5 and 6 regularly gain enough precise information from their assessments to be able to identify pupils' needs, set individual targets and direct their teaching towards helping pupils achieve these.
34. The headteacher and governors share a belief that the school should provide 'wrap around care' for staff and pupils and have made provision in the budget for this. As a result the school is a caring and supportive community where all pupils and adults know themselves to be recognised and valued as individuals. Self-esteem is high, pupils are confident in a variety of situations and success of all kinds is celebrated. Support for new members of staff and those encountering difficulties is readily available and generally effective.

35. The creation of leadership teams whose membership includes all teaching and administrative support staff is effective in giving everyone the opportunity to express their views about school life. Each group's representation in the senior leadership team ensures that these views are passed on and influence decisions taken on the school's behalf. The school council and Children's Development Plan Group successfully extend this consultative process to include pupils. As a result, all adults and pupils feel a sense of shared ownership of future plans. The school development plan addresses educational improvement priorities appropriately. Now covering three years, it is carefully matched to budget spending and enables governors to take a longer-term approach to financial decisions. This represents improvement since the last inspection.
36. The governing body gives sound support to the school. The many recently appointed governors, encouraged by the enthusiastic chair, have taken part in extensive training. In addition, they spend a morning a term visiting the school and receiving updated information and further training. They are clear about their roles and the issues that are pertinent to their overview of the school. They are becoming more confident in challenging proposed initiatives and have employed external consultants to brief them about the likely gains or otherwise to the school. This good practice ensures the school achieves value for money. They are directly involved in the development of the school plan that covers short and long term action and ensures the school meets its statutory responsibilities. The day-to-day administration of the school is efficient. The headteacher and governors set a well thought out budget that is carefully monitored throughout the year.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

| Income and expenditure (£) | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Total income | 1,377,423 |
| Total expenditure | 1,352,289 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 3,123 |

| Balances (£) | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Balance from previous year | 30,767 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 25,131 |

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the reception classes is satisfactory overall with some good and very good features. This represents maintenance of the quality found at the time of the last inspection. Since then, the attainment of children entering the school has changed significantly. The standards attained by children when they join the reception classes are broadly in line with those expected nationally. In language and literacy, and personal, social and emotional development, standards are below those typical of children aged four. The majority of children have attended some form of pre-school provision, although only a few attend the school's private nursery on the same site. All children, including those for whom English is not the first language, make at least satisfactory progress, achieving particularly well in their personal, social, emotional and creative development. Children with special educational needs achieve well because of the quality of support they receive. By the time they are ready to leave the reception classes, although they are unlikely to achieve the goals expected for children aged five in language and communication, children are on track to achieve the goals in all other areas of learning. This is due to teaching that is satisfactory overall, often good and occasionally very good. The curriculum is soundly planned to provide a wide range of stimulating and relevant activities. Children's progress is carefully monitored. Good use is made of all available space and the extensive, secure and well resourced outside area is an improvement since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because of the good teaching and high expectations of staff.
- They are in line to reach the goals expected by the end of the year.
- Classrooms are safe, colourful and inviting; children are happy and want to learn.

Commentary

37. Children enter the school with lower levels of personal, social and emotional skills than was the case at the time of the last inspection. The team of adults has recognised this and responded well by adjusting their practice and the learning opportunities they provide. Emphasis on learning through play, with many choices given to children, encourages the development of the social skills they need to work together as a group. Adults are very good role models and consistently demonstrate the high expectations they have of all children. The children who particularly lack the necessary social skills are quickly made aware of what is expected. Nevertheless, they still find it difficult on occasions to take turns in sharing materials and waiting to speak. Most children are happy to contribute to the organisation of the classroom, collecting books and tidying away the equipment they have used at the end of sessions. They use materials sensibly and with care.
38. Constant attention paid to the progress children make is coupled with ongoing positive comments from staff that help children recognise what they have achieved. They grow more confident as a result and are very comfortable and secure in the stimulating

classrooms, where they are happy to move within the separate areas both inside and out.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make satisfactory progress from a low point of attainment when they enter school, but are unlikely to achieve the goals expected by the end of the year.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes better, but it is not consistently good enough to raise standards to the level expected.

Commentary

39. In recent years, children's language and communication skills on entry to the school have declined and are below those typically found of children aged four. Staff take every opportunity to promote children's skills, particularly those relating to speaking and listening. Children usually listen to adults but not always to each other. They speak confidently but use language at a basic level. Staff have adjusted their teaching methods and programme content in response to the children's differing needs, but tasks are nevertheless sometimes too difficult for children to complete them independently. On these occasions, although all adults give necessary emphasis to the development of the children's language skills, the number of adults available does not ensure that children receive the support they need to learn effectively. Few can write simple words accurately and many are still at the stage of forming recognisable letters or making marks on paper. Although children know that books contain information and stories, few recognise all the letters of the alphabet and match these accurately to their sounds.
40. Teaching is of varying quality. Although some examples of good and very good practice were seen, the work in children's books indicates that in the longer term teaching is of consistently satisfactory rather than good quality. More able children do not always make the progress of which they are capable. Children who find learning difficult make good progress because of the effective support they receive. The teaching of reading, including the use made of support staff, is well structured. Pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are skilled in planning stimulating activities that promote mathematical understanding well in some lessons.
- Group assessment of children's progress does not identify the specific needs of individuals sharply enough.

Commentary

41. The planning of some lessons is effective in ensuring that mathematical ideas are taught in ways that appeal to these young learners. Children were engrossed in counting gold coins and diamonds hidden in the sand as they dug for buried treasure during a topic about pirates. Evidence from children's work indicates that in the longer term teaching is of satisfactory quality overall, ensuring that most children will attain the goals expected by the end of the reception year. They count to 20 and the higher attainers count beyond this. Most understand the idea of one more and one less, and many can split numbers to make two smaller ones, for example saying that 5 is 2 add 3. Their understanding of pattern and recognition of shapes are as expected for their age.
42. Although teachers and support staff make regular assessments of children's progress, these are done in groups of usually five or six. Records do not indicate that on a daily basis the needs of individual pupils are recognised and used to plan very precisely the next steps in their learning. The match of tasks to children's needs is therefore not always consistent and tight enough to ensure that children make progress at other than a satisfactory rate.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A range of interesting activities is planned to promote learning in this area.
- Staff are not always on hand to question children and deepen their knowledge and understanding as they engage in activities.

Commentary

43. Satisfactory teaching leads to all children making sound progress and being on track to achieve the goals expected in this aspect of their learning by the end of the reception year. Children use construction equipment to make pirate ships with masts and flags. They talk confidently about their work and the effects they want to achieve. They access simple programs on the computer and operate equipment to listen to story tapes. They describe what plants need in order to grow and understand the different stages in the life of a butterfly.
44. With thirty children in each of the two reception classes, the four-adult team works hard to stimulate children's learning, rightly giving priority to the development of their reading, writing, mathematical and personal and social skills. Too often, they are unable to engage children other than briefly in quality conversation that probes their understanding and makes them think more deeply. Children make slower progress overall as a result despite the stimulating nature of the many activities provided that hold children's interest and concentration well.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good use is made of all available resources.

- Constant and imaginative use of the outside area promotes children's learning well.
- Time is lost when children are allowed too long to change for some lessons.

Commentary

45. All teaching staff provide a wide range of activities to move children on briskly in acquiring appropriate levels of physical control. Whether using their hands to write, paint or construct, or their bodies to climb, jump, slide or run, for example, all children demonstrate at least the levels of skill expected for their age. They are on track to achieve the goals for the end of the reception year. Teaching is good and staff demonstrate effectively the skills they want children to acquire. In a gymnastics lesson, children performed confidently in the large hall, using apparatus sensibly and with clear enthusiasm and enjoyment.
46. The secure, large and well equipped outside area is readily available to both classes throughout the day. This represents improvement since the last inspection. Its use is carefully planned and varied to reflect the current topic. During the inspection it became a desert island where children hunted for buried treasure. The assignment of a member of staff to work in the area keeps children focused on the tasks in hand and promotes their learning well.
47. The time children spent in the hall using large apparatus was eroded by the excessive amount of time they took to get changed for the lesson. An over-relaxed atmosphere allowed them to become distracted rather than undress quickly as they clearly are able to do. As a result, about half the class had to wait quite some time until the many stragglers were ready and this initially reduced the sense of purpose and urgency of the lesson.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The well-planned activities designed to stimulate children's imaginations and creative thinking are a strength of Foundation Stage provision.
- Children's attitudes to this aspect of their work are particularly positive.

Commentary

48. Teaching is good and children make good progress, achieving well. They are in line to reach, and in some respects exceed, the goals expected by the end of the reception year. Children were enthralled when all staff appeared at the start of the week dressed as pirates. The children responded with great excitement and enthusiasm to the invitation to become pirates too. Deeply engaged in role play and wearing the pirate hats they had made earlier, they warned the inspector not to go near their desert island or try to take their treasure. Staff were skilled in drawing the few reluctant children into the fun, enabling all to make significant gains in their creative and collaborative skills.
49. Displays of children's work demonstrate the good overall quality and breadth of provision. Children use a range of materials including paint, paper, clay, wool and fabrics to design, draw, paint and construct pictures, patterns, models and collage

work. In discussion they are clearly proud of what they have achieved and show good recall of how they completed the work. They are confident to make up short songs and perform them for the class. Children's positive attitudes contribute well to the progress they make.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a good knowledge of English and plan lessons well.
- Enthusiastic teaching and good use of resources help pupils to achieve well.
- The new library offers pupils opportunities to enjoy a wide range of books but they do not know how to find non-fiction books confidently.
- The subject leader has been effective in maintaining standards of provision in English.
- Marking does not always help pupils to know what they have to do to improve.

Commentary

50. Pupils' achievement is good. By the end of Year 2 pupils reach standards that are broadly in line with those expected nationally. As pupils enter Year 1 with standards below those typical for pupils aged five, this represents good progress. Pupils use spoken language confidently to explain their work and communicate their ideas. Most listen carefully to adults and each other. Reading skills are particularly secure and pupils are beginning to read for pleasure. Writing skills are less well developed. By the end of Year 6 pupils are on target to achieve standards that are well above those expected nationally. The smaller number of pupils likely to reach the higher levels is a slight decline on last year. These pupils entered the school seven years ago with above average attainment. They have achieved well to attain the very high standards noted. Pupils achieve good standards because the subject is well planned and taught enthusiastically. Standards were also well above average in the previous inspection. All pupils achieve similarly and no difference in achievement was noted for pupils from minority ethnic groups, pupils for whom English is an additional language or boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well because of the good support they receive. Pupils read a range of fiction for pleasure and discuss their favourite authors with enthusiasm. Their writing is well structured and demonstrates a clear awareness of its purpose and the audience for which it is intended. Pupils recognise and use techniques such as simile and metaphor to enliven their work and make it more interesting. Standards of handwriting vary and for a few pupils are too low.
51. The main reason why standards are good across the school is the consistently good teaching pupils enjoy. Teachers' good subject knowledge helps them to plan work that is interesting and challenging. The content of lessons, taught in a logical sequence, helps pupils build well on what they already know and makes it easier for them to acquire and use new reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Activities that are generally well matched to pupils' individual needs and abilities motivate them to work hard and to achieve well. Good planning helps to keep the pace of lessons brisk and pupils do not get bored. Well-chosen resources are used effectively to support pupils' learning. Assessment is used to track pupils' performance and their work is marked regularly. However, the marking is not as good as it could be because it does not always include comments about how pupils can improve their work.
52. The new library is an excellent resource and enables pupils to browse through books, use computers and develop their reading skills. Pupils are not able to find non-fiction books easily because they have not been taught the skills needed. In one lesson

seen, pupils were unable to find maths books because they did not know how to use the classification system to help them. The opportunity to use this as a teaching point and to provide an explanation of the library organisation was not taken.

53. The good leadership and management of English have improved teaching and learning. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and well organised. She supports colleagues by monitoring planning, observing lessons and feeding back to teachers. She has a good overview of the subject, has identified areas for development and has developed an action plan to address these. Although newly in post, she is already having a positive effect on the standard of provision.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. The use of language and literacy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 6 use their skills as writers in subjects such as history to write detailed accounts of life in Ancient Greece. Pupils in Year 2 have written clear instructions for making masks in design and technology. The use of information and communication technology is satisfactory.

Example of outstanding practice

An English lesson with Year 5 pupils in which the teacher was developing their understanding of persuasive writing techniques.

Pupils have been working on this aspect of English for some lessons and today are to attempt to write an advertisement to sell a derelict property. As a preface, the teacher reads them a selection of advertisements from a locally produced property magazine. He then demonstrates how the exaggerated language used distorts the reality of what the properties are really like. His dynamic delivery and rewording of the advertisement details, for example - "would suit a young executive means it's so small all you'll want to do is sleep there" - is so funny that pupils are laughing out loud but understand exactly the point he is making. They are so inspired by his input that they join in, making similarly amusing suggestions that add to the overall stimulation and enjoyment. Pupils cannot wait to get started on the writing task. The high quality of their work demonstrates more than anything else the very successful teaching they have experienced.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 6 are high. Pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory.
- More able pupils do not achieve the standards of which they are capable by the end of Year 2.
- The tracking of pupils' progress is not sufficiently thorough and consistent.

Commentary

55. In national assessments for 2004, results indicated that standards attained by pupils aged seven, in Year 2, were below those found in all schools nationally. Evidence from pupils' work, discussions with them and observation of lessons indicates that, although almost all pupils are now attaining the average standard, Level 2, only a few pupils are achieving the higher Level 3. Not all the more able pupils are making the progress of which they are capable. The school has recognised the issue and is

taking firm and decisive action to raise standards. It is not yet known whether this action will impact positively on the 2005 national test results.

56. Results of national tests in 2004 for Year 6 were well above the national average and above those achieved by pupils in similar schools. When the current Year 6 pupils entered school aged four their understanding of mathematics was better than that typical for their age. Over the years their progress and achievement have been satisfactory and they are on course to achieve standards similar to pupils last year.
57. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress thanks to the good quality of support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils for whom English is an additional language or who are from minority ethnic groups make satisfactory progress and achieve as well as other pupils.
58. The teaching and learning in mathematics are satisfactory throughout the school with some very good teaching in Years 3 and 6. This represents the broad maintenance of the quality found at the time of the last inspection. Teachers have a good understanding of mathematics and they plan lessons carefully. Short periods of mental mathematics work at the start of lessons effectively focus pupils' thinking and engage their interest. In the best practice seen, teachers work pupils at a fast pace, using a variety of teaching strategies that involve pupils and help them to concentrate and learn. Pupils respond well to this, working hard, behaving co-operatively and making good progress as a result. Interactive whiteboards are starting to play a growing and important role in teaching and are used effectively to explain difficult mathematical processes. Teachers do not always recognise and use opportunities to engage pupils in investigating mathematical concepts to build on what they already know.
59. The school lacks consistent and rigorous procedures for teachers' assessment of pupils' progress in mathematics. As a result, not all teachers systematically evaluate the knowledge and understanding of individuals and groups either day to day or in the longer term. Too often, irregular and insufficiently detailed assessments do not help teachers plan future lessons designed to meet all pupils' needs. This leads to some pupils being set tasks that are too difficult for them and others being insufficiently challenged, with the resulting drop in their rates of progress.
60. Only in post since January, the subject leader has had little time to make an impact as yet. Through her careful analysis of teachers' plans, she ensures that the curriculum is covered and well balanced. Some as yet limited opportunities to monitor teaching and learning are beginning to provide her with a picture of strengths and weaknesses in the subject from which to plan future improvement. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. There is evidence that teachers look for opportunities to use mathematics in other subjects but there is no whole school strategy to support this. Pupils therefore have limited chances to develop their mathematical thinking in meaningful situations such as when carrying out scientific investigations and geographical studies.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good gains in their understanding of scientific concepts and knowledge in Years 5 and 6 due to effective teaching.
- The achievement of more able pupils in Year 2 is varied but on occasions unsatisfactory.

Commentary

62. Since the last inspection, standards in Year 2 have declined and are now average, as judged by teacher assessments for 2004. When the current Year 2 pupils started in Year 1, they were working at broadly average levels. The school predicts that all pupils will achieve the expected Level 2 at the end of Year 2. Inspection findings confirm that pupils are achieving average standards overall. The number of pupils reaching the higher levels is low because teachers do not provide work that is sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils. Consequently, these pupils do not always attain the standard of which they are capable.
63. In the Year 6 national tests in 2004, the pupils attained standards in science that were well above the national average. All pupils attained the expected level with a majority reaching the higher level. The current Year 6 pupils reached standards in science that were above average at the end of Year 2. They have made sound progress over the past four years and have continued to achieve standards that are above average. Furthermore, the school predicts that several Year 6 pupils will reach a higher standard in the national tests than is indicated by their current work.
64. The overall quality of teaching in science is satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2 it is less effective in ensuring that more able pupils achieve at a sufficiently high level. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils are pushed on in their learning at a good pace, covering all aspects of science systematically. This consistently good teaching helps to ensure that pupils achieve well in these classes and attain good results in the national tests at the end of Year 6. Pupils' engagement in investigative work varies and practice in this aspect of science teaching is inconsistent.
65. The school effectively monitors the standards attained by pupils each year and sets achievable targets for them to reach during the next school year. However, the school has not made full use of the information produced to identify emerging issues. The assessment of pupils' progress on a day-to-day basis, undertaken as part of a planned activity in some lessons, is inconsistent. Here again, the information is not always well used, especially to identify what individual pupils need to learn next. Pupils' work is regularly marked in science books, but this does not always help them to understand what they are doing well and what specific aspects of their work need to be improved.
66. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, although many aspects are good. The subject co-ordinator has a good grasp of the curriculum and supports the professional development of teachers well. Decisive action has been taken to address the variable rates of achievement in science, particularly in Years 1 and 2. For example, external advisers have provided valuable professional support and a new scheme of work has been introduced. The effects of these changes have yet to be reflected fully in the quality of teaching and in pupils' work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources have improved and are enabling pupils to broaden their knowledge and skills and undertake more complex work.
- The confidence and expertise of teachers have improved and are reflected in the quality of their teaching and pupils' learning.

Commentary

67. Standards overall are average and pupils achieve at a satisfactory rate throughout the school. Although this is similar to the findings of the last inspection, pupils' confidence and knowledge in ICT have improved and are starting to have a positive effect upon their rate of progress and the standards they attain. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as all other pupils because of the good support they receive.
68. Pupils discussed their work in ICT with great enthusiasm and explained how they now use the Internet in the normal course of their work to find out information for other subjects. Most pupils have access to computers at home and this provides them with good opportunities to practise the ICT skills they have developed at school.
69. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good and sometimes better, resulting in pupils achieving well. Lessons seen were well structured and developed pupils' knowledge and skills systematically. Teachers have a good general understanding of what pupils know and can do. However, there is no common system for assessing and recording pupils' progress on a day-to-day basis. This makes it difficult for teachers to ensure that all pupils build on previous learning at a good rate as they move up through the school.
70. The school has improved the quality and quantity of its resources since the last inspection and, together with teachers' growing confidence in the subject, these have led to pupils experiencing a much wider and richer ICT curriculum. For example, pupils are competent in using the newly installed interactive whiteboards and are able to develop their individual paths of investigation in the ICT suite that can now accommodate each member of the class working at their own computer. New computers have just been installed in the school library, although they are not yet fully functioning. A computerised library management system has been installed which provides pupils with good practical experience of ICT being used to monitor and manage an everyday process. These are all good developments that are starting to raise the standards attained in all aspects of the subject.
71. Leadership and management are good. The new co-ordinator is currently piloting an assessment and recording system that is designed to help ensure that pupils' progress is accurately tracked throughout the school. A comprehensive audit has taken place to identify strengths and weaknesses in the subject and a good action plan prepared to guide improvements.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is improving. Work in ICT is regularly linked to studies in other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in a Year 6 ICT lesson were creating an invitation to a dance that was based on their studies in history. This involved them in the use of the Internet and a range of publishing programs. The school does not have a carefully structured programme to guide ICT links across the curriculum and recognises that further work is needed if this aspect is to be fully effective.

HUMANITIES

73. **Religious education** was not part of the inspection brief. Although **history** and **geography** were sampled, only one lesson was seen in each subject. No secure judgements about provision can therefore be made. Examination of teachers' plans and pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicate that a broad curriculum has been organised and that standards are broadly in line with those expected for pupils nationally at ages 7 and 11, as was the case at the time of the last inspection.
74. Pupils enjoy geography and history because teachers make the lessons interesting. Pupils in Year 6 enjoyed the history project about life in the 1950s because the teachers used a variety of resources including videos and tape recordings that made the lessons more exciting. Pupils could recall geography work done earlier in the year because it had been well supported by a residential field trip to the Isle of Wight.

Example of outstanding practice

Year 4 history lesson: learning objective - to know that the Blitz made a difference to people's lives in World War 2.

Excellent use of the interactive whiteboard, video clips and music to introduce the lesson immediately captured the pupils' interest and stimulated their curiosity. The dynamic approach and imaginative way in which the teacher used the materials succeeded in transporting pupils back in time. The teacher went on to use role-play to put himself 'into the Blitz', ducking to avoid falling masonry and shouting instructions to those around him – the pupils. This was done so convincingly that the pupils instinctively joined in and became part of the Blitz situation. The classroom reality was as close as it could be to replicating the experience for the pupils, who gained significant understanding of what it must have been like for the people living at that time.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are high.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards the subject.
- The long-term use of specialist teachers is very successful.
- Strong leadership maintains the priority the school gives to physical education.

Commentary

75. Within the subject, the school successfully combines the element of pupils striving to improve their personal performance with their participation in team events on a competitive basis. This dual focus is very successful in promoting the high standards found in Year 6. The quality of teaching seen, good overall with some very good features, is a major factor in the school's success, as evidenced by the number of competitions it has won and the awards it has gained. In a Year 6 gymnastics lesson the good teaching included high quality modelling of the work expected from pupils and very precise details of what the teacher was looking for when assessing pupils' performance. Constant and specific feedback to individual pupils left them in no doubt about how their work could be improved. Similarly high expectations of their skills in relation to throwing and catching, self-organisation and team collaboration made challenging demands on pupils of all abilities and resulted in high levels of performance. There was insufficient evidence on which to make a judgement about standards in Year 2. All aspects of the curriculum, including swimming, are covered effectively.
76. Pupils' enjoyment, perseverance and determination to succeed increase the rate at which they learn. They are keen to engage in all activities and speak with enthusiasm about what the school and they as individuals have achieved. They are confident to take part, even when tasks are demanding. The school's strong ethos of support is echoed in pupils' willingness to work together in pairs, groups and teams and to help each other improve and succeed.
77. For the past four years the school has employed a specialist teacher who is responsible for much of the delivery of physical education. His knowledge of individual pupils and what they are capable of is thorough, enabling him to make demands on them that are realistic but challenging. This is highly effective in moving them all on at a very good rate in their

learning. Regular assessment of individual pupils' work, fed back to class teachers, provides a clear picture of pupils' good achievement and progress.

78. The prominence given to physical education is due to the strong leadership of the co-ordinator whose enthusiasm for the subject inspires others and keeps the subject to the fore in everyone's thinking. He is constantly looking for ways to improve provision both within and beyond taught lessons. Initiatives such as 'craze of the week' make daily use of the school's good accommodation and resources, including a range of climbing equipment, and encourage all pupils to take regular physical exercise. Improvement since the time of the last inspection has been good, resulting in the maintenance of the high standards found then.
79. Art and design, design and technology and music were sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to make secure judgements about provision. No lessons were seen in design and technology or music, and only one lesson was seen in art.
80. The work seen in **art and design** indicates that standards are very variable, but below those expected nationally overall. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress. Displays throughout the school show a limited range of work. In the main entrance hall, paintings produced by pupils from different year groups are well presented and of a good quality, showing good use of colour and a broad range of painting styles. Pupils have sketchbooks but these are only used on very rare occasions. This restricts pupils' opportunities to develop and perfect their drawing, to experiment using different techniques and to practise and improve their skills. The limited range and variable quality is due in part to the school not having a scheme of work to guide teachers in their planning and help to ensure pupils develop their skills and knowledge systematically as they move up through the school. The previous inspection identified the same weaknesses, which the school has still to address. The co-ordinator is aware that standards need to rise and is seeking to raise the status of art in the school. Leadership and management of the subject are currently unsatisfactory.
81. A scrutiny of pupils' work during the inspection indicates that the National Curriculum requirements for **design and technology** are met and that standards are broadly in line with expectations of pupils aged 7 and 11. Samples of work from all year groups, including photographs, models and pupils' books, were scrutinised. Evidence ranging from clay boats in the reception classes to slippers in Year 6 demonstrates satisfactory levels of skills in planning, when pupils carefully select the best materials to use before starting work and give reasons for their choices. Older pupils' designs show some attempts to modify original plans as they consider the problems they might encounter in their implementation. Teachers' marking, although inconsistent in its quality, is helpful when it draws pupils' attention to specific details of their designs, encouraging them to review their work further. Pupils' evaluations of their completed work are an integral part of the design and technology programme and are successful in helping pupils identify how they can do better in the future. The co-ordinator has not monitored teaching in the subject, but has an awareness of standards through the sampling of pupils' work. She has identified aspects of provision that are priorities for improvement. The subject leadership and management are satisfactory.
82. The nature of the subject means that little evidence of pupils' most recent work in **music** was available and no judgement is therefore possible about overall standards or provision.

83. Standards achieved by the woodwind ensemble that meets after the school day are high. Although this is a newly formed group, they come together well to enjoy and make music through the high quality teaching of the visiting music specialist. Pupils read music confidently, whether playing flutes, clarinets, glockenspiels or saxophones. They share the teacher's enthusiasm. Their excellent concentration and the teacher's high expectations of them ensure they learn at a good rate and show good improvement. The small singing group achieves a satisfactory standard, as do younger pupils when playing the recorder.
84. The co-ordinator's monitoring of lessons gives him a clear awareness of pupils' and teachers' needs and has led to the introduction of a new scheme of work for music. Designed to increase pupils' active involvement in making music, as well as to build steadily on their skills and knowledge, it represents sound development of the subject. The well managed timing of music enrichment activities outside the school day successfully avoids pupils losing time from other lessons in order to take part. The co-ordinator's enthusiasm maintains the status of music in the school. The subject is soundly led and managed.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The newly appointed co-ordinator gives effective leadership.
- Recent initiatives have raised the status of the subject well.
- Accommodation and resources are good.

Commentary

85. The co-ordinator brings enthusiasm and good subject knowledge to her role. Her efficient auditing of the extensive range of resources available, and the subsequently created catalogue, means staff know what is available and are able to access materials easily. This has led to their increased use and consequently more interesting activities, including visits and the use of visitors, being provided. The co-ordinator has gained staff support for the piloting of a class book as a method of recording the outcomes of personal, social and health education sessions. This is very successful in engaging pupils in evaluating their work, celebrating each other's successes and raising their self-esteem as the book is shared and read by all. The school has built well on the established programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship, which now includes work on diet, health, sex, drugs and personal safety. Detailed and structured term plans for each year group allow staff to provide focused weekly lessons covering important topics within the subject. These build steadily on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Lessons in other subjects provide many opportunities for pupils to discuss and form views on a range of related issues. Evidence from sampling pupils' work, talking to them and observing lessons indicates that teaching is generally satisfactory, and sometimes good. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate the levels of understanding and skill expected for their age.
86. In addition to the well-established school council, the recently created Children's Development Plan Group provides a further opportunity for pupils to make their views known. The twenty-five pupils, drawn from the three oldest year groups in the school, are representative of their classes and determine the issues to be included in

the plan. Their regular review of action taken by the school in relation to their suggestions represents their direct involvement in influencing changes in school life. It successfully promotes their understanding of how communities and society work and of what it means to be a citizen. The creation of the group has raised the status of citizenship and issues relating to pupils' personal development well, as has the focus on bullying undertaken in the past few months. Parents and pupils speak appreciatively of the strategies taught to pupils to help them deal with any instances of bullying and regard the school's work as very successful. Pupils who have responsibilities under the 'playground pals' and 'buddies' schemes report that there is now very little bullying occurring in school.

87. Conversion of what was the school kitchen to a room capable of holding an entire year group represents effective use of space. The room is ideal for lessons in which pupils sit in a circle of chairs and discuss personal, social and health issues. Other facilities of which pupils speak with enthusiasm include the prayer room, the Listening Sessions and the Worry Box. The school has made good progress in achieving improvements to this aspect of its provision since the last inspection.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| Inspection judgement | Grade |
|---|----------|
| The overall effectiveness of the school | 4 |
| How inclusive the school is | 3 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 4 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 4 |
| Overall standards achieved | 4 |
| Pupils' achievement | 4 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos) | 3 |
| Attendance | 2 |
| Attitudes | 2 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 3 |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |
| The quality of education provided by the school | 4 |
| The quality of teaching | 4 |
| How well pupils learn | 4 |
| The quality of assessment | 5 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs | 4 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 2 |
| Accommodation and resources | 3 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 3 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 3 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 3 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 3 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 3 |
| The leadership and management of the school | 4 |
| The governance of the school | 4 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 4 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 4 |
| The effectiveness of management | 4 |

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).