

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST JOHN BOSCO RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Blackley, Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105530

Headteacher: Mrs M T Woodward

Lead inspector: Mrs L Read

Dates of inspection: 11 – 13 April 2005

Inspection number: 267800

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 category: Voluntary Aided  
Age range of pupils: 3 – 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 207

School address: Hall Moss Road  
Blackley  
Manchester  
Lancashire

Postcode: M9 7AT

Telephone number: 0161 740 7094

Fax number: 0161 795 6843

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr D Fleming

Date of previous inspection: 30/11/1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St John Bosco Primary is around the same size as most primary schools with 207 pupils on roll. It serves the families of the local parish which covers a diverse area of Blackley. The immediate vicinity of the school is recognised as an area of deprivation. Taking into account the full range of housing and employment, social and economic circumstances are below average overall. Pupils entering the school have a range of learning experiences and attainments that are below average for the age group. The total percentage of pupils in school who have special educational needs (14.5 per cent) is below average; 1.5 per cent of pupils have a statement of special educational needs, and this is around the national average. Most of the special needs come under the specific learning or social, emotional and behavioural categories with a few pupils having physical or medical difficulties. In total, 26.3 per cent of pupils claim their entitlement to free school meals, which is above average. Most pupils are of a white, British or European background with a small proportion of mixed race heritage. Around one per cent of pupils are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The headteacher is in her third year at the school and has worked on a considerable programme of improvement since her appointment.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21199	Mrs L Read	Lead inspector	English Geography History English as an additional language Special educational needs
19343	Mrs M Howel	Lay inspector	
21910	Mr G Longton	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Physical education
21893	Mrs V Brittain	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Art and design Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**St John Bosco RC Primary School** provides a satisfactory standard of education with some good features. There have been considerable changes at the school since the previous inspection with a new headteacher in post. Standards by Year 6 are similar to those expected except in science. Strengths include very good provision for personal development and good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Leadership and management are satisfactory and senior management demonstrates a good capacity to improve. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are good and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils' attainment in science is below average at Year 6.
- Leadership and management are successful in maintaining a strong, caring ethos.
- There is insufficient monitoring of provision and standards in some subjects, including science.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs is good and they achieve well.
- There are no consistent assessment procedures in some subjects, including science.
- There is very good provision for personal development and, as a result, pupils have very good attitudes to learning, very good behaviour and there are very good relationships.
- There is good enrichment for learning, including the teaching of two modern foreign languages.

### Improvements

Improvements since the last inspection are unsatisfactory. However, the school has been through a period of change and many good improvements are evident in the time since the new headteacher's appointment. These include better standards in information and communication technology (ICT), and new assessment and target setting systems in English and mathematics that are leading to better achievement. One key issue from the previous report related to assessment. This has been introduced in four subjects but not all; consequently it is only partly addressed.

### 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	D	B	B
mathematics	B	D	C	C
science	B	E	D	E

*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.*

**Achievement is satisfactory overall.** Children in the nursery and reception classes make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in personal and social education. By the time they enter Year 1, they have achieved the expected learning goals in this aspect but not in the other areas of learning. Attainment in Year 2 is judged as average in reading, writing, mathematics and science and pupils are achieving well. Standards seen at Year 6 during the inspection are average for English and mathematics. The relatively lower attainment in English is due to more pupils with special educational needs in this subject;

standards in mathematics have been sustained for the two years. The 2004 results for science were below the national average and well below that for similar schools. Inspection findings show attainment is below average by Year 6. There is no effective assessment system in place and very little monitoring of teaching and learning in science and these are major factors behind the lower achievement in this subject. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language achieve well and there are no differences in learning in the classroom between ethnic groups or boys and girls.

**The school promotes pupils' personal qualities including their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development very well. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes and very good behaviour.** Relationships are very good and pupils work hard. Attendance is improved but remains below average in spite of considerable efforts made by the school. Pupils are generally punctual.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and good in Years 1 and 2. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is soundly planned to meet the specific learning needs of the age group, including a strong emphasis on personal development. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is satisfactory but variable; generally it is better for the older juniors. Occasionally, there is insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils or the pace of learning is too slow. Assessments of learning are used well by most teachers in English and mathematics to set work of varying difficulty. However, there are no effective systems in most other subjects. Teaching assistants are well trained and experienced; they make a good contribution to learning.

A broad curriculum meets statutory requirements and is satisfactory overall. However, there is insufficient use of pupils' ICT and writing skills when working in other subjects, especially in Years 3 to 6. Good enrichment for learning is provided through lessons in two modern foreign languages, visits and visitors and out-of-school activities. Accommodation is satisfactory overall and staff work very hard to overcome the lack of a computer suite and main library. Resources are much improved and are satisfactory but there are weaknesses in the range and quality of the class library books.

Standards of care, welfare and safety are good. Guidance in personal development is good. Some junior pupils do not know their targets so guidance for academic progress is unsatisfactory. Good links with the community and other schools support pupils' learning well. Home-school links are satisfactory. Parents are supportive but there is no regular system for gathering their views and they have little information about their children's targets for learning or of the topics they are studying.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory.** The school meets most statutory requirements. The headteacher has led an effective drive for improvement and has an ambitious plan for future developments. The monitoring of provision and standards has improved well in English and mathematics but is not effective in all subjects. Governors are supportive but do not have a thorough overview of standards and the school's performance against its own targets. Overall, governance is satisfactory.

### **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

The results of the parents' questionnaires and the meeting show that parents have good levels of confidence in the school. Pupils are proud of their school but have no elected pupil council through which to influence decision making.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do in its drive for improvement are:

- raise standards in science in Years 3 to 6;
- put in place effective assessment systems for all subjects, giving priority to science, and make sure that all pupils know what they are expected to learn over the term;
- develop the monitoring of teaching, learning and attainment in all subjects, starting with science.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Standards are average overall by Year 6 although they remain below average for science. Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good and better than in Years 3 to 6, where it is satisfactory.
- Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is much improved since the previous inspection and is now average.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and those who enter school with below average attainment achieve well in relation to their starting points and progress is good.
- There are strengths in singing and in some aspects of physical education.
- Attainment and achievement in science is below average because pupils' skills of investigation and experimentation are not as good as their knowledge of the subject.

#### **Commentary**

1. There is a wide range of prior learning among the children who enter the nursery. Overall, their skills and knowledge are below those expected for the age group and some are well below, especially in language and communication and mathematical understanding. During the nursery and reception years, the children make satisfactory, and sometimes, good progress. By the start of Year 1 some have reached the early learning targets, but the majority have not and attainment is below average overall. Children achieve especially well in personal, social and emotional development and this provides a good foundation for their very good attitudes and behaviour.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.6 (14.6)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	13.5 (14.0)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	15.5 (15.1)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. The results for Year 2 pupils in 2004 were well below national averages in reading and writing. Standards were below average in mathematics and science. However, when compared to schools in similar circumstances, attainment was average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. This group had a very unusual profile with just under one half of them having summer birthdays which meant that they were under seven years old at the time of the tests and assessments. The relatively lower level of maturity affected the numbers attaining the higher level 3, although there was a good number of level 2A grades; especially evident in reading and writing. This was one factor behind the lower standards and managers took action to tackle other identified issues including:

- an improved emphasis on writing;
- a stronger focus on reading with lunchtime sessions providing extra time for teaching and learning;
- an improved emphasis on mental arithmetic and problem solving skills;
- further developing intervention strategies to boost learning in English and mathematics; for pupils with special educational needs and where attainment was below expectations;
- more time given to investigation work in science.

Standards of work seen in lessons and books for the present Years 2 group during the inspection are around average in reading, writing, mathematics and science and achievement is judged as good and improved since last year. This also represents a good improvement on the overall trend of attainment that is below the national one from 2000 to 2004.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.9 (26.2)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.3 (25.6)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.6 (26.2)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 21 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. The results for Year 6 pupils in 2004 were above the national and similar school averages for English and in line with both for mathematics. The targets set at level 4 were met in both subjects but those for the higher level 5 were not. One very significant reason for this was that two higher-attaining pupils left the school between the time of setting the targets and the actual tests. Records show that targets are likely to be met this year. Evidence from lesson observations, pupils' completed work and assessment records seen during the inspection shows that attainment in English and mathematics is around average. There are more pupils with special educational needs in English in this group and this fact accounts for the relatively lower grade when compared to 2004. Achievement in English and mathematics is not as good as in Years 1 and 2 because teaching and learning are more variable and, especially in the younger juniors, the higher attaining pupils are not always challenged fully. The overall trend in attainment for Year 6 is below that seen nationally over the last four years. An improved tracking and target setting system is now in place to tackle this problem. Standards in science were below the national average in 2004 and well below the average for similar schools. The subject manager has introduced a better emphasis on investigative and experimental work but standards observed during the inspection remain below average. There is no effective assessment, tracking or target setting system for this subject so teachers do not have a clear picture of what pupils know and need to learn next. There has been little monitoring of teaching and learning in the past so the manager does not have the information she needs to check the effectiveness of the curriculum or to address any issues that arise.
4. Standards are lower than at the previous inspection in mathematics and science; they have been sustained in English. The context of the school has changed over the six and a half years with a new headteacher now in post. There is a strong commitment to raising standards and a good capacity to improve. Some of the work already done is beginning to bear fruit, for example, in the improved attainment and achievement in Years 1 and 2 and in the tracking and target setting for English and mathematics. More work is now needed to raise standards in science.

5. The achievement of pupils who have special educational needs is good throughout the school. This is because these pupils have specific, clear targets that move their learning on at a good pace. Teachers know exactly where to pitch the level of challenge or support in lessons. Well trained and experienced teaching assistants lead a range of specially planned groups that are carefully focused on promoting the skill or knowledge needed. This good provision is also extended to pupils identified as making less than expected progress and is a strength of the school.
6. The headteacher has gone to great lengths to ensure good provision for pupils who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. A dual-language assistant translates for them in some lessons and is very ably supporting their progress. Pupils of different ethnic backgrounds make equal progress to the majority. In class lessons, boys and girls do equally well and teachers are careful to choose topics that are of interest to both.
7. Attainment in ICT across the school matches expectations and there have been good improvements in resourcing, teaching, learning and standards. In the other subjects where provision was judged, attainment matches what is usually seen and there are strengths in singing and aspects of physical education. It was not possible in the time available to make a judgement for art and design, design and technology and geography.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance is below average.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's commitment to building mutually supportive relationships is a particular strength.
- Very good, open communications between staff and pupils ensure that everyone is valued and feels secure in school.
- Children in the reception class are well-placed to reach the early learning goals in the personal, social and emotional areas of learning.
- The school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- Attendance is below the national average in spite of substantial efforts made by the school.

### **Commentary**

8. In discussion with inspectors, pupils were enthusiastic about everything that the school offers. They made it clear that they enjoy their lessons and like their teachers. Pupils settle quickly in class and are very keen to respond to questions and to participate in discussions. They support each other very well in paired and group work. For example, in a joint ICT lesson, Year 4 pupils helped those in Year 2 to program floor robots. Pupils' behaviour is very good throughout the school day and playtimes are friendly, social occasions. In lessons observed, pupils needed very few reminders about how to behave and this means that the valuable learning time is used to best advantage. Pupils who have special educational needs have good support and good levels of confidence. There are good links with the families of

those who have emotional or behaviour difficulties and teachers have a sensitive, but firm, approach to help them overcome problems. Since the previous inspection, behaviour has been maintained at a very good level and attitudes have improved further. These aspects are major strengths of the school and underpin learning very effectively.

9. Adults in the Foundation Stage place a great emphasis on developing the children's personal and social skills and this area of learning permeates into all activities. As a result, children become very enthusiastic learners and behave well. They are confident in group work and are keen to explore, investigate and ask questions.
10. The very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development results in a strong community feeling within the school. There have been good improvements since the previous inspection in the provision for personal development and the strong ethos has been maintained. Spiritual development is supported very well by close links with the church and the very good opportunities taken in lessons and assemblies to raise self-awareness. Pupils enjoy worship time. They appreciate the calm ethos, listen well and demonstrate reverence when saying prayers. They reflect on the theme of worship in a mature way. For example, in one assembly on wisdom, pupils concluded that 'you don't have to be clever to be wise'. There are good opportunities for pupils to express themselves in creative ways through art and music, which support pupils' spiritual development well.
11. The 'Golden Rules' displayed in all classes make expectations clear and help to promote good behaviour. Pupils have a very secure understanding of the difference between right and wrong and a very clear appreciation of the possible impact that their behaviour might have on others. Very effective links between teachers and lunchtime supervisors ensure that expectations are consistent. As a result, the mid-day break provides enjoyable leisure opportunities for pupils of all ages. Pupils are encouraged to accept responsibilities around the school. They collect and return registers, act as monitors and become helpful 'buddies' for younger pupils at lunchtimes. Class discussions provide good opportunities for pupils to consider moral and social issues and explore solutions to problems.
12. There is very good provision for cultural development. As a result, pupils develop good levels of understanding of local and national traditions and of cultures around the world. They show great respect for beliefs and values that are different from their own. In classrooms there are very interesting displays of artefacts from other religions which encourage pupils to explore and investigate. Older pupils are in the initial stages of exchanging information with friends in Germany through a video link. This is a good enrichment to cultural provision as it provides interesting opportunities to explore daily life in a different country. Pupils' understanding of the practicalities of living in a diverse society is heightened by activities such as the recent whole-school topic on life and events around the world.

***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)***

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.4	School data	0.8
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

13. In 2004 the attendance was well below the national average. The school has made considerable efforts to improve these figures. During the autumn term, staff tried out various strategies including inviting parents into the start of the day, organising breakfast clubs, introducing more awards and publicising the benefits of good attendance. Some improvements resulted although attendance is still below average. The school aims to raise figures to at least an average level and planned action is based on the strategies that proved to be most successful in the trial period. Punctuality is satisfactory; most pupils arrive on time and are keen to start work.

**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	133	3	
White – Irish	6		
White – any other White background	2		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3		
Mixed – White and Black African	3		
Mixed – White and Asian	1		
Mixed – any other mixed background	2		
Black or Black British – African	4		
Any other ethnic group	1		

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

The school works closely with the families of excluded pupils in order to solve issues and provide good support. There is very good use of outside agencies and specialist advice where needed.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education is satisfactory overall with some strengths. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There is a broad curriculum that is well enriched. Care and welfare are good and there is good guidance for pupils’ personal development. Not all pupils know their targets for learning and therefore guidance to support pupils’ academic development is unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. There are good links with the community and other schools and those with parents are satisfactory.

**Teaching and learning**

Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory although they are good in Years 1 and 2. Assessment is unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 6.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a good deal of expertise in the teaching for pupils with special educational needs and those whose prior attainment is below average.
- Most teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are good and there is some very good practice.

- Pupils who are capable of higher levels of attainment are not always fully challenged, especially in the lower juniors.
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and there is a calm, productive working atmosphere in lessons.
- Teaching assistants are very experienced, well trained and briefed and provide good support for learning.
- In Years 1 to 6, pupils' progress is not adequately assessed and recorded in subjects other than English, mathematics, ICT and physical education.

## Commentary

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4(10%)	17 (44%)	16 (41%)	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.*

14. The judgement for teaching is based on lesson observations, a scrutiny of work over time and an analysis of the records available showing pupils' progress. This evidence shows that teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory and in Years 1 and 2, they are good. In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are variable but satisfactory overall. The best practice is seen in classes for the older juniors. The overall quality is not as good as at the previous inspection. However, since the appointment of the new headteacher there have been good improvements in teaching and learning in ICT, writing and in the support for pupils who are not making the expected progress. All three have led to improved attainment.
15. The teaching and learning in the nursery and reception classes are satisfactory overall with some good features. Very good sessions for mathematical development were seen in the nursery. In both classes, children have an inviting range of activities where they can explore and investigate. Adults encourage them to be independent learners and place a strong emphasis on developing their personal skills. There are few opportunities, however, for children to explore the natural world in their outdoor sessions. There is scope to extend speaking skills and imaginative role play through better adult intervention.
16. In Years 1 and 2, most of the teaching is good. Teachers focus on developing a solid foundation in literacy and numeracy. The teachers plan work at different levels for groups of pupils based on assessments of their learning. As a result, pupils are well supported or challenged in lessons. In Years 3 to 6 the quality of teaching and learning varies from very good to unsatisfactory. The best provision is seen in the older age groups. In these two classes the whole lesson is often pitched at a high level of challenge suited to the higher attaining pupils. The rest of the class is then supported by prompt sheets, extra resource material or through adult intervention. In lessons for the younger juniors, the level of challenge is often matched to the average pupils and extra work provided for the higher attainers. However, this work sometimes consists of extension activities rather than challenge at a higher level and is therefore not exploiting the pupils' full potential. The monitoring role of several subject managers is not effective enough to improve this situation since they do not regularly visit classes or check work in books.

17. Throughout school, there are effective group sessions for those who are not achieving at the average level or not making the expected progress in English and mathematics. These are often led by teaching assistants who include a good selection of short activities to motivate pupils and to promote success. This is a major factor in the good provision and good achievement for these groups of pupils. It also accounts for the fact that the test results for Year 6 show a higher percentage of pupils attaining the average level 4 than is usual among similar schools in the local authority.
18. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Those who require additional help are identified as soon as possible when they begin school. The special educational needs co-ordinator and the class teachers discuss and develop pupils' individual education plans and review progress regularly. This maintains a good pace to learning because work is well matched to pupils' requirements. Teaching assistants play a very good role in whole-class sessions by sitting alongside pupils, helping them to clarify their thinking and encouraging them to answer questions. This ensures their full involvement in lessons. Pupils who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language are well supported; the provision of a bi-lingual assistant is a major factor behind their good progress.
19. Reading skills are generally well promoted in all classes but opportunities for writing in Years 3 to 6 are sometimes insufficient in a number of subjects because too many worksheets are used for recording work. Skills in ICT are also not always used to best effect across other subjects, although this is a priority of the subject manager's action plan. Teachers share the aims of the lessons with the pupils in all subjects and then review the success achieved at the end. This is helping pupils to evaluate their own progress and to become independent learners. Targets for learning in English and mathematics are set twice yearly, at different levels of difficulty depending on prior attainment. Some pupils know their own targets because they are entered in books and displayed in the classroom but many, especially in Years 3, 4 and 6 are not aware of the goal that they are expected to achieve. Homework is satisfactory. Some pupils make good use of websites that their teachers recommend, either at home or using the arranged facilities at the local college.
20. The checking of children's progress in the nursery and reception classes is good and the information is well used in planning the next steps. In Years 1 to 6, progress in English and mathematics is regularly assessed and the information forms the basis of the target setting process. Pupils' attainment in ICT and physical education is also checked and recorded and the information used in planning lessons. The very basic assessment system for science does not provide enough information for teachers and is recognised as a priority area for development. In the other subjects, the previous assessment systems were evaluated as inadequate and discarded. They have not been replaced and this is an unsatisfactory situation since, in several subjects, there is no reliable way of checking which pupils need extra challenge or support or of monitoring the effectiveness of the curriculum and planning. Teachers do, however, make informal checks on progress during and after lessons and often include helpful remarks in their marking.

## **The curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory overall and has been maintained since the previous inspection. All statutory requirements are met and there is good enrichment for

learning. Accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory but there are some weaknesses.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The provision of enrichment activities both within and outside the school day is good.
- The curriculum for personal, social and health education is good and reflects the high priority given to this area.
- There have been good improvements to the curriculum for ICT.
- The lack of a school library and ICT suite, together with an inadequate number of good quality books, limits opportunities for personal study and research.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and enables them to make good progress.

### **Commentary**

21. Since the last inspection, the identified weaknesses in the curriculum have been addressed and improvement is satisfactory. Good improvements have been made in ICT provision, especially in the use of control technology for older pupils. Time allocations have been reviewed so that there is now an appropriate balance between literacy and other subjects. Subject planning has been strengthened and the aims of lessons are made clear to the pupils. The school has specific lessons for personal, health, social and citizenship education and provision is good. Good use is made of additional strategies in literacy and numeracy to support pupils who are experiencing difficulties. However, the stock of books is low for a school of this size and the space that was allocated for a library is now used for other, essential purposes. The science curriculum has been strengthened through more emphasis on practical work but there has been little opportunity for the subject manager to monitor lessons and check whether learning has improved or to address issues that arise. The expertise and experience of teaching assistants is enabling lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to make good progress in lessons.
22. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of all children and topics are used to link the areas of learning so that skills are practised and knowledge reinforced. However, there is scope to extend the use of outdoor areas to investigate the natural world and to extend opportunities for children to develop their speaking skills.
23. Initiatives have been put in place to link subjects in order to make the curriculum more interesting and meaningful. For example, Year 5 pupils designed and made musical instruments, being well supported by the knowledge and understanding that resulted from their science topic on sound. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboard resource and exchange classrooms so that pupils of different age groups can share the benefits of the facility.
24. Links with local schools and colleges have strengthened the curriculum, particularly for older pupils who benefit from the use of specialist ICT facilities as well as specialist teaching for French and German. During the inspection Year 6 pupils were well motivated through a video conference link with a German school. This is an example of good, innovative development in the curriculum. French lessons also make good use of ICT. In one class, pupils played against each other in a game



which consolidated their knowledge of vocabulary and also improved their speed of recall.

25. There is a strong commitment to ensure that all pupils, regardless of any special need they may have, are fully included in all aspects of the school's work. Girls and boys have the same access to all parts of the curriculum and there is no stereotyping of male or female roles. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs, and individual education plans have specific and manageable targets. Tasks are adapted when necessary or additional help is provided to ensure that pupils experience success. The provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is good; teachers take care to explain new vocabulary and a bilingual assistant translates in some lessons.
26. Staff are committed to enhancing provision by planning for a wide range of experiences outside the basic curriculum and this is a strength. Activities generate real enthusiasm for learning and provide good enrichment. Regular feature days focus on whole school participation such as the 'Super Learning Day' this year which provided activities such as drama, dance workshops and orienteering trails. Many pupils are given the opportunity to perform in concerts both in school and within the local community. Visits, for example, to the local museum and art gallery are planned to link directly with topics being covered and are effective in extending learning outside of the classroom. Visitors include authors, artists and musicians who share their skills with pupils to enrich lessons. There are a good number of school clubs which encourage participation in sport and teams compete regularly with those from other schools. The lunchtime reading clubs in Years 1 and 2 and the book club in Year 6 provide valuable extra learning time and boost attainment in this area.
27. Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is well developed. Health education, including advice on healthy eating and guidance about the dangers of misusing drugs, is planned and taught well. The governors have exercised their right not to provide a programme of sex and relationships education.
28. The school building is in need of general maintenance and upgrading. Since her appointment, the headteacher has worked through a programme of improvements, as funding has allowed. Important changes include better security and safety measures and improved play facilities but remaining weaknesses include the lack of a computer suite or school library. The headteacher works hard to bid for any available grant funding but the lack of space for these two important study areas means that major building work is needed. The selection and quality of fiction and non-fiction books in the school is unsatisfactory and the English manager recognises that improvements to class libraries are a priority. Recent purchases of good quality group reading books have improved this resource. The help sought and given by other schools and colleges have effectively supported the improvements to ICT provision, notably the use of ICT facilities at the local college and the extended loan of laptop computers.

### **Care, guidance and support**

There is good provision for the pupils' care, health, safety and welfare and the school provides good guidance for their personal development. The guidance for academic development is unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6 because not all pupils know their targets for learning.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers know pupils and their families well and guide their personal development effectively.
- Guidance for pupils' academic development varies between classes and many pupils do not know what they are expected to achieve over the term.
- Pupils work in a safe environment because teachers and managers pay good attention to protection and safety issues.
- Pupils have no regular opportunity to express their views and opinions about the running of the school.

## **Commentary**

29. The school provides well for pupils' personal development. The pupils are known and valued as individuals, and there are good relationships between them and teachers. The pupils are comfortable talking to their teachers and know they will receive help when they need it. The school has secure child protection procedures and the designated person has received appropriate training. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection. The lunchtime supervisors work closely with the teachers to ensure there is continuity in the care and support provided at lunchtime. They provide good opportunities for pupils to relax, play games and enjoy their break from lessons.
30. The good knowledge that the teachers have of the pupils and their families enables them to offer effective support and to be sensitive to individual circumstances. There is very good support for vulnerable pupils and close contact with the relevant outside agencies to ensure all pupils' well-being. Parents are very confident in the care provided by the teachers and the fair treatment that their children receive. The Catholic ethos of the school plays a significant part in the personal development of the pupils.
31. Pupils have targets for English and mathematics based on their prior learning but many do not know what these are. In one class, targets are kept in books for ease of reference and displayed in the classroom as a constant reminder. The pupils in this class know what they need to do to improve. However, this is not the case in every class and some targets displayed are general whole-class goals which do not provide clear guidance for individual pupils. Those who have special educational needs know their individual targets and these are shared with parents so that they can support their children effectively. No learning targets are set in science so there are no clear goals for achievement. For the other subjects, goals for learning are largely based around the targets that are stated at the beginning of lessons and reviewed at the end.
32. There is no system to enable pupils' opinions to be taken into account concerning the running of the school. Class discussion times are useful for the sharing of views but do not provide regular opportunities for pupils' voices to be heard on whole-school issues. They have limited opportunities, therefore, to experience how democracy and joint decision-making works.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The partnership between school and the parents is satisfactory overall, with some strengths. There are good links with other schools and the community.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The parents are generally supportive of the school although not all ensure that their children attend regularly.
- Effective links with other schools provide additional opportunities, resources and expertise.
- The school works very closely with the local church and community.
- The school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents do not contain all the required information.

## **Commentary**

33. The returned questionnaires show that parents are happy with the way their children are educated at the school. They say their children enjoy attending the school and are well behaved. The significant number of parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting also expressed these views. A number of parents felt they were not well informed about how their children were progressing or how they could help them at home. The school provides regular newsletters that keep the parents up to date with school events and staff news, but there is no regular information about the topics that their children will cover or any targets set for the pupils. There is no regular system in place to seek the views of parents and carers.
34. Parents are very pleased with the induction arrangements and feel their children settle quickly and happily into the school routines. They are supplied with a very user-friendly booklet that includes information about how they can help their children to feel comfortable during the early days in school. There is a flexible programme that allows parents and children to decide how long the introductory period should be; this ensures that all children are confident and happy by the time they attend the nursery without a parent present. Parents generally provide good support for learning at home including hearing their children read and ensuring that homework tasks are completed. There are, however, some parents who are not supporting the school fully in the drive to improve attendance and some still take holidays during term time.
35. The 'Friends of St John Bosco' provide valuable support for the school through fundraising activities and social events. They have generously donated many additional resources. Through established links with local parishioners, pupils are able to make a good contribution to church and community life.
36. There are very effective links with the main high school and local colleges. Through these links, the pupils benefit from support in a number of subjects including modern foreign languages, drama, food technology and advanced literacy and numeracy weekend classes. The pupils are well prepared for their transfer to the high school with regular visits and opportunities to meet their new teachers. By the time they make the move the pupils are confident and ready for the next stage of their education. The school works very closely with the church and takes a full part in community life. The pupils join in church worship and parish activities, and the choir regularly performs at nearby hospitals and local events.
37. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents do not meet statutory requirements. They do not include all the necessary information, including the right for parents to withdraw their children from collective worship and religious education lessons.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall although there are some areas for improvement in subject management. Governance is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership of the headteacher is based firmly on high aspirations and a drive for improvement.
- There have been good, recent improvements in the management and leadership of English and mathematics.
- There is insufficient monitoring of provision and standards in most other subjects, with the exception of ICT and physical education.
- Information gathered from the school's self-evaluation programme is used effectively in school improvement planning.
- The very supportive governors are not focused enough on asking questions about achievement or checking that targets are met.
- Day-to-day practice reflects the success of the school's commitment to ensuring that all pupils with special educational needs have full and equal access to all parts of school life.

### **Commentary**

38. The headteacher is successful in promoting a strong caring ethos which is reflected in the very good standard of pupils' personal development, their enjoyment of lessons and their willingness to work hard. She is very well regarded by parents who value her commitment and approachability. There is a clear, shared vision for future developments based on improving standards. Most statutory requirements are met except for the information provided for parents.
39. There is a very strong commitment to inclusion. Staff seek out specialist advice, where needed, to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and those in the early stages of learning English as an additional language can take full advantage of all that the school has to offer. Staff, including the non-teaching personnel, reflect the school's aims through their everyday practice and there is good teamwork. These factors form the strengths in leadership at the school.
40. The strengths in management include:
- the very smooth running of the school on a day-to-day basis;
  - a school improvement plan with clear priorities that is a good guide for senior managers and teachers;
  - regular monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher; but not in some subjects by subject leaders;
  - regular performance reviews for teachers and teaching assistants from which a programme of training and development needs is established;
  - good administrative support that frees the headteacher from routine matters;
  - efficient use of the accommodation and resources;
  - a strong commitment to seeking best value for money and to seeking out additional funding and resources wherever possible.

41. There are, however, some areas for development in subject leadership and management. The role of the managers for English and mathematics has been well established over the last two years. These managers monitor performance satisfactorily and ensure that the governors' challenging targets are set. The manager for ICT and physical education has a good overview of attainment and provision because he teaches both of these subjects to all classes. However, there is little monitoring of teaching, learning and attainment in the other subjects. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory with good potential to improve further. The judgement is not as good as at the previous inspection, some six and a half years ago, but the school has been through a period of change with a new headteacher, senior management team and Chair of Governors now in post. Successes gained in the last two years include better attainment in ICT throughout school and in English, mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2. Overall, however, there is unsatisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.
42. The leadership and management of special educational needs are good. The writing and reviewing of individual education plans is checked and pupils' progress carefully tracked. The manager goes to great lengths to ensure that specialist support is secured where needed and provides good, informed support for teachers by assessing pupils and giving advice.
43. The governors are supportive of the school and have the interests of the pupils at heart. They have a sound overview of everyday practice and attend training courses to keep up to date with current trends in education and legislation. There are strengths in governance but there are also some areas for improvement. Governors are involved in compiling and reviewing the school improvement plan but do not routinely check on standards or whether targets are met. They do not check whether printed information meets requirements. On balance, governance is satisfactory.
44. The main aids to learning at the school are recognised as a strong, shared vision, support from the local authority, parents and the community and the commitment to including all pupils regardless of any special need they may have. The main barriers are recognised and the following table indicates how the school has acted to overcome some of the most urgent.

Barrier	Action taken	Outcomes
Lower than average levels of prior learning when children enter school.	A series of intervention programmes designed to boost learning in Years 1 to 6. Good provision for those pupils who have special educational needs.	Results show that a good number of pupils attain the average level 4 in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 and achievement for this group of pupils is good. In this respect, the school does well compared to similar ones in the local authority.
Limited space in the building which means there is no library or ICT suite.	Seeking out sources of funding. Improving ICT resources through links with other schools. The appointment of an ICT specialist. Library areas in all classrooms.	ICT resources are satisfactory and wireless laptops allow skills to be taught to whole classes. Attainment in ICT is improved and maintained at average.

		Pupils have some books for research and to borrow, although the stock is limited.
Lack of cooperation on the part of a few parents in sending their children to school regularly.	An attendance week when various strategies were trialled, such as a breakfast club, attendance awards and special assemblies to congratulate good attenders and their parents.	Attendance rates are improved although still below average. The school is planning to introduce the most successful strategies tried during attendance week as permanent features.

45. The school provides satisfactory value for money, taking into account the pupils' achievement, very good personal development, the quality of teaching, leadership and management and costs that are above average.

**Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	665,490	Balance from previous year	83,614
Total expenditure	605,665	Balance carried forward to the next	59,825
Expenditure per pupil	3,090		

46. The balance carried forward amounts to nine per cent of income which is above recommended limits. Part of the money was committed to pay for on-going building work and refurbishment. The remainder was allocated to sustain the current staffing in the light of lower numbers at the school. Accounts show that there will be no reserves at the end of the present financial year.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

Provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is satisfactory. On entry to the nursery, children's prior learning is below that usually seen. A significant number of these children are well below the national average in terms of their language and mathematical development. Despite good progress in some areas, the overall attainment of children who enter Year 1 is still below what might be expected nationally. There are good induction procedures and relationships with parents are good; this helps children to settle in quickly. Staff work together as an effective team ensuring a smooth transition between the nursery and reception classes. The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of young children and topics are used to link the areas of learning and make activities more meaningful. Leadership and management are sound, with the school's senior management team monitoring provision satisfactorily. Teaching is satisfactory overall and is sometimes good or very good, especially in the nursery. Accommodation and resources for Foundation Stage children are satisfactory but there is scope to extend the range of outdoor learning activities. Assessment procedures are good and enable staff to build on what children understand and can do. Provision and achievement are not as good as reported at the previous inspection in most areas but have been maintained in personal and social development.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children work in a caring environment in which the development of good relationships features strongly.
- Activities are planned to increase the independence of children and to develop cooperative skills.

#### **Commentary**

47. Teaching is good in this area of learning. Personal and social development is given a high priority within the planning and this enables children to settle down quickly in the nursery and begin learning. They are achieving well in both classes and almost all are likely to reach the early learning goals by the end of the year.
48. Children feel secure because of the well-ordered routines and because they know what is expected of them. Optional activities are well structured so that children can exercise choice, become independent learners and have opportunities to explore the world around. Children's concentration in group and class sessions develops well. By the reception year, most are able to listen to each other and take turns in speaking. They persevere and stay on task when working independently at a chosen activity. The good provision lays a firm foundation for later development in this very important area.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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





## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Early reading and writing skills are generally well taught and this enables children to achieve well.
- There is scope to extend speaking and role play skills.
- Good use of assessment information ensures that work is planned appropriately for each child.

## **Commentary**

49. Teaching overall is satisfactory. It is good for the development of early reading and writing skills and many achieve well in these aspects. However there are insufficient focused opportunities to develop speaking skills. Attainment by the end of the year is likely to be just below average in this area of learning and achievement is satisfactory.
50. In both year groups children are given many opportunities to listen although, on occasions, the teacher's questioning is not structured to encourage extended responses. The role-play areas in classrooms do not have enough adult intervention to promote speaking skills in different scenarios. Whilst many children can communicate well with adults by the time they are in the reception class, a minority need support in making the meaning clear. Children in both classes enjoy listening to a variety of stories. A well-chosen book in the nursery encouraged participation in the repetitive text and provided a good stimulus for developing children's early writing skills. The basic skills of reading are well taught. All children in reception class have books and are beginning to read simple sentences, using picture clues and phonic strategies (letter sounds) to help them. In both classes reading or story books are taken home daily to share with parents and carers and this has a good impact on standards in early reading. Children's writing is developing well alongside their reading and higher attaining children are beginning to write their own sentences. This provides a sound start to children's English studies as they enter Year 1.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Opportunities are used throughout the day to develop children's mathematical understanding and language.
- Focused group sessions in both classes enable children to achieve well.
- Whole class lessons in the reception class are sometimes too long and some children become restless.

## **Commentary**

51. Teaching is satisfactory overall with a significant amount of good practice. Children are achieving soundly in this area, however attainment overall is likely to be just below average by the end of the year.
52. In the nursery children's attainment varies widely; some can do simple addition whilst others have a limited understanding of the concept of number. This reflects the

differences in prior learning at the start of school. Well-planned, practical activities promote an understanding of number, pattern, shape and measurement. All adults make sound use of informal opportunities to count and to recognise numerals. Number songs and rhymes are used frequently for this purpose. However, on occasions, mathematical understanding is not exploited as well as it could be through the 'free choice' activities. There are sometimes missed opportunities to compare shapes when building or to compare length or weight. Assessment information is well used in planning activities with a good level of challenge. In a very good group session in the nursery a 'fun' game enabled higher attaining children to make very good gains in their learning and work at levels above those expected when counting and adding numbers. Another interesting session introduced children to the concept of mass and challenged their misconceptions of the link between size and weight.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

Provision overall is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A wide range of interesting activities are planned to extend children's experiences in all aspects of this area of learning.
- Opportunities for children to discuss their experiences are often limited by 'closed' questioning.
- The use of the outdoor area to explore the natural world has not been fully developed.

### **Commentary**

53. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and children make sound progress. Staff plan a wide range of interesting activities to stimulate children's curiosity. Those in reception enjoyed dressing up and finding out about aspects of life in Victorian times. Questioning was used very effectively in the nursery to extend children's thinking about taste and texture when they were investigating the ingredients to make 'gingerbread men.' However, on other occasions in both classes, it was less effective because it did not provide opportunities for children to express their ideas. 'Free choice' activities are structured satisfactorily to encourage exploration. Children enjoy using large and small construction toys and can build recognisable structures and vehicles. They use computers regularly and are developing ICT skills appropriately. Many children come to school with very little knowledge or understanding of the world around them and attainment is still below average by the end of the reception year.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision because a limited selection of physical activities were seen during the three days. However, from evidence available, it is likely that most children, but not all, should reach the early learning goals by the end of the year. Children have daily access to climbing frames and other apparatus which they negotiate soundly. They ride tricycles and other wheeled vehicles with dexterity and control and ball skills are developing well. There are good opportunities for children to develop manipulative skills using a range of tools. Teachers ensure that pencils and small tools are

held and used correctly and children were seen to be handling scissors well in the reception class.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on provision or attainment in this area as no direct teaching was seen. Daily activities are planned to enable children to express their feelings through exploring a range of media and materials and through play. Role-play areas are satisfactory but little adult intervention was seen to encourage imaginative play and speech. Children in both year groups play regularly with 'small world' resources such as farm animals and make up their own stories and scenarios. They enjoy painting although they are limited in their experimentation by the use of ready mixed paints. There are many planned and impromptu opportunities to sing simple songs and rhymes and to use musical instruments in creative ways.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good teaching in Years 1 and 2 leads to good learning and achievement. Teaching, learning and achievement in Years 3 to 6 are more variable; overall they are satisfactory.
- There is a good provision for pupils who have special educational needs and a good system of intervention programmes to boost pupils' learning.
- In some instances, the higher attaining pupils do not have enough challenge in their work.
- The lunchtime reading groups in Years 1 and 2 and the book club for Year 6 provide valuable, additional learning time.
- The stock and quality of books are insufficient for a school of this size.
- Targets are not consistently displayed or kept in books so not all pupils know their learning goals.

#### **Commentary**

54. Attainment for the present Year 2 pupils is around the national average in reading, writing and speaking and listening. More pupils are predicted to attain the higher level 3 than in 2004 and this accounts for the improved standards this year. Pupils are achieving well in Years 1 and 2, given their starting attainment. Attainment for the current Year 6 is broadly average. Lesson observations and additional evidence from a scrutiny of work and assessment records show that achievement is variable but satisfactory overall in the junior years.
55. Standards have been maintained at Year 6 since the previous inspection. There have been some good improvements in assessing pupils' work, in tracking their achievement over time and in setting targets for learning. However, pupils do not always know what their specific learning goals are. Reading books have been well organised into levels of difficulty and new, good quality books bought for group reading in class. Space previously allocated to the main library is now used for other, essential purposes and the stock of fiction and non-fiction books in class libraries is limited with many being old and worn. The situation is compounded because there is no local library and many pupils rely on the school entirely for a source of reading material. The literacy hour is now well established and there is a good emphasis on teaching phonics (hearing and articulating letter sounds). Considering the strengths and weaknesses, improvement overall since the previous inspection is satisfactory.
56. Most pupils are attaining standards in speaking and listening that match national expectations. By Year 6 pupils participate confidently in discussions and are able to justify and illustrate their point of view. Reading is promoted well and pupils demonstrate a good interest in books from an early stage. The younger pupils know about the different types and structure of books, including fiction and non-fiction texts. The older pupils infer meaning from the text and extract information efficiently from non-fiction sources. This supports their study skills well.

57. The school has taken action to improve standards in writing which are generally lower than those in reading. In Years 1 and 2 pupils are encouraged to rehearse their sentences out loud and to check with a partner whether they make sense. They often practise writing on wipe-off boards so that they can edit their work easily. The strategies are leading to some good progress and some improved standards are evident, especially in Year 1. By Year 6 pupils are able to write for a range of purposes but there is little use of extended sentences or imaginative vocabulary that would take the writing to a higher level, in some cases. Writing skills are taught soundly but there is insufficient time given for pupils' extended writing so they can practise and orchestrate the skills that they are learning. By Year 6 most pupils are able to produce a fluent, joined style of handwriting. The standard of presentation in books is variable in Years 3 to 6; it is good for the older pupils but sometimes untidy for the younger juniors.
58. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and is good in Years 1 and 2 and for the older juniors. Lessons for these age groups take into account the needs of those pupils capable of higher attainment by providing work at a good level of challenge; this is not always the case for the younger juniors.
59. Marking and the feedback given during most lessons helps pupils to improve and to evaluate their own work. Learning is enhanced through the use of ICT, especially for drafting, editing and refining. Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported and make good progress from their starting points. There are several good intervention programmes to support pupils who are not making the expected progress. Many of these are led by well trained, experienced teaching assistants who make a good contribution to learning. The book club for older juniors provides good enrichment for the subject. Pupils discuss their favourite books and authors and their critical appraisal is good with well justified views. The lunchtime reading sessions for Years 1 and 2 pupils provide valuable extra learning time and are enjoyed by those who attend. One pupil attends a weekend class for gifted and talented pupils which provides good challenges and extends learning. This provision has been made possible through good links with other schools.
60. Many teachers have prompts displayed around the walls and pupils make good use of these. For example, in a Year 1 writing lesson, pupils checked their spelling against the key words displayed and Year 6 pupils referred to the 'language of debate' sheet when analysing a written argument.
61. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall; there are several strengths and also some areas for development. The subject manager is successful in maintaining a suitably high profile for English and has a detailed action plan based on the outcomes of her monitoring. However, there is scope to improve the checking of pupils' achievement against the targets set in Years 3 to 6. There is a strong commitment and a good capacity to improve. The school is aware of the need for more books and plans to develop stocks as the budget allows. The Friends of St John have made some generous contributions and the headteacher is continually seeking extra funding from outside sources.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

62. Pupils' literacy skills are average overall. Speaking, listening and reading skills are well applied and improved across the curriculum. Skills in writing are soundly consolidated in Years 1 and 2 through the topics that are studied. A limited amount of extended writing is seen in other subjects in Years 3 to 6; recording here is often

completed on worksheets, tables, charts and fact files. This means that pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise the writing skills that they learn in lessons. There are sound links with ICT and these enhance learning. Pupils often word process their work to make reviewing and editing easier.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attainment by Year 2 has improved; achievement is good in Years 1 and 2.
- The setting of pupils in Years 5 and 6 is having a positive effect on raising standards.
- Systems for tracking pupils' progress are being used effectively to set challenging targets for groups of pupils.
- Not all pupils know what their targets are.
- The higher attaining pupils are not always fully challenged.

### **Commentary**

63. From the evidence seen during the inspection standards in the subject are average for pupils in Years 2 and 6. Attainment in Year 2 is better than last year and in Year 6 it is improving due to the new arrangements to teach the subject in sets according to pupils' prior learning. Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2 and sound in Years 3 to 6; overall it is satisfactory. Standards overall are lower than at the previous inspection but better than those achieved in the 2004 tests. Recent improvements include better assessment and tracking of pupils' progress and a target-setting system to provide challenge at different levels of difficulty within each class. However, only some pupils know their targets which means that others do not know what they are expected to achieve over the term. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory with good potential to improve. The new subject manager has an action plan in place based on the findings of his monitoring and is keen to raise standards further. This year's attainment is better than in the 2004 tests as a result of the work already completed. However, the checking of pupils' achievement towards the targets that teachers set twice yearly is not effective enough at present to highlight where problems are occurring. Resources are satisfactory; they are well organised and readily available.
64. Throughout the school there is now a strong emphasis on teaching computational skills, especially during oral and mental sessions. For example, Year 2 pupils were very excited as they tried to 'beat the teacher' in calculating their answers to questions. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson pupils tried to beat their own class target time for completing a series of calculations. This effectively improved their speed and accuracy in calculation and also their knowledge of tables.
65. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection varied from very good to unsatisfactory. Taking into consideration the scrutiny of pupils' work and their progress over time, it is judged to be satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 and good in Years 1 and 2. The setting of pupils in Years 5 and 6 is having a positive effect on raising standards by providing work at the correct level of challenge or support. However, higher attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 are not always sufficiently challenged and do not always work at the higher level of which they are capable. Teachers generally

plan interesting tasks that cover shape, space, data handling and number in a balanced way and include a satisfactory element on problem solving and investigation. They mark pupils' work carefully, adding comments of praise and advice.

66. There is good use of the interactive whiteboard with teachers exchanging classrooms to take advantage of the resource. Pupils who have special educational needs receive good support and do well. Work is well matched to their targets in their individual education plans and they have a good amount of help in lessons. Teachers and assistants support pupils who speak English as an additional language effectively, taking care to explain new terminology and help with recording tasks. The school is particularly successful at improving the attainment of pupils who experience difficulties in their learning through intervention and booster classes. As a result, many of them reach the national average at the age of eleven.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

67. Pupils' mathematical skills are broadly average for their age and are applied effectively in other subjects. For example, pupils follow a timeline in history, which enables them to develop a good understanding of chronology. In science they measure accurately using a variety of instruments.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory** overall.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in Year 6 are similar to last year and are still below average.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are achieving well because of good teaching.
- There is no effective system for assessing pupils' learning.
- The monitoring of standards, and of teaching and learning, is not yet fully in place.
- The overuse of worksheets leads to lack of achievement in some classes.

#### **Commentary**

68. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Standards, whilst erratic, have declined and only recently has some action been taken to arrest this. The science curriculum is now well focused on investigative learning but assessments are not effective enough to check which skills have been acquired and which need further emphasis. Consequently, teachers do not have the knowledge that they need to set appropriate challenges, especially for those pupils capable of higher attainment in Years 3 to 6. In conversations with older pupils, some had difficulty in expressing what they know in scientific terms.
69. Standards for Year 2 pupils are in line with the national average; more pupils are reaching the higher level than was the case in 2004. There is good achievement in Years 1 and 2 because of good teaching across the infant stage. National tests results for Year 6 pupils in 2004 showed standards to be below those nationally and well below those of similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that more pupils are on line to achieve the higher level, although standards overall are still below average. No significant differences were noted between the achievement of boys

and girls, those with special educational needs or pupils from minority ethnic groups. Those who are learning English as an additional language are well supported in developing the technical terminology and are achieving well from their starting point.

70. Based on lesson observations and an analysis of pupil's work, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall for older pupils and good in Years 1 and 2. Overall, they are satisfactory. Teaching is stronger in the upper junior classes because work is generally better matched to pupils' prior attainment and there is a good level of challenge. Good marking of work in these classes is helping pupils to improve. In one good lesson seen, the teacher used skilful questioning to develop pupils' thinking and extend their understanding. An important element was the time given to exploring ideas. In lower junior classes little challenge is given for higher attaining pupils. Recorded work is often limited by worksheets so that pupils do not have the opportunity to explain their findings fully or to pose further questions. This limits pupils' achievement. The new subject leader is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and keen to raise standards but the role does not include regular, formal opportunities to check teaching and learning in classes, identify areas of weakness and influence provision. The manager has a clear idea of what needs to be done but present limitations in the role means that leadership and management in this subject are unsatisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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



## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision in the subject is much better than it was at the previous inspection.
- Pupils have made rapid strides in their achievement.
- The influence of the specialist teacher for ICT has been of great value to staff and pupils in raising levels of confidence.
- The very good facilities and expertise provided by a partner college have helped raise standards of attainment.
- The use of ICT to support work in other subjects is insufficient.

## **Commentary**

71. The school has made good improvements since the previous inspection and standards are now average at Years 2 and 6. The quality of teaching and learning is good which has helped the older pupils to make up the shortfalls in their earlier learning. Achievement is good for all groups of pupils throughout school. Those with special educational needs often use programs to support their learning or to practise skills such as spelling. The ICT specialist teaches all classes and has helped to improve colleagues' ICT skills by working alongside them and helping to introduce new hardware and software. The full curriculum for ICT is now taught, including a sound emphasis on control technology which was an issue identified at the previous inspection. The school has arranged the loan of equipment to supplement their resources and bring them to a satisfactory level. Good use of the wireless laptop computers and the interactive whiteboard goes some way to overcoming the lack of a computer suite, since skills can now be taught to groups of pupils. However, the provision of a suite is a priority for the school so that pupils can have more 'hands-on' time to consolidate what they learn, engage in personal research and extend the use of ICT across the curriculum.
72. The school, over the last two years, has been innovative in finding solutions to its ICT problems and has been successful in securing the valuable support of other schools. Classes travel some distance to a local college and the effort is well worthwhile. In a Year 6 lesson taught there, pupils were able to take advantage of resources not usually available for this age group. This meant that they had good access to everything they needed to program an electronic buggy.
73. Other innovative approaches include using a live video link with a partner school in Germany to support learning in modern foreign languages. In carefully planned mixed-age lessons, older pupils consolidate their learning and develop troubleshooting skills as they help younger ones. In one such lesson, Year 4 pupils helped Year 2 pupils to program a floor robot. Year 4 pupils provided good support and at the same time became much more confident in their own abilities.
74. There is good leadership and management in this subject. The manager has made great strides in the short time since his appointment and has ambitious plans to improve provision and standards further. Because he teaches each class, he has a good overview of attainment and inspires colleagues and pupils alike. A simple but effective system of assessment is in place which provides sound information for the planning of lessons.

## **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

75. Pupils' ICT skills are average for their age. As pupils become more confident they are beginning to use computers in other subjects. Good use is made of the school's digital camera to record events and some use is made of ICT in English to review and edit written work. Year 5 pupils used the Internet to research information on the water cycle and those in Year 6 were proud of their 'Powerpoint' presentations which they had produced. However, in general, the use of computers across the curriculum is not yet good enough. Little use was made of computers in most of the lessons observed and it is an issue that the manager has already identified for urgent action.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

76. During the three days of the inspection, it was not possible to observe teaching in geography and therefore no judgement on provision is made. From an analysis of pupils' work and discussions with them, indications are that pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout the school and reach standards that match what is expected by the end of Year 6. No judgements were made on standards at the previous inspection.
77. The curriculum includes a strong emphasis on comparing and contrasting different locations. Pupils in Year 2 described how life on an island is different from that in their home town, focussing on physical and human features. Year 1 pupils had made a study of the local area, contrasting quiet and busy places. Work is often linked to history topics, which is a good way of extending and reinforcing studies in both subjects. For example, some pupils charted the travels of Christopher Columbus which supported their mapping skills well. In their work on Ancient Greece and Rome, pupils considered the importance of geographical features such as rivers and ports to the success of those civilisations. Pupils develop a sound understanding of environmental issues, such as pollution, and an interest in conservation. Teachers encourage pupils to initiate their own enquiries and there is enough flexibility in the curriculum to allow this. Year 6 pupils had wanted to know more about countries surrounding the Indian Ocean and to understand geological factors relating to earthquakes after the recent Tsunami. They said they had enjoyed their research and learned a lot from it.
78. Much of the recording is done by making brief notes, on worksheets or in tables and lists. This does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to extend and enhance their literacy skills. The role of the subject manager is not fully developed. As a result, there are weaknesses in checking standards and the effectiveness of the curriculum. There is no consistent system for assessing and recording pupils' progress.

### History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good emphasis on the skills of enquiry and interpreting historical evidence.
- An interesting range of educational visits and visitors to school bring the curriculum to life.

- Some good links with geography work enhance and enrich studies.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length when recording their work.
- Assessment and monitoring are unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

79. Evidence was taken from lesson observations, completed work and displays around school. Overall, attainment matches what is expected at Years 2 and 6 and achievement is satisfactory throughout school. This is similar to judgements made at the previous inspection and there are improved opportunities for pupils to pose their own questions and to evaluate the accuracy of historical reports.
80. The work includes a sound emphasis on people of the past and of their influence on modern-day lives. For example, Year 2 pupils studied the life and work of Florence Nightingale, contrasting hospitals of the past and present. Timelines are used effectively to help pupils develop a sense of chronology. The work is made relevant to pupils because it often focuses on everyday life. For example, older pupils looked at Victorian families, contrasting the lives of rich and poor. In Year 3, the writing about the evacuees of world war two shows a sound empathy with children of the time. There are suitable opportunities for personal research and historical enquiry, using printed and electronic sources. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils interpreted census records to build a picture of local occupations and families. There was a good link to English here as they examined the changing language across 100 years.
81. Pupils who have special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language do as well as the majority through good, sensitive support and work that is tailored to their needs. One pupil in the early stages of learning English was able to keep up with the fast pace of learning in one lesson observed because there was an interpreter on hand to explain the content and to help with technical language.
82. There is very little extended writing in books which means that opportunities for pupils to extend their literacy skills are not fully exploited. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory with no regular systems in place to check the quality of teaching and learning and to monitor pupils' progress. There is no consistent assessment system for the subject. Teachers create eye-catching displays of work, pictures and artefacts in history and this helps to generate interest in the subject.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

The subjects of **art and design** and **design and technology** were sampled during the inspection because there was insufficient evidence to make a fair judgement on provision.

It is clear from teachers' planning and pupils' work that the full range of aspects is taught in both subjects and statutory requirements are met. In art and design pupils have a wide range of experiences in two- and three-dimensions. The work of known artists is used soundly in all year groups to learn about, and to practise, different techniques. Pupils are confident in using visual and tactile materials to create specific effects. In the one lesson seen, pupils created a collage representing 'carnival feelings.' The vibrant colours, interesting textures and shapes certainly caught the festival mood. Observational drawings in Year 5 show good attention to detail with the use of pencil shading to add depth. Standards are broadly average. Some high quality batik work by pupils in Year 6 is the

result of regular, specialist art tuition from a very talented volunteer. His weekly sessions provide good enrichment and pupils look forward to this work and thoroughly enjoy the gallery visits that he arranges. In design and technology finished products such as 'Joseph's coat' in Year 2 and 'cushions' in Year 4 show the development of making skills such as cutting and sewing. The work seen was of average standard. Pupils produce annotated design sheets and are learning to evaluate their products critically. Opportunities for food technology are provided regularly across the school. In both subjects relevant links were made to other curriculum areas; for example, the work on cushions was linked to sound insulation in science. There is some evidence of the effective use of computers in this subject. For example, some pupils researched for information about products and others used a graphics program to aid design.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning in singing is a strength of provision.
- Good resources support learning well.
- Pupils participate in a good range of activities both in and outside of school time, including performances.
- There is no consistent assessment system to identify the skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils develop.
- There is no regular system for monitoring teaching, learning and provision in the subject.

## **Commentary**

83. The exuberance of pupils' singing indicates that the school pays good attention to this aspect of the curriculum. Infant pupils perform with lots of enthusiasm, adding appropriate actions to the songs which are often accompanied well by a range of percussion instruments. Pupils are confident and very familiar with a wide range of songs, which they perform from memory. The school choir is very well supported and enjoys a certain amount of fame. They perform to a high standard in a central Manchester church and in concert halls. They have a wide repertoire, including songs from world-wide cultures and different times in history. The good quality of singing reported at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained. Standards overall match what is expected at Years 2 and 6.
84. In the two lessons observed the teaching was good. Teachers are knowledgeable and their own confidence inspires the pupils. In a Year 5 lesson groups of pupils appointed a conductor and prepared compositions based on cyclic patterns. Each group's finished production was recorded and the class provided positive, yet critical, appraisal of the work. Pupils who have special educational needs often do well in this creative subject and those who are gifted have opportunities for instrumental tuition to enhance their talents.
85. The subject is well resourced with a good selection of instruments, including those from other cultures. There is a strong commitment to ensuring that music thrives and good enrichment for the subject. These are positive aspects in leadership and management but there are also some important areas for development. Assessment has not yet been developed to check pupils' progress and there is no regular, formal

monitoring of teaching and learning. Overall, therefore, leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

## **Physical education**

Provision for physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well because of good teaching across a wide range of activities.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum.
- Leadership is good and there is a drive for excellence.
- Good resources are well organised and managed.

### **Commentary**

86. At Years 2 and 6 pupils' attainment in dance, gymnastics and games is typical of pupils of the same age. Achievement is satisfactory overall and often good in swimming. In gymnastics lessons observed pupils developed and performed a sequence of movements well, demonstrating good body shapes with fluency and control. They show good levels of confidence as they demonstrate their work to the class. Records show that standards in swimming are good and achievement is well promoted from Year 4 onwards. Almost all pupils reach the nationally expected standard and many go beyond it. No judgement was made on physical education in the previous report and therefore improvements cannot be assessed.
87. Physical education lessons are popular, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of exercise and sport. There is good out of school provision for physical education with clubs for activities such as football, netball, fitness and cricket, according to season. The lunchtime sessions in the hall with the 'play parachute' are very popular. They help pupils develop good relationships and the ability to work together as a team. Particularly successful is the weekly morning 'fit club', where vigorous games and exercises attract pupils and healthy eating is stressed. This is also part of the school's initiative to help improve attendance and punctuality. Physical education has a high profile in the school and pupils regularly take part in competitive sport against local schools. This promotes their sense of fair play and extends social interactions. The school secures specialist tuition where possible, for example, professionals from the local football club take regular sessions. Their high levels of skill and enthusiasm motivate the pupils very effectively.
88. Teaching and learning are good and staff are well aware of safety issues. Pupils arrange the movement of large apparatus very quickly and carefully which shows good routines are well established. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject manager takes many of the lessons and so has a secure overview of teaching, learning and attainment. Resources are satisfactory overall. The new apparatus recently installed in the playground is proving popular with pupils and helping to raise levels of fitness. The school hall, however, is not well planned for physical education. The raised platforms at each end restrict the amount of available space. There is a simple but effective system of assessment in place which allows teachers to track pupils' progress through the curriculum.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

89. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their positive relationships with staff and each other reflect the school's strong commitment to this aspect of development. The curriculum provided is good and includes work on diet and health as well as personal and social skills. Good use is made of outside agencies. For example, sessions led by local police personnel strengthen the teaching of drug awareness. Sex education is not provided, in line with the policy of the governing body.
90. All classes have discussion times each week to discuss and explore feelings and relationships and this is an important part of the school's successful approach to behaviour management. Assembly themes consolidate learning in class and strengthen spiritual development. At present there is no council through which pupils may make contributions to the running of the school. However, as some compensation, lessons cover the responsibilities of living in a community in an effective way. Teaching in the lessons seen was good. For example, Year 2 pupils had a lively discussion about the impact of pollution on the environment and on other people. Links with the geography and science curricula support learning well as pupils study the importance of water in pupils' lives and the benefits of maintaining the balance of nature. The school has joined the healthy schools initiative and is working towards an endorsement for this good work.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
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	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	5
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	5
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
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).*