

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dovercourt, Harwich

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115132

Headteacher: Mrs Theresa MacLeod

Lead inspector: Mr Paul Nicholson

Dates of inspection: 20th – 23rd June 2005

Inspection number: 267829

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: 4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 112

School address: The Drive
Dovercourt
Harwich
Essex

Postcode: CO12 3SU

Telephone number: 01255 503493
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mrs Angela East
governors:

Date of previous March 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Currently there are 112 pupils (48 boys and 64 girls) on roll aged four to 11 years. When children enter the school, their attainment varies greatly, but overall it is average. Most of the pupils are of white British origin with about 10 per cent coming from a mix of other ethnic backgrounds. None speaks English as an additional language. Eight per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is close to the national average and two pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times of first admission or transfer to secondary school is similar to that found nationally. The school has had significant changes to its staffing over the last two years. The school gained a Schools Achievement Award in 2003 and a Healthy Schools Award this year. Until recently, the school was a member of an Education Action Zone; it now belongs to a Trust of local schools that aims to promote links with schools in the developing world.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25406	Paul Nicholson	Lead inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs Modern foreign language
9052	Helen Barter	Lay inspector	
12997	Christine Cheong	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage curriculum English Geography History Music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Joseph's is an **effective** school with some very good features. It provides a **good** quality of education. As a result of good teaching, pupils achieve well. The ethos within the school is very positive. The staff are particularly successful in promoting pupils' personal development. The school is well led and managed and it provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- the school's provision for pupils' personal development is very good and so pupils are very well behaved and have very positive attitudes;
- pupils do well in reading and science, and very well in mathematics because of good teaching;
- pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not do as well as they could in writing;
- the headteacher provides good leadership and has created a warm and very caring ethos within the school;
- procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress in English and mathematics are inconsistent throughout the school;
- good links with parents and very good links with the community and other schools support pupils' learning;
- planning for the future is satisfactory but lacks a clear focus on whole-school priorities for development;
- the school is very inclusive and this helps all pupils to learn confidently.

The school has maintained the overall good standards and very positive ethos noted at its last inspection. The school has successfully improved its outdoor provision for children in reception, which was a weakness.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Overall, pupils' achievement is **good**, and by the time pupils leave the school, standards are well above average in mathematics, above average in reading and science, and average in writing.

Children enter school with a wide range of attainment, but overall it is similar to that expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress in reception and the majority reach the expected goals in all areas of learning. Progress is good in their personal, social and emotional development and in mathematical development and many children exceed the goals in these areas by the start of Year 1. Pupils do well in Years 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 2 standards are well above average in reading and above average in writing, mathematics and science.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	B	C	C	E
mathematics	A*	A	B	D

science	B	B	B	C
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Key: A - very high; 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.*

The small numbers of pupils in each year group make a detailed analysis of the school's annual test results, as shown in the table above, unreliable. Using the average score for the three years 2002 to 2004 is more useful in assessing standards. The combined results in end of Year 6 national tests show pupils' performance is average in English, well above average in mathematics and above average in science. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current Year 6 are higher than those reached in 2004 and are similar to the pattern of recent years. These standards indicate satisfactory achievement in English, good achievement in science and very good achievement in mathematics. In English, pupils do well in reading but in writing they do not do as well as they could. Pupils are not sufficiently developing the skills learnt in literacy lessons in longer pieces of writing in English lessons and in other subjects. The school has correctly identified writing as an area to develop. Throughout the school standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average. Other subjects were only sampled during the inspection. However, examples of pupils' work seen were in line with expectations for their age. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets because provision for them is good.

Provision for pupils' personal development is **very good** overall and so pupils have very positive attitudes towards school. Their behaviour is very good and they have very positive relationships with other pupils and with staff. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and their cultural development is good. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Overall, teaching is **good**. Teachers manage the pupils very well and have a good understanding of pupils' needs. Teachers make good use of support staff to help pupils in their learning. Learning is good because boys and girls respond very well to the high levels of encouragement they are given. Assessment is satisfactory overall but there is no whole-school approach to assessment and recording procedures in English and mathematics. The curriculum is satisfactory and there is good enrichment from wide range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities that support pupils' learning. The very positive care and support that pupils receive help them to learn confidently and with success. The school has a good partnership with parents and very strong links with the community and with other schools to benefit the pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management of the school are **good**. The headteacher's good leadership is having a direct impact on pupils' achievement and particularly their personal development. Leadership of the school by the other key staff is satisfactory overall. Governance is good. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met, are very supportive of the school and show a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors and staff show a very good commitment to educational inclusion. The school's development plan, though satisfactory, lacks a sharp focus on whole-school priorities for improvement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils hold very positive views of the school. Parents are pleased with the teaching and the progress their children make. They feel the staff are approachable and that the school is well led. Pupils like being at school and feel they have to work hard. They appreciate the help teachers give them and know who to seek advice from if they have a problem.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in writing, so as to match the high standards achieved in other core subjects;
- develop whole-school procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress in English and mathematics;
- have a clearer focus on, and a shared accountability for, the most important whole-school priorities when planning for the future.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall, pupils' achievement is **good** and standards are **above average**. Children in reception make satisfactory progress and standards are in line with national expectations. In Years 1 to 6, pupils achieve well and overall standards in the core subjects are above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in reception do well in their personal, social and emotional development and in mathematical development because of good teaching in these areas.
- Pupils make consistently good progress in mathematics and by Year 6 standards are well above average.
- Pupils do well in reading and science.
- Writing is not as well developed as pupils' other basic skills.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

Commentary

1. At the time of the last inspection pupils made good progress because of good teaching. They attained above average standards in English, science and information and communication technology (ICT), and well above average standards in mathematics. Currently, overall standards are broadly similar though standards in writing have dipped and so the school's trend, shown by its overall performance in national tests has been below the national trend. Standards in ICT, which were above those expected, have also dipped since the last inspection.
2. **Foundation Stage:** Children enter reception with a wide range of attainment, and overall it is similar to that expected for their age. Some children start early in the autumn term and the others after half term in the spring term. Children are taught in a mixed-age class alongside Year 1 pupils. Reception children make satisfactory progress and most reach the Early Learning Goals¹ in each of the six areas of learning. However, a minority of children will not achieve them, mainly those who started school half way through the year, as they have not had sufficient time in reception to reach the expected goals. Children do well in personal, social and emotional development and in mathematical development. Standards are higher in these two areas because of good teaching and a large minority of children exceeds the expected goals. Overall, this represents satisfactory achievement.

¹ Early Learning Goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with communication language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning, for example, in language and literacy children should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.3 (16.6)	15.5 (15.7)
writing	14.7 (16.0)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.6 (16.5)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. **Years 1 and 2:** The relatively small numbers of pupils in each year group make a detailed analysis of the school's annual test results unreliable. The combined results for 2002 to 2004² in end of Year 2 national tests show pupils' performance in reading is well above average and in writing and mathematics it is above average. Teacher assessments in science indicate that standards are above average.
4. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current Year 2 are higher than those reached in 2004 and are similar to the pattern of recent years. Standards in reading are well above average, as the introduction of a new reading programme and regular support from parents and carers help more pupils than would be expected nationally reach the higher standard, Level 3, by the end of Year 2. Standards in writing are above average because of the large proportion of the pupils that achieve the nationally expected level. In mathematics, pupils build on the good start made in reception and reach above average standards as a result of good teaching. Standards in science are above average because of the higher than expected proportion that reaches the higher standard. From an average starting point, this represents very good achievement in reading and good achievement in writing, mathematics and science.
5. In ICT standards by the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Other subjects were not a focus for the inspection and so it was not possible to make overall judgements on standards and achievement. However, in the sample of work seen, standards were in line with those expected for the pupils' age.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.6 (27.4)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.1 (28.6)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.8 (29.4)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 17 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

² Using a three-year average is more useful in assessing standards of attainment when number of pupils in each year group, as at this school, is small.

6. **Years 3 to 6:** The combined results for 2002 to 2004 in end of Year 6 national tests show pupils' performance to be average in English, well above average in mathematics and above average in science. The school's performance over the last three years compares favourably with that of similar schools in mathematics and science, and is average in English. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current Year 6 are higher than those reached in 2004 and are similar to the pattern of recent years. By the end of Year 6, overall standards in English are average. Standards in speaking, listening and reading are above average but in writing, standards are average. While most pupils reach the expected standard in writing, very few go on to reach the higher standard, Level 5. Pupils are not sufficiently using and developing the skills learnt in literacy lessons, including punctuation, spelling and handwriting, in longer pieces of writing in English lessons and in other subjects. All pupils continue to make good progress in mathematics because of carefully planned activities matched to the different ability groups in each class. As a result, standards are well above average. Standards in science are above average as all pupils reach the expected standard and half reach the higher standard.
7. From their average starting point, these standards represent very good achievement in mathematics and good achievement in reading and science. In writing, achievement is satisfactory and therefore not as good as in the other core subjects, or as high as that seen at the last inspection. The newly appointed co-ordinator for the subject has correctly identified this as an area for development but has not yet been able to implement fully all the required improvements needed to raise standards.
8. By the end of Year 6, standards in ICT are in line with national expectations. This represents satisfactory achievement though standards are not as high as those reported at the last inspection. The school has not kept up with developments in the subject. Resources have recently been improved but the small number available in each classroom can limit pupils' access to computers. The school intends to increase the number of laptops available to classes. In other subjects, the work sampled indicates that standards are in line with national expectations.
9. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. Their needs are clearly identified and planned for so that they can work at levels that are suitable. Support for these pupils is well focused in lessons by teachers, and learning support assistants ensure that these pupils make good progress towards their individual targets. In national tests boys have done better than girls, except in English at Year 6. Teachers have worked hard to encourage boys through their choice of texts in literacy lessons. The inspection did not identify any differences in performance, and in lessons seen both boys and girls made similar progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are **very good**. Overall, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Attendance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very positive about every aspect of school life.
- Pupils are encouraged to behave very well and to learn to resolve their differences.
- The very strong ethos of the school helps pupils to develop very well as individuals.

Commentary

10. Pupils are keen to learn and to do their best for their teachers and for themselves. They are enthusiastic about the wide range of activities that they undertake in school, in clubs and through visits. Parents say that their children are very happy at school. Inspectors confirmed this in discussion with pupils. They describe their school as a 'happy, enjoyable place' where people are 'helpful and loving'. They particularly appreciate the small, 'family' atmosphere where everyone knows and looks after one another.
11. Pupils behave very well in lessons, at lunchtime and in the playground. They are very welcoming and friendly with each other and with adults. All staff expect high standards of behaviour and pupils respond very well to this. The school has been active in helping pupils to resolve friendship issues and minor incidents of bullying by training them to be 'peer mediators'. Those pupils involved are very positive about their roles in helping others to overcome their differences and feel well supported by staff if there are more significant problems. There have been no exclusions from the school in recent years.
12. The school's commitment to valuing each pupil and to promoting their spiritual, moral and social education is very strong. Pupils know that adults consider and value them as individuals through their strong relationships with them. They have a very clear appreciation of right and wrong and a sense of fair play. They gain a very good understanding of social and moral issues through assemblies and a sense of self-worth when their achievements are celebrated. Pupils are very willing to take responsibility and to help others, although opportunities for them to share their work and ideas with others in lessons are sometimes missed. The school plans good opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of their own and other cultures in modern society.
13. Pupils' attendance is good because they want to come to school and their parents value the education provided for them. There is no unauthorised absence. Punctuality to school in the morning is also good and lessons start on time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	4.1
National data:	5.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	0.0
National data:	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are **good**. The school's provides pupils with a **satisfactory** curriculum and **good** enrichment outside of lessons. There are **very good** arrangements for securing the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils. Pupils benefit from **good** links with parents and **very good** links with the community and with other schools.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching is **good** and so pupils make **good** progress in their learning. Assessment procedures are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very positive attitudes support their good learning.
- Good teaching, particularly in reading, mathematics and science, leads to above average standards being reached.
- The teaching of writing is not as effective as that in other core subjects.
- Teachers make effective use of the learning support assistants to help pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, in their learning.
- In some lessons, teachers' planning does not focus sufficiently on the skills or strategies to be learnt.
- There is no whole-school approach to assessment and recording procedures in English and mathematics.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 19 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	0	10	8	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

14. The school has maintained the overall good quality of teaching seen at the last inspection. During the inspection teaching ranged from satisfactory to good, with an example of excellent teaching seen. All staff successfully implement the school's strong stance on educational inclusion. Boys and girls work hard and co-operate very well because teachers manage their classes very well. Teachers provide all pupils with high levels of encouragement. The resulting very good relationships and very positive attitudes are important factors in pupils' learning.

15. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, with some good features and strengths in some areas of learning. The teaching of personal, social and emotional development is good and so children quickly develop into keen and interested learners. The teaching of mathematical development is also good because of the teacher's good subject knowledge. Reception children are taught with pupils from Year 1. This places a considerable burden on the reception teacher, who has to plan for two different key stages and two different approaches in the classroom at the same time. Work is satisfactorily planned for reception children. During each day there is a reasonable balance between tasks that children choose for themselves and those chosen by the teacher. Small group tasks are carried out with a learning support assistant or a teacher. These are often well used to extend children's learning. However, on some occasions activities are not well tailored to the needs of the youngest children. Just occasionally, staff do not provide enough choice and over-direct learning for this age group.
16. In Years 1 to 6, teaching and learning are good overall. The teaching of reading is good and benefits from the recent introduction of an effective programme that progressively builds up pupils' early reading skills. In mathematics, teaching is consistently good and there is a clear progression in pupils' learning because activities are carefully planned for the different levels of ability within each class. Pupils' mathematical skills are satisfactorily promoted through other subjects. Teaching in science is good. Pupils develop a good knowledge of the different aspects of science because teachers provide clear explanations. Consequently, by the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well in reading and science, and very well in mathematics.
17. The quality of teaching and learning of writing is satisfactory overall with good teaching in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactory, though improving teaching in Years 3 to 6. Teachers do not provide enough focused opportunities for pupils to use and develop their writing skills in other subjects in order to match the standards in writing to those achieved in the other core subjects.
18. The good teaching seen was characterised by a number of common strengths. In the main, teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach and so they give clear explanations and make effective use of subject vocabulary. Pupils' learning is enhanced as they gain a good knowledge of the topics studied. The quality of marking is generally good, though varies from satisfactory to excellent. It is best where comments encourage pupils and help them understand what they can now do and what they need to learn next. Teachers deploy the learning support assistants well and so pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, benefit from good quality additional support. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. They make good progress towards their individual targets because of the good levels of help they are given in the classroom and the careful monitoring of their work.
19. In lessons where learning was satisfactory rather than good or better, the focus tends to be on the activities to be completed by the pupils rather than the skills or strategies to be learnt. For example, the oral activity at the start of mathematics lessons does not always focus on a strategy that will help pupils'

develop their mental skills. Occasionally, activities are too closely led by the teacher and do not let pupils develop their practical and experimental skills, as in science. At the ends of lessons, teachers often celebrate the work pupils have completed but do not always use the opportunity to highlight what pupils have learnt so as to reinforce their learning.

20. Overall, procedures for assessing pupils' progress are satisfactory. Teachers assess pupils' understanding in lessons through careful questioning. In the core subjects of English and mathematics, teachers record assessment information in different ways, which makes the sharing of information and tracking of pupils' progress difficult. The school has recognised this as an area to develop. Teachers use a suitable range of activities to assess what pupils can do in other subjects by the end of each unit of work. Newly introduced procedures ensure that this information is recorded in a similar way. Teachers do not make sufficient use of this information in monitoring attainment and achievement in their subjects and in reporting to parents.

The curriculum

The school provides a **satisfactory** curriculum overall. The way the school enriches and enhances the curriculum is **good**. The accommodation and resources are **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Additional learning opportunities have a positive impact on the pupils' learning and social development.
 - The provision for pupils identified as having special educational needs is good throughout the school.
 - Provision for personal, social and health education is a strong feature of everyday school life.
 - The two-year rolling programme of units of work requires some minor modification to ensure a more balanced curriculum.
 - Resources for ICT are adequate but access to computers for large groups is difficult.
21. Overall, the curriculum is broad and balanced and satisfactorily meets the needs of the pupils. A suitable curriculum is planned for children in reception, based on the national guidelines for this group. Satisfactory activities are planned in each of the areas of learning to form a balanced curriculum for the youngest children in the school. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and is enhanced by the addition of French. Staff have recently spent time ensuring continuity within the mixed-age classes by revising their two-year rolling programme of work. However, the school's 'curriculum map', which shows the sequence in which units are taught, is not sufficiently well monitored. There are still places in the curriculum where further refinement and adjustment are required, such as when there is too long a gap between units of work that build one on another. While the pace of lessons is generally satisfactory, in most age groups a few lessons are overlong. Most mornings only contain curriculum time for English and

mathematics and the pace of learning slows when activities are extended and time is not used effectively.

22. Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development in reception and their personal, social and health education in Years 1 to 6 is good. This has a positive impact on pupils' very good personal development. Work based on the recently achieved Healthy Schools Award has resulted in pupils having clear understanding of the importance of staying fit and healthy.
23. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities that enrich the curriculum. A good programme of regular visits to places of interest helps enliven pupils' learning and understanding in subjects such as history, geography and science. The school welcomes a good range of visitors, who bring their expertise and interests into school. There is a good number of after-school clubs that enhance pupils' learning and support their personal development. The school is successful in promoting participation in sports, with the school taking part in a very good range of sports fixtures and clubs. The school also provides choir and recorder lessons and guitar tuition is available.
24. The school works very hard to ensure that all pupils have equality of access to the curriculum. It provides well for pupils with special educational needs, who make good progress as a result. Individual educational plans are well written and accurately reflect the pupils' needs. Help from the learning support assistants is effective and pupils' progress is carefully monitored.
25. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. Accommodation is good for the reception class. This is because of the recently installed secure outside play area that aids the teaching and learning of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The library, which is in the entrance hall to the school, is a very small space, and this limits its use. There is an adequate number of suitably qualified teachers and a good number of well-trained support staff, who make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Overall, subject resources are good, particularly in science and the Foundation Stage, and in the provision of interactive whiteboards. The number of computers is adequate for the number of pupils, though access for large groups to work on computers during a lesson is difficult.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. Pupils are provided with **good** support, advice and guidance. The school is **very good** at involving pupils in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school cares very well for all its pupils throughout the day.
- Pupils have very good relationships with the adults who support and care for them.
- Individual care and support are good but there is inconsistency in the way in which pupils are advised and guided to improve their work.

- The school council is a very effective forum for pupils to make their views known.

Commentary

26. The school looks after pupils very well because it is committed to supporting and including every pupil. Procedures for health, safety and welfare and for safeguarding children are very good. Parents appreciate the way in which the school is sensitive to their family's needs and treats their children as individuals. They say that the school provides a 'secure, loving and disciplined environment' and inspectors agree with them. Inspectors also agree with pupils' views that the school is 'educational and healthy'.
27. Pupils and adults have very good relationships with one another. All staff, including lunchtime and catering staff, treat pupils with care and consideration which helps them to feel confident and secure. Pupils feel that the staff are kind and listen to them when they need help with work or with problems. They, and their parents, feel that staff help them to learn from their mistakes and that they are treated fairly when things go wrong.
28. The induction arrangements ensure that children get to know their classmates quickly and settle well into the routines and expectations of school life. Across the school, staff use their useful knowledge of pupils to offer them good informal guidance and support when they are experiencing difficulties with their work. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers provide pupils with useful guidance, for example when discussing their work through marking. However, there is variation in the quality of written reports, assessment and recording, and target setting for pupils, which means that advice and support offered is uneven.
29. Through the well-established school council, all pupils are involved very well in making decisions about their school and presenting ideas for improvement. They seek the views of their peers and discuss their decisions with them following meetings. Their request for shaded seating in the playground, for example, has resulted in improved facilities for play and for sociable picnics at lunchtime. All pupils are very positive that there is an adult to speak to if they wish to discuss something or express any worries and that their views are listened to seriously and acted upon.

Partnerships with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are **good**. There are **very good** and productive links with the community and with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents value the school and most support it well.
- Parents are provided with good information, although end-of-year reports do not provide clear information on pupils' standards and achievement.
- Very good community links are used to make pupils' learning more interesting.

- The school has, and continues to further develop, very positive partnerships with other schools to the benefit of pupils' learning and staff development.

Commentary

30. Most parents like the school very much and feel that their children are doing well because of good teaching. They appreciate the very positive ethos, which values their children and helps them to become mature and independent. Inspectors agree with these positive views. The school's links with parents in the reception class are good. With children being collected and delivered to the classroom door, good communication is established and maintained. Parents regularly help with reading and other small tasks at home. Across the school, parents lend good support to the school as governors, through the friends of the school association and with some voluntary classroom help. Literacy and numeracy courses, concerts, assemblies and meetings with teachers are well attended. The majority of parents find staff approachable and feel they listen to their views and concerns. The school keeps them well informed in newsletters and through its web site.
31. Parents appreciate informal discussions with teachers at the end of the day but not all feel that they are as well informed about their child's progress as they might be. Inspectors feel that teachers communicate very well with parents through informal links and at formal parent/teacher meetings. However, end-of-year written reports do not give a clear picture of children's standards and how these compare with those expected for their age. Teachers do not make sufficient use of the assessment data they have gathered in reporting to parents.
32. Very good use is made of the school's links with the community to widen pupils' experiences of life beyond the small school environment. Very good use is made of visits, for example to theatres, temples and museums, to broaden pupils' cultural knowledge. Through its strong parish links, pupils' spiritual development is very well promoted through many opportunities to take part in celebrations, to perform for senior citizens and to help others. Pupils participate in Harwich's community events such as the Charter 400 celebrations where they met the Queen and at the annual Mayor-making ceremony. Parents confirm that the school is very well thought of by the local community.
33. The school is very active in developing its links with other schools, particularly through a group of small schools and a consortium of local schools. These links are very beneficial because they provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities to meet and work with others, for example through the recent 'Rhyme Against Crime' initiative, in sports matches, health and safety awareness training and music and drama events. Teachers too benefit from these links as they share and develop expertise across the curriculum, participate in joint training and gain mutual support through web site links.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good** overall. Governance is **good**. The quality of the leadership of the headteacher is **good** and that of other key staff is **satisfactory** overall. Management is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors are well informed, provide strong support and help shape the vision of the school well.
- The headteacher provides a very strong pastoral lead and leads the school well overall.
- Many teachers are new to their current leadership role and have not yet fully developed their role so as to have good impact on their subjects.
- There is a strong commitment to educational inclusion.
- The management of the school is good and the day-to-day running of the school is smooth and effective.
- The school development plan does not sufficiently clarify whole-school priorities.
- Financial matters are well managed.

Commentary

34. The governance of the school is good. The governing body undertakes training to improve its role and, as a result, governors have a good understanding of their responsibilities and their duties. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met. They provide good leadership and are generally well informed about the life and work of the school. Governors use this information well to challenge and hold the school to account as well as support the headteacher and help form the vision and direction of the school. They understand the strengths of the school well but do not have a sufficiently clear view of the priorities for development. The governors, headteacher and staff have a very clear commitment to educational inclusion and this helps all pupils to learn confidently.
35. The headteacher has a powerful vision for the pupils in the school that is focused strongly on the care, safety and welfare of the pupils and is determined that each child should reach their full potential during their time in the school. She provides good leadership and has, after recent changes and difficulties, put together an effective team who work together well for the good of the pupils. She provides good leadership for the curriculum and, as she teaches some classes, is able to lead well by her example.
36. Overall, the leadership and management of individual subjects are satisfactory. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory while the management is good. The leader is committed and competent. The good management ensures that the whole adult team of teacher and learning support assistants are able to organise the classroom efficiently and plan soundly for the children in their care. The co-ordination of mathematics is good and has resulted in well above average standards. Provision for special educational needs is well managed and this results in good provision for these pupils. Many other co-ordinators are new to their current roles and have not yet fully developed their role or been able to bring about all the improvements needed. They monitor teaching and pupils' work but, in the foundation subjects, teachers lack a clear enough understanding of the levels pupils are currently achieving by the time they leave

the school. Also, their development plans sometimes lack pertinent detail or are not up-to-date.

37. Overall, the management of the school is good and the headteacher has put in place good systems for the smooth running of the school. The management of the recruitment, retention and workload of staff is good and performance management is well established for all teaching and support staff. This is an improvement on the last inspection. Policies for areas such as behaviour are well established, but policies and practices for assessment and marking are not yet carried out consistently across the whole school. The school's self evaluation is in the main accurate. The school improvement plan is satisfactory but it is not easy for all involved to be clear about the most important elements of it and thus monitor their effectiveness. Success criteria are not always focused on improving standards. The subject actions plans do not always link closely enough to the whole-school priorities for improvement.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	418 792	Balance from previous year	71 117
Total expenditure	419 239	Balance carried forward to the next	70 670
Expenditure per pupil	3 743		

38. Finances are well managed, with the school using its budget well to support learning. The school is diligent in ensuring that purchases are cost-effective and based on the principles of best value. The school currently has a large amount of money held back in the budget, over 16 per cent of its annual income, but this is clearly set aside for planned improvements and repairs to the school building. The school provides good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve well in the areas of personal, social and emotional development and mathematical development as a result of the good teaching they receive in these areas.
- Good management ensures that learning support assistants are used very effectively to extend and support children's learning.
- Some children are slow to start writing and many will not achieve the expected level by the end of the reception year.
- The good new outside accommodation has improved the curriculum provision for physical development since the last inspection.
- Planning does not always meet the diverse needs of the mixed age groups within the class.
- Some art and craft activities do not provide as much choice as they might.

Commentary

39. Children are admitted to the school twice a year, with one group starting early in the autumn term and the other, the younger children, after half term in the spring term. For this year's group of children, standards of attainment when they started school were broadly average. Children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Achievement is satisfactory. By the end of the reception year, the majority of children are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals, the nationally expected levels for children in this age group, in the six nationally recommended areas of learning. Children do particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development and in mathematical development. However, a considerable minority is not likely to attain the expected standards. These are often children who have only had one and a half terms in school.
40. Reception children are taught in a mixed-age class alongside younger Year 1 pupils. Although there are times when the reception children benefit from this mix, there are other times when matching up the two curricula is hard and some activities are more suited to the needs of the older pupils. Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory. The teaching is satisfactory with some good features. The classroom is spacious and well equipped. The new enclosed outdoor play area is also well equipped and well used. To provide this area was a key issue in the last inspection report so good improvement has taken place. Leadership is satisfactory while management of the adult team is good; as a result, learning support assistants make a very good contribution to the children's learning and achievement. Children are very well cared for and good links with parents ensure that children make a happy start to each day and are confident learners.

41. Children's achievement in their **personal, social and emotional development** is good. By the time they transfer to Year 1, the vast majority of the class is likely to have achieved the expected goals and a considerable minority will have exceeded them. The school sees this area as a priority and, as a consequence, the team of adults gives it a high profile and their teaching of it is good and children learn well. As a result, near the end of the year children demonstrate independence in selecting and using resources, take turns and work harmoniously as part of a group, even if no adult is close by. Children are very keen to learn and take part fully in the activities provided. Children are forming good relationships with each other, supported well by the whole adult team. A few children currently find working as part of a whole class hard.
42. In **communication, language and literacy** teaching, learning and achievement are satisfactory. At the end of the reception year, attainment overall is likely to be in line with the Early Learning Goals. The majority of children will achieve all of the expected goals for speaking, listening, and reading. In writing, the majority are not likely to achieve the expected level. Standards in speaking and listening are as expected nationally. By the time children end their reception year, most of them are able to communicate soundly, helped by the teacher's satisfactory and sometimes good methods such as enabling all the class briefly to speak and listen in pairs. The teacher provides good activities to help children to develop their reading skills and knowledge of letter sounds. The school is involved in a reading research programme, where short regular sessions are beginning to help children to learn word building skills more quickly, which in turn will help their reading and eventually their spelling. In writing, progress is not as fast and the standards within the age group vary greatly. Writing standards are lower than reading, with the majority of children not expected to reach the goals for this aspect by the end of the year. Teachers provide some good opportunities to write, and there are some suitable 'free choice' activities where children can write, such as in their 'café'. Children are not reluctant to try writing and they enjoy writing 'labels' but there are too few opportunities to develop the writing of simple sentences. Staff do not make sufficient use of opportunities to write stories, poems and non-fiction text with children, to provide a good model and develop children's writing for different purposes.
43. In terms of their **mathematical development**, the children achieve well. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff constantly provide a wide range of interesting mathematical activities and so children have a particularly good understanding of number. A good proportion of higher-attaining children are confidently able to add and subtract small amounts and record their results and explain different ways they can sort pictures of animals. The teacher and learning support assistants work with two main groups for mathematics. This works well as it enables the tasks to be tightly linked to the children's learning targets. This is possible because of the sound regular assessment and record

keeping being undertaken using the 'stepping stones'³, the nationally recommended assessment stages.

44. The children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** is secure by the time they transfer to Year 1 and children achieve satisfactorily. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and best when first-hand experiences are used. Consequently, at the time of the inspection, the children were eager to extend their knowledge of mini-beasts as they had just been on a visit to a nature reserve. In this work, some good follow up activities were provided, such as computers being used well to look up information, and good materials being available for child-initiated activities. The children have satisfactory mouse control for their age and a few are able to find their way round the information provided without help. Children are learning a little about traditions from the major world faith festivals. The children benefit from being included in the work of visitors that involves the school as a whole.
45. In terms of their **physical development**, provision, teaching, learning and achievement are satisfactory. As a result, children generally have average skills for this area of development. By the time they enter Year 1, the majority of children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals for this area of the curriculum. A large proportion will exceed the expected level in their development of whole body movements, as demonstrated in physical education lessons where they make good progress and achieve well. Children have good control over their bodies when running, and when dressing. The development of large physical movement is provided for well by daily opportunities for outdoor play in the newly provided area. Less strong is their ability to make fine movements. Although the teacher provides some good activities, such as weaving ribbons, to extend their manipulative skills, not enough is done in this area.
46. In the area of **creative development**, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, as is achievement. Progress is good when children are provided with a range of activities and equipment from which they can make their own choices but sometimes too little choice is offered and, occasionally, adults over-direct the activities. Children satisfactorily learn and perform simple songs with enjoyment but do not have enough free access to music-making activities where, for example, they could explore different properties of different instruments.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

³ These show teachers what they need to know about children's learning in each area of the Foundation Stage. They are the steps that children will take as they make progress towards reaching the Early Learning Goals for children by the end of reception. They show stage by stage the knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding children need to achieve the goals.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning in reading is good and pupils achieve well.
- A recently introduced reading research programme is having a positive impact on the learning in Years 1 and 2.
- Writing is the weakest element, with the content of pupils' work and their spelling needing improvement.
- There are too few opportunities in other subjects to develop writing skills.
- Pupils are keen and eager to learn.
- Learning support assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- There is no whole-school system for assessing and recording pupils' progress.

Commentary

47. Overall standards by the end of Year 2 are above average and by the end of Year 6 they are average. Achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good while for the older pupils it is satisfactory. The combined test results over the last three years show that standards at the end of Year 2 are well above average in reading and above average in writing. Inspection evidence confirms similar standards in current Year 2. Test results at the end of Year 6 for the last three years show that standards in English have been average overall. Girls have done better than boys, a difference that is slightly greater than that shown nationally. The school has introduced a wider range of texts in literacy lessons to encourage boys' interest in reading and writing. No significant variation in learning between boys and girls was noted during the inspection. Inspection evidence shows that while pupils do well in reading, standards in writing, which are average, are not as high as those in other core subjects or at the time of the last inspection.
48. At the end of Year 2 most pupils are likely to attain the expected level in reading and a good proportion will exceed it. This is very good progress over their time in Years 1 and 2. It is here that the recent introduction of a reading research programme is having a very positive impact on pupils' learning. They are encouraged to take books home regularly and parents and carers are rightly encouraged to help with reading. Inspection evidence indicates that nearly all pupils by the end of Year 6 will achieve the expected standard in reading, with just over half exceeding it. Library skills are fairly well developed by Year 6. Most pupils can explain how a library is organised, know how to locate relevant books and find information quickly by using contents and index pages.
49. Standards of speaking and listening are good overall. They are good for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and average for younger pupils. Listening is very good throughout the school. Pupils listen attentively to teachers and focus well on instructions given to them. Teachers often stress new vocabulary carefully and reinforce it well through their teaching. Pupils are given a few good opportunities, both within their literacy lessons and in other subjects, to practise and extend their speaking and listening skills by articulating their understanding and sharing their ideas. But pupils too rarely discuss work as a group or are

asked briefly to exchange ideas with another pupil. When they are taught how to do this, such as in an English lesson seen, the results are excellent.

50. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do well in writing. For seven-year-olds, standards overall are above the national average. Group targets are set for the next step in their learning, and are helping to raise writing standards. Standards in writing by the end of Year 6 are not so strong and the school has not performed as well as similar schools. Writing has been an area of weakness in recent years at the top of the school, and although it is improving, it remains a key area for development. The school is aware of this and has put in place some suitable actions to address it, as a consequence of which results in national tests this year are likely to be better, with more pupils attaining the expected standard and a small number attaining better than average. These results are not as good as in mathematics and science. Handwriting is taught regularly but a considerable minority of the oldest pupils is not consistently using joined-up writing where it is needed. Spelling and punctuation could be better. The content of their writing is satisfactory but sometimes too little is written in the given time. Teaching of writing skills varies greatly. The very good practice in developing writing skills seen in one class is not yet being shared throughout the school.
51. The quality of teaching and learning of English is satisfactory overall with good teaching in Years 1 and 2. Over time, teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 have been satisfactory overall but are now improving. Some good and excellent teaching was seen during the inspection across the school. Planning is generally satisfactory. The teaching of the reading research programme is having a very positive impact through its good sequences of lessons and building up of skills. The curriculum is good overall and teachers generally take good account of the two ages in the classes as well as the ability range. All pupils are included and catered for well. Staff manage pupils well. As a result, pupils' attitudes to their lesson are good and often very good. They are interested and keen to join in, and concentration is good. The marking of pupils' work varies from satisfactory to excellent, and is good overall. It is best where comments not only encourage pupils but also help them understand very clearly what they can now do and what they need to learn next.
52. Learning support assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning in English. They support literacy teaching well, helping to maintain good concentration, reinforcing teaching points well and enabling all pupils, to take part fully in lessons. Effective use is made of a computer program to support those pupils with special educational needs. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. Overall, satisfactory use is made of ICT to further pupils' literacy development.
53. The leadership and management of English are satisfactory. Overall provision is not as strong as at the time of the last inspection, when standards were above average in both reading and writing. The co-ordinator is new to the school. She has correctly identified that standards in writing are not high enough but has not yet been able to implement fully her very clear vision for the subject and the good ideas that she brings. Good monitoring of teaching is

regularly undertaken and is having a positive impact on teaching. Overall, procedures used by individual teachers for assessing pupils' progress are satisfactory but there is no unified whole-school system for recording and using this information.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. Provision for the development of language and literacy skills through other areas of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Although a few good opportunities are given for both speaking and listening and writing in other subjects, this is not yet fully integrated and opportunities are sometimes missed or are not sufficiently tightly focused to ensure that the literacy skills are practised and improved.

Modern foreign language

French is taught by a visiting teacher to all pupils from Years 3 to 6. No lessons took place during the inspection so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on this provision. The curriculum teaches pupils basic communications skills. Pupils spoken to showed that they have a sound understanding of the vocabulary used in greetings, numbers and colours. The pupils are extremely keen on learning French because they enjoy their lessons with the visiting teacher and their visits to France.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do very well in mathematics because of consistently good teaching and their very positive attitudes.
- Teachers provide a good range of activities to meet the needs of the different ability groups within their class.
- Learning support assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- The 'mental starter' and summing-up activity at the end of a lesson are satisfactory but could be more effective.
- There is no whole-school system for recording pupils' progress.

Commentary

55. The school has successfully maintained the high standards noted at the last inspection. There have been variations in the school's annual performance in national tests, which need to be interpreted carefully because of the small numbers of pupils in each year group. Results over the three years, 2002 to 2004, show that the performance of the pupils at the end of Year 2 is above average and by the end of Year 6 it is well above average. Inspection evidence confirms that this is still the case. Overall, the school's performance compares favourably with that of similar schools. Boys have done better than girls, a difference that is greater than that shown nationally. No significant variation in

learning between boys and girls was noted during the inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the effective support they are given in class.

56. From their average starting point on entering school, this well above average performance by the end of Year 6 represents very good achievement overall. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and standards are higher than expected by the end of Year 2, as shown when pupils use their good knowledge of numbers when ordering numbers to at least 100 and using appropriate operations and strategies to solve simple money problems. The good progress continues in Years 3 to 6 and most pupils reach the expected standard for their age by the end of Year 6 and just below half go on to reach the higher standard, Level 5. Pupils have a very good knowledge of number.
57. Teaching and learning are good across the school and the pupils have very positive attitudes. Lessons seen during the inspection were consistently good and a number of common strengths were evident. Throughout the school, teachers manage the pupils very well and provide very good levels of encouragement. The resulting very positive relationships and pupils' high levels of concentration are key features in supporting learning. Pupils are confident when tackling new work and are not afraid to ask for help if they do not understand. Lessons provide a clear progression in pupils' learning and useful activities aimed at the different levels of ability within each class. Good quality marking helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. Learning support assistants are well deployed in lessons. Their reinforcement of teaching ensures that the groups that they support, particularly those with special educational needs, understand what is expected of them and make good progress in their learning. Other strengths shown by individual teachers included good individual support when difficulties are encountered and careful questioning to develop pupils' understanding.
58. Teachers' planning is satisfactorily based on the National Numeracy Strategy. The short oral sessions at the beginning of lessons are satisfactory but not as effective as they could be, as they do not always provide a sharp focus on a useful mental strategy to help pupils develop their understanding. These sessions do not always ensure that all pupils are fully involved. The plenary sessions at the end of lessons are often used to celebrate pupils' work but teachers do not use them to focus the pupils' attention on what it is they have learnt during the lesson. Teachers make satisfactory use of ICT, including the interactive white boards to support pupils' learning. Regular access to computer software that provides pupils with an individual programme of mathematical activities helps pupils to consolidate their learning. Occasionally, opportunities to use computers to help pupils understand their work, for example in data handling, are missed.
59. Overall, the subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator monitors the subject well and has ensured that high standards have been maintained. Overall, procedures for assessing what pupils know and can do are satisfactory. However, teachers record this information in different ways, which

does not help them to monitor the progress of individual pupils or to easily plan what pupils need to learn next.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. Teachers satisfactorily reinforce pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects. Pupils apply their numeracy skills well in science as measurements are made and graphs used to display information. In other subjects, such as design and technology and geography, pupils do not sufficiently develop their data handling and measuring skills.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a good knowledge of science because of good teaching.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and their very positive attitudes support their learning well.
- Learning support staff make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to fully develop their investigative skills.
- The recording of practical activities does not always highlight the important skills to be learnt or help develop pupils' writing skills.

Commentary

61. Overall standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are above average. Teacher assessments over the last three years show that most pupils at the end of Year 2 have attained the expected level for their age, which is similar to the national average. Over a third go on to reach the higher standard, Level 3, which is well above average. Inspection evidence found a similar picture in the current Year 2. Pupils make good progress because there is a good focus on developing pupils' knowledge of life processes and living things, and materials and their properties. Results in national tests over the last three years show that pupils continue to make good progress and that by the end of Year 6, standards are above average because all pupils reach the expected standard and half go on to reach the higher standard. Inspection evidence found a similar pattern in the current Year 6. This represents good achievement, particularly for the boys. The school has maintained the above average standards reported at the last inspection.
62. Teaching and learning throughout the school are good overall. Lessons seen during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to good. Pupils develop a good knowledge of their science topics because teachers' explanations are clear. Teachers' good subject knowledge and understanding mean that they use the scientific vocabulary very well and challenge pupils' thinking through careful questioning and marking of pupils' work. Learning support assistants work

closely with pupils with special educational needs and, through this support, these pupils achieve as well as others. Pupils' very positive attitudes support their learning well, as when helping each other in practical activities. They have confidence to make predictions and pupils get much enjoyment from their work.

63. Throughout the school, teachers emphasise the investigative aspect of science and much of the teaching involves pupils in useful practical activities. As a result, pupils are satisfactorily developing their experimental skills and, for example, they understand the importance of a fair test. However, practical activities are often too closely led by the teacher and do not let pupils select their own apparatus and methods, or to test their own ideas. Pupils systematically record their observations and findings. Younger pupils often use worksheets and older pupils an identical format. These methods do not always allow the recording to focus in on the most important aspect of the work or encourage pupils to develop their writing skills. In some activities, pupils use their mathematical skills well to measure and classify objects. They make satisfactory use of the Internet for research and investigation, though the use of their ICT skills to record on a database and to produce tables and graphs is limited.
64. Leadership and management of science are satisfactory. The new co-ordinator has successfully ensured that the subject has good, well-organised resources. She is beginning to monitor teaching and learning across the school but has not yet identified areas for development. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers manage the pupils well and give clear explanations.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes and their ability to work independently support their learning well.
- The number of computers available limits pupils' access to computers.

Commentary

65. Standards at the time of the last inspection were reported as being above those expected by ages of seven and 11. Currently, standards throughout the school are in line with national expectations and achievement is satisfactory. There is no significant variation in the standards achieved by boys and girls. This dip in standards is due to the school not keeping pace with developments in the subject. The recent introduction of new computers and an interactive whiteboard in each classroom has improved the use of ICT as a teaching method. Teachers make effective use of the boards to demonstrate new programs and activities. There are five computers in each classroom, which ensures pupils have easy access to them. However, there are times when the

small number available limits the pace at which the pupils can follow up the teaching of new work with their 'hands-on' activities.

66. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers use questioning well to remind pupils of previous learning and they give clear explanations on how to use new programs. Consequently, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make steady progress in developing their ICT skills as they move through the school. Pupils' keyboard skills are satisfactory and they know how to load programs and to edit, save and print their work. They are confident in using the Internet and have a satisfactory understanding of spreadsheets. In Year 6, pupils show good skills in producing multimedia presentations. Teachers manage and encourage the pupils very well and so pupils are well motivated and very well behaved. A major strength in the pupils' learning is their capacity to work both independently and in pairs when it is their turn to use the computer. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development.
67. The new co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership and management for the subject. There are suitable procedures for monitoring teaching and learning. The curriculum and newly introduced procedures for assessing pupils' progress are satisfactorily based on national guidelines and ensure all aspects are taught at an appropriate level for the age of the pupils. In order to consolidate pupils' learning, the two-year rolling programme of units of work requires some adjustment so as to ensure that all aspects are taught regularly. For example, long gaps between activities involving the element of control have resulted in pupils' knowledge of this aspect being slightly weaker than expected. Although resources are adequate overall, the co-ordinator has correctly identified the need to add to the number of computers available so that larger groups of pupils can access computers during lessons.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

68. Currently, the use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory overall. Pupils make good regular use of a program for reinforcing learning in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the use of a similar program that reinforces literacy skills. Teachers are beginning to make effective use of the interactive whiteboards to support their teaching in ICT and in other subjects, for example, by showing short video clips in science. Pupils make satisfactory use of their word processing skills but do not make sufficient use of databases, tables and spreadsheets to record their work.

HUMANITIES

In humanities, religious education was inspected by the Diocese⁴. Work was sampled in geography and history and so no overall judgements can be made about

⁴ Because the school is a voluntary aided school, the inspection of religious education and collective worship is carried out under Section 23 of the Schools Inspection Act 1996 (Denominational Education) by an inspector approved by the diocese and appointed by the governing body.

provision. No lessons were observed but pupils' work was carefully scrutinised and aspects of humanities were discussed with staff and pupils.

69. In **geography** and **history**, evidence from teachers' long-term plans indicates that the subjects are being regularly taught. The curriculum is satisfactory and meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. The school has satisfactorily adopted nationally recommended units of work for the two subjects. Talking to pupils and examining books suggest that standards are in line with those found nationally. In geography, some good methods are used, such as a river study undertaken by Year 6 pupils, and the use of story books with Year 2 pupils to study a contrasting location and compare it in detail with their own. New procedures for assessment and record keeping in both subjects are satisfactory, as are leadership and management.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

These subjects were not a focus for the inspection and so were sampled, but not in sufficient detail to provide judgements on provision.

70. Throughout the school, there are attractive displays celebrating pupils' work in **art and design**. These examples show that pupils' skills are developing satisfactorily overall. Some examples, such as the Year 1 and 2 paintings of the Great Fire of London and the three-dimensional theatrical masks in Years 5 and 6, show that the pupils take great care in producing their work. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to study and learn from the work of well-known artists, such as David Hockney and John Constable. Pupils make satisfactory use of ICT. They use a program to draw simple pictures and the Internet to find out about artists. During part of a lesson seen, useful opportunities to evaluate and discuss their work helped the pupils to improve what they had done. Pupils in Year 6 spoke enthusiastically about their work in art and how much they enjoyed painting their views of the school's grounds from different perspectives. Pupils' artwork is used effectively to illustrate their work in other subjects. Pupils use sketchbooks to record their initial ideas but not frequently enough or with sufficient focus on developing artistic skills. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and resources are good. The curriculum is satisfactorily based on national guidelines and satisfactory procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress have recently been introduced.
71. In **design and technology**, very little work was available to show pupils' practical making skills. That seen, including hand puppets made from felt pieces and fastened with a simple running stitch, was of a satisfactory quality. Photographic evidence showed that pupils are taught in a systematic way, following national guidelines. They make an appropriate range of models that include wheeled vehicles, money containers and slippers. Pupils take great care in decorating their models. They draw simple plans, satisfactorily list materials and equipment used and write brief evaluations of their work. Plans and evaluations are completed for each activity but the design skills used do not develop sufficiently as they move through the school. They do not, for example, communicate design ideas in different ways, indicate alternative ideas

or often involve measurements. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and new procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress are satisfactory.

72. In **music**, two lessons were observed and singing in assembly was noted. Listening to pupils singing in assembly suggests that standards in this aspect are satisfactory. In one lesson observed, standards of singing were good as pupils practised for a forthcoming concert. The teacher encouraged the pupils well and teaching and learning in this lesson were good, though pupils had too little opportunity to evaluate their performances. In the other lesson, children extended their sense of rhythm well by clapping and following instructions. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Assessment and record keeping are satisfactory, as is the curriculum. Pupils enjoy attending the choir club, which is open to all pupils from Year 1 upwards.
73. In the lessons and parts of lessons seen in **physical education**, overall standards were in line with national expectations for the pupils' ages. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 showed good levels of control and balance when stretching and curling as they moved on apparatus. They satisfactorily used imaginative movements when responding to music and story. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have developed satisfactory throwing and catching skills, which they use in a range of team games, including rounders and 'benchball'. The school makes effective use of a visiting teacher and physical education instructor. Teaching seen was satisfactory overall. In a good lesson that was seen, there was a clear focus on developing pupils' gymnastic skills. In some other activities seen, the pace of learning was slow as pupils spent too long waiting for their turn to perform. Pupils' demonstrations are used successfully to praise and encourage pupils, but rarely to highlight what it is others can learn from the demonstration.
74. The school has a satisfactory curriculum for physical education that ensures that pupils are taught the full range of activities, including gymnastics, dance and games. The school has a good programme for swimming that involves pupils in Years 3 to 6 in weekly lessons during the autumn and spring terms. Most pupils swim to the expected standard by the time they reach Year 6, and many exceed it. There are good opportunities for older pupils to take part in competitive sports and a range of after-school sporting activities over the year. These activities are enjoyed by pupils and make a positive contribution to their social development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

75. This subject was sampled: planning was scrutinised, discussions took place with staff and pupils and one lesson was observed. The personal and social development of pupils is a key priority of the staff. Teachers' planning shows that there is a good, comprehensive scheme of work in place based on the teachings of the Catholic Church. The school's recent involvement in the Healthy Schools award has helped ensure that pupils are given regular weekly opportunities to talk about personal and social aspects of school life. Incidental opportunities, assemblies and systems such as older pupils taking care of younger ones and the very positive ethos in the school all support the learning in this area strongly. In the one lesson seen, teaching was satisfactory.

Opportunities such as residential visits are also well used. In some lessons, not enough is done for pupils to take responsibility for their learning, such as by working in small groups or pairs, or in organising their own resources or activities.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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