

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Redhill, Surrey

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125234

Headteacher: Mrs E Walsh

Lead inspector: Mrs S D Morgan

Dates of inspection: 25th - 28th April 2005

Inspection number: 267834

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: 5-11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 421

School address: Linkfield Lane
Redhill
Surrey
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Telephone number: 01737 765373
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mr A Hunter
governors:

Date of previous November 1998
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is a large Catholic primary school with 361 pupils in Years 1 to 6. In the reception year 37 children attend full-time and 23 part-time. There are similar numbers of girls and boys in almost all year groups. However, in Year 3 there are significantly more boys than girls. Seventy-eight per cent of pupils are white British, with other pupils coming from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Twelve pupils are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language. Few pupils join or leave during the year and most pupils who start in reception complete their primary education at the school. The school serves a wide geographical area and data suggests that most children come from advantaged rather than disadvantaged backgrounds. The school is popular with parents and is oversubscribed. Most of the children who enter the reception classes have benefited from pre-school education in playgroups and nurseries. The attainment of pupils on entry to the reception year is above average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs has been increasing, and at over fourteen per cent, is broadly average. Similarly, the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is also average. Pupils' needs mostly relate to learning and or behavioural difficulties. The school gained the Schools Achievement Award in 2000 and Investors in People status in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9595	Mrs S Cash	Lay inspector	
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16084	Miss M Coussins	Team inspector	English, geography, history, special educational needs, English as an additional language
25778	Mr A Hicks	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St. Joseph's is a good school with a number of very good features. Leadership and management are good and the new headteacher has a clear vision of how to improve the school further. Pupils achieve well and standards are well above average. The quality of teaching is good. Relationships are excellent and the school takes very good care of pupils. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Pupils achieve well and standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average by the end of Year 6
- Teaching is good overall, and very good in the reception classes
- The school has a very good ethos which values all equally. Pupils are encouraged to do their very best and their achievements are celebrated
- The vision and high aspirations of the headteacher are helping the school move forward by building on the many existing strengths and identifying areas for development
- A very good range of enrichment activities, especially music, support pupils' learning well
- Subject leadership has not always been sufficiently influential in driving up standards
- The school has a wide range of useful assessment data but this is not being used effectively to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils and set challenging targets for all

The school has improved satisfactorily since its last inspection. Strengths identified at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and aspects of teaching and curriculum planning have improved well. Most of the issues raised in the last inspection report have been dealt with systematically although there is still too little use of assessment data to set challenging targets and help raise standards.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Pupils' achievements are good. In the reception classes children achieve very well because teaching is very well planned and organised. It provides a wide range of interesting learning experiences which meet children's needs very effectively. By the time they start Year 1 almost all children exceed the standard they are expected to reach in all aspects of learning. In the 2004 national assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2, results in reading, writing and mathematics were well above average. In the current Year 2, standards are well above average overall. They are well above average in reading, mathematics and science, and above average in writing, and average in information and communication technology (ICT). Overall, results in the end of Year 6 national tests in 2004 were above average. Current standards are well above average overall. They are well above average in English, mathematics and science and average in ICT. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values, behaviour and other personal qualities are very good. **The school makes very good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.** These factors together with very good attendance support pupils' learning very well.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is very good in the reception classes because work is planned very well and the management of children is very good. In Years 1 to 6 teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and use a range of resources well to make activities interesting and motivate pupils. Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and time is used productively to develop pupils' skills and knowledge. Very good use is made of homework to extend pupils' understanding. Relationships are excellent and pupils show considerable maturity when they work collaboratively on practical tasks. Pupils' work is marked regularly but they are not given consistent guidance on how to improve it. The school has a wide range of useful assessment data but this is not being used effectively to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils and set challenging targets for all.

The curriculum provides a good range of learning opportunities and very good enrichment activities. The school takes very good care of its pupils. It involves them well in its work by asking for and acting upon their views on aspects of school life. The school's partnership with parents is very good as are its links with the community. It has good links with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has very good vision of what the school should be aiming to achieve and is supported well by other key staff and the governing body. Subject leadership and management are good overall. However, as a group, subject leaders have not been influential enough in driving up standards, because they have not had a clear enough view of what pupils do well and what needs to be improved. The school has a good governing body and it makes sure all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very supportive of the school and the vast majority are overwhelmingly positive about the opportunities it provides. Pupils are very pleased with what the school offers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Make effective use of assessment data to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils and set challenging targets for all
- Ensure that subject leadership has a clear view of aspects of each subject in which pupils are achieving well and areas that need to be improved

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievements are good overall. Children in the reception year achieve very well. Achievement in Years 1 to 6 is good.

Main strengths

- Standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average
- Pupils achieve well and standards are particularly good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science
- Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well

Commentary

1. In the 2004 national assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 results in reading, writing and mathematics were well above average. When compared to those of similar schools (that is, schools with a similar proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals), results were above average. Based on teacher assessments, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level 2 in science was above average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 3 was well above average. Improvement in results has been above the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.5 (17.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.3 (15.7)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.8 (18.1)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Key Stage 2

2. Results in Year 6 national tests in English, mathematics and science have shown some fluctuation in recent years and improvement has been below the national trend. Overall, results in 2004 were above average when compared to those nationally. They were well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English. Comparing the Year 6 2004 results with those of the same year group when they were in Year 2 shows that pupils achieved well in mathematics and satisfactorily in English and science. Overall, boys performed better than girls. The school did not meet the targets it set for English and mathematics in the 2004 tests.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.3 (27.9)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	29.1 (27.7)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.0 (29.3)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 55 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Pupils are achieving well in Years 1 to 6. Current standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards show improvement on the 2004 test results as action has been taken to deal with weaknesses that were identified, for example, in writing. Standards are above average in design and technology, history, geography and

music, and average in ICT, art and design and physical education. Pupils take pride in the presentation of their work. For example, in science pupils' written work is neatly presented and diagrams, tables and graphs are drawn clearly. In design and technology their design work is drawn carefully and annotated.

4. Pupils' skills in English are used effectively in other subjects and pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to apply and develop their literacy skills. Speaking and listening opportunities are evident in most subjects. Opportunities have improved recently for pupils to use and develop their writing skills in other subjects, such as writing recounts of visits for history and persuasive writing in geography and this is leading to an improvement in standards. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to use their numeracy skills in subjects such as science, design and technology and geography. Opportunities for pupils to apply their ICT skills are being developed and are currently satisfactory, with some good examples in subjects such as history.
5. The skills that children have when they enter the reception classes are above expectation for their age in their personal, social and emotional development, their knowledge and understanding of the world and mathematical development. The writing aspect of communication, language and literacy is in line with expectations. Children currently start school full time in the term in which they become five. This means that a significant proportion of them attend on a full-time basis for only one term. Considering the short time they are in the Foundation Stage they make very good progress. By the time they enter Year 1 almost all exceed the levels expected in all areas of learning. Pupils' achieve very well in relation to their varying starting points. This is because their progress is carefully monitored and teaching is planned well to meet their needs.
6. The school works very hard to ensure that all pupils achieve equally well. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that, throughout the school, work is planned well to meet the needs of pupils of differing levels of attainment. However, at present the school does not identify those pupils who are gifted and talented. The new headteacher is taking steps to rectify the situation. Currently, opportunities such as beginners Latin for more able pupils in Year 5 are provided.
7. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well overall and complete tasks and activities accurately. Sometimes they are not given enough opportunities to think things out for themselves and so when they are working on their own their learning falters and they do not make as much progress.
8. Pupils whose first language is not English achieve well. Their progress is monitored carefully and teaching activities support their learning well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values, behaviour and other personal qualities are very good. The school makes very good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These factors together with very good attendance support pupils' learning very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a strong Christian ethos, which obviously permeates all it does
- Relationships throughout the school are excellent
- Pupils behave very well and concentrate hard on their work
- Pupils have good opportunities for taking responsibility but the school is rightly seeking to extend these
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very well provided for but their understanding of other faiths is limited
- Attendance is very high when compared with schools nationally but many pupils arrive late for school

Commentary

9. Relationships throughout the school, as a result of the very positive ethos, are excellent. The staff work as a team and demonstrate very effectively to the pupils how to treat others.

For their part, the pupils get on very well together and say there is very little bullying. They feel safe and well supported. They can work together in pairs and groups and enjoy playing in teams or taking part in the orchestra and choir. The annual production involves large numbers of people. Older pupils, in particular, are very appreciative of the time that adults so willingly give to provide such a range of opportunities and are much looking forward to going to the Isle of Wight for a residential visit.

10. Behaviour throughout the school, both in lessons and around the school, is very good. A calm and purposeful atmosphere is evident in lessons which enables pupils to concentrate and work hard. One class enjoyed the challenge of solving mathematics problems within a time limit and worked in silence and concentrated very hard on the task. As a result, they achieved well. Pupils listen to what adults say to them and settle quickly to work, so time is used productively. Adults manage pupils in a very positive way, praising and encouraging good behaviour. Those pupils that find it harder to behave well, often need only a gentle reminder or just a 'look' from an adult. Exclusions are very rare and there have been none in the last year. The school works hard to support pupils with emotional and behavioural problems and has been successful in enabling them to work well in class. All classes have monitors and a 'pupil of the week', which encourages responsibility and self-reliance. Classes also have representatives on the school council. The school is looking at ways to give Year 6 pupils more responsibility and already some are helping to look after the younger children, for example during wet playtimes. Sometimes opportunities are missed in lessons to give pupils responsibility for their own learning. The school is aware of this and is planning to improve this aspect of its work.
11. Each school day contains several opportunities for prayer and reflection. Pupils are encouraged to be very quiet and are helped to focus their thoughts at these times, so that the prayer is relevant and meaningful. Whether it is at the start or end of each session or as part of collective worship, such moments are valued and respected. The effect of this very strong spiritual content was seen in the very mature and reflective comments made by a number of older pupils interviewed. It is also evident in the atmosphere of mutual respect, even affection, that pervades the school. It informs the very strong moral code that pupils are learning. They raise money for charity and are aware of the needs of the world.
12. Pupils have a good knowledge of Western European culture through history, art and music and the rich range of visits they go on. They have made African masks and learn about life on St Lucia. Their understanding of other faiths, however, is limited because they spend only a very brief time learning about Judaism and Islam.
13. The youngest pupils are helped to get on very well together, they are learning to put their hands up and not call out, and to listen to others and share. They, too, make very good progress in their personal development.
14. Levels of attendance are well above the national average. Pupils say that they very much enjoy coming to school. Parents are encouraged not to take holidays in term-time and the school helpfully provides information about cheap holidays that are available during school holidays. Absences are not followed up until the child returns to school but are then monitored and the Education Welfare Officer is involved if necessary. Many pupils arrive late for school and regular reminders are included in the newsletter in an attempt to encourage parents to be punctual.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.3	School data	0.0
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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching has improved since the time of the previous inspection and is good. All of the teaching observed was at least satisfactory and over three-quarters was good or very good. The quality of assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good in the reception classes
- Teachers expect high standards of behaviour and relationships are excellent
- Pupils work hard and collaborate on tasks very well
- Teachers plan lessons well and use time effectively
- The wide range of assessment data available is not used effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses and set targets so that pupils know what they have to do to improve
- The work of teaching assistants makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those pupils with special educational needs

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	9 (21%)	23 (55%)	9 (21%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	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. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

15. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and the proportion of good, very good and excellent lessons has increased. Teaching is good in English, mathematics and science and satisfactory in ICT.
16. In the most effective lessons, teachers plan work to ensure that it is interesting and motivates pupils. For example, in a Year 4 science lesson the teacher used the wildlife area in the school grounds to very good effect when pupils were studying habitats. The lesson was very well resourced and pupils were prepared well for the practical activity through discussion and designing their own sheets to record their findings. When they worked in the wildlife area pupils collaborated very well and recorded their observations systematically by using digital cameras and making notes and sketches. Pupils worked hard and their written work and discussions showed that they had learnt a considerable amount about the various habitats studied. Teachers also use homework very effectively to develop pupils' research skills and to reinforce learning that has taken place in class.
17. Teachers share what is to be learnt with pupils at the beginning of lessons and through careful questioning check pupils' understanding at the end. Excellent relationships between staff and pupils are evident throughout the school. Pupils' contributions are valued and this helps build their confidence and self-esteem. In the best lessons resources and time are used effectively. For example, in a Year 5 design and technology lesson the teacher used the interactive whiteboard together with exemplar materials to check pupils' understanding and recall of how changing the shape of a cam influences the motion of a follower. Exemplars were used effectively to stimulate pupils' interest and show the standard of finish required. When they started practical tasks pupils worked very well in pairs, they collected and used resources quickly and sensibly and needed little help or prompting from the teacher. Their mature approach resulted in them making very good progress with their practical work.

18. When teachers have a high level of subject knowledge, pupils' make rapid learning gains. For example, in an excellent music lesson pupils improvised short passages to represent the different emotions experienced by a child during the evacuation in World War II. Pupils played a wide range of instruments and the teacher made increasing demands as successive recordings of the whole musical story were made. Expectations were very high and musical direction was very good. Pupils worked very hard and performance improved very quickly.
19. Teaching in the reception classes is very good. Teachers are supported well by teaching assistants who work hard to ensure that they support and enrich the learning that takes place. Teachers plan very thoroughly and give clear explanations and introductions so children know what they will learn and what they have to do. They use a variety of resources and a combination of whole-class, small group and individual work which gives children a range of experiences. Although most of the learning is under the direction of the teachers, there are opportunities for children to plan and organise their own activities in the classroom, which they do very effectively.
20. Satisfactory lessons have some of the features of good and very good lessons. However, in some the pace was too slow and the tasks were too open ended so that pupils were unclear about what they had to do and time was wasted. In other lessons the teachers did not always insist that pupils were quiet and listened carefully to instructions. In these lessons misconceptions arose and this slowed the pace of learning.
21. Teaching and learning opportunities for pupils with special educational needs are good. Individual education plans are written by class teachers, are clear and specific and appropriate for the targets set. Considerable evidence is recorded to show how pupils' make progress towards reaching their targets. Pupils are involved in the process of setting targets by completing "My Target Sheets" which encourages their commitment to achieving them. Work in lessons is often adapted well by teachers using individual plans as a guide, although the success of this is inconsistent across the school. Teaching assistants provide good support in lessons and when they work with groups of pupils or individuals outside of the classroom.
22. The progress of pupils whose first language is not English is monitored effectively and teaching activities support their learning well. When pupils are expected to do the same work as others in class, they are supported well by the teacher or teaching assistant. For example teaching assistants would repeat the instructions given to the class by the teacher and check understanding of the vocabulary. This meant that pupils could complete the task accurately. Pupils benefit from specialist support because the expertise provided meets their needs well. Pupils in the school for less than a year, but who started at school speaking no English, are learning well in all subjects and by Year 6 are reaching the expected standards in the national tests.
23. In the reception classes assessment arrangements are good. Staff know how children are progressing, they monitor their day-to-day learning well and use the information to plan the next steps in learning. Throughout the school a wide range of assessment data is gathered. However, it is not used effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses and to set targets to improve standards and the performance of groups of pupils and individuals. The school has recognised that this is an area requiring improvement. Pupils' books are marked regularly but the quality of marking varies too much, for example in science. In some classes marking is detailed with helpful comments indicating how pupils can improve whilst in others marking takes the form of ticks offering too little guidance.

The curriculum

The school provides pupils with a good curriculum that meets statutory requirements. A very good range of educational visits and extra-curricular activities enrich pupils' experiences. Staffing, learning resources and the school's accommodation are good.

Main strengths

- Previous curriculum weaknesses have been remedied. Planning is now good
- The curriculum for children under five is very good
- Pupils have good opportunities for writing in subjects across the curriculum
- The school provides a very good programme of enrichment activities that contributes positively to pupils' learning
- Very good opportunities are provided for pupils' personal, social and health education
- The school makes good use of its accommodation

Commentary

24. Planning, now good, has improved since the last inspection to ensure that there is a well-balanced programme of work within all subjects. Curriculum weaknesses in science, design and technology, art and music have been remedied. Planning draws well on national guidelines to ensure that pupils gain new skills and knowledge systematically as they move up through the school. High expectations and good planning contribute effectively to pupils' achievements. Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good. Sex and relationships education and drug awareness are treated in accordance with the school's Catholic religious education teaching programme. The curriculum for children under five is very good. National guidance is successfully used to plan a range of interesting and relevant activities.
25. Pupils have good opportunities for writing in subjects across the curriculum, for example composing poems about life in Britain during the Second World War. Opportunities to use mathematics and ICT skills are satisfactory overall. However, the school is not complacent. All members of staff share a common vision for the development of the curriculum to take account of the latest national recommendations for greater creativity in learning. Curriculum development is a priority in the school improvement plan and work is just beginning.
26. The school provides a good range of activities for pupils with special educational needs that are additional to the main curriculum. Skilled teaching assistants, the special needs co-ordinator and the special needs teacher, deliver these programmes in literacy and numeracy so that pupils make good progress. Additional programmes of support from the national literacy and numeracy strategies are particularly effective as they provide interesting, fun activities, which pupils enjoy and as a result they are keen to be involved and make good progress. However, the school does not yet have a register of gifted and talented pupils.
27. An extensive programme of extra-curricular activities, educational visits and visitors contribute very positively to learning. Music is especially strong, offering pupils the opportunity to perform in large school productions and concerts and to learn a wide range of musical instruments. Many pupils take these opportunities and they perform to a high standard. Pupils have good opportunities to take part in seasonal sports including participation in local tournaments. Residential visits to places such as the Isle of Wight support provision for PSHE, promoting especially pupils' growing independence and personal development. Pupils are enthusiastic about the wide range of visits and other special events that the school provides. They appreciate, for example, how re-enacting life as Victorian children in "living history" visits improves their understanding of the way we used to live. Special themed weeks add good variety to the curriculum. Year 6 pupils recall with great pleasure the science week from last year. They particularly enjoyed planning their own experiments. As one pupil said "It was us telling them (the teachers) what to do, not them telling us!"
28. The school is well staffed and management responsibilities are spread throughout the school to make good use of teachers' expertise. Accommodation is maintained to a high standard and provides a good learning environment. Outdoor play facilities for children under five, developed since the last inspection, are now very good and promote their physical and creative development very well. The school makes good use of available space, for example providing withdrawal rooms for teachers to work with pupils with special educational needs, and combining the library with the ICT computer suite. Facilities for sport are good and the school's spacious halls are well equipped for large scale music and drama. Resource levels and the quality of equipment to support learning are good across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides very good care and support for all its pupils.

Main strengths

- The school makes very good provision for the care and welfare of pupils
- Very good support is provided for all pupils

Commentary

29. Child protection procedures are in place and known to staff. First-aid trained adults are on hand to deal with injuries or to administer epipens or prescribed medication. A well equipped medical room is a useful resource. Injuries are carefully recorded and parents informed of head bumps and more serious accidents. Governors use their considerable expertise to undertake regular health and safety inspections. Fire and electrical equipment is tested as required. The school is maintained to a high standard and is kept very clean. The high level of care is also demonstrated in the appointment by the school of a counsellor who spends half a day per week in school and works with children who need support on a personal level.
30. The school knows its families well and the communities from which they come and this enables key staff to intervene effectively when necessary. The school is committed to the concept of “wrap around care” and this is clearly evident in the way that adults work with children throughout the school. Pupils have an excellent relationship with adults. There is a real sense of care and trust around the school, based on very effective relationships. Conversations between adults and children show that there is mutual respect and a real interest in welfare, enriched by gentle and appropriate humour. The school works hard to create and maintain this. All adults in the school, teachers and non-teaching staff alike, comprise a very good team that supports this work. Children say that they like all their teachers, there are “many smiles” and they trust all the adults to help them.
31. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and cared for. Pupils receive sympathetic but appropriate help from teaching assistants so that they are able to play a full part in the life of the school.
32. Induction arrangements are good and this leads to children being confident in the reception classes. Children are happy to come to school. However, following discussions with parents the school plans to admit four year olds earlier in future years and the induction arrangements will be modified to enable this to take place. Few children start at other times in the year, as there are few places available.
33. Pupils are consulted about the work of the school through the school council. This includes representatives from Year 2 upwards and has enabled pupils to make decisions, for example about the games the school purchased for use at lunchtime. Pupils were instrumental in setting up the ‘Friendship bench’ in the playground and in setting the code of conduct. Pupils value this responsibility and are disappointed if the meetings have to give way to other priorities.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very good links with parents and carers. Very effective links with the community enhance pupils' learning opportunities. Good links are in place with other schools.

Main strengths

- Parents have a high regard for the school and are very supportive of it
- Information about their children’s progress is very good
- Links with the Catholic parishes which the school serves, contribute much to the life of the school
- Good links with pre-school settings and secondary schools ensure smooth transition

Commentary

34. The school has a good reputation in the communities it serves and many parents choose to travel considerable distances so that their children can attend. Many parents take advantage of opportunities to attend school events, for example class assemblies and the

annual production, and to support the school through the parent-teacher association. A range of events raise large sums of money for the benefit of pupils. Parents, grandparents and members of the wider community come into school to help, particularly with reading.

35. The school keeps parents very well informed about its activities. Newsletters are now published weekly. The school also usefully provides a wide range of other information of interest to parents about services and facilities in the area. The prospectus and governors' annual report meet requirements. End of year reports are detailed and give parents very good information about how their child is progressing. They are worded very positively and encouragingly but still give a clear idea of what needs to be improved. The personal profile on each child shows how well teachers know their pupils. Good arrangements are in place so that all parents can attend regular consultations with their child's teacher and teachers are readily accessible at the end of the day if parents need to speak to them. Parents are encouraged to be involved in homework and many do support their children. They are given a curriculum outline each year. The school is planning to make this termly, which will further increase opportunities for parents to understand what their children do at school. Parents are involved in discussing the school improvement plan.
36. The school ensures that parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept informed regularly of the progress of their children. They have opportunities to speak with teachers or the school's special needs coordinator at parents' meetings. However, staff are always available and parents take advantage of the many other informal opportunities to discuss their children's progress.
37. The school works well with parents of pupils whose first language is not English. For example, through a letter translated into the appropriate language, which gives suggestions on how parents can support their children's learning at home. The expertise of parents is important to the school and this is used well by using the skills of parents to liaise with others and provide translations when needed.
38. The school is linked to four Catholic parishes and feels that it is very well supported by the priests and congregations. The priests provide pastoral care and regularly lead Masses. Other community involvement also contributes to pupils' personal development. They entertain elderly residents to tea and sing carols in the shopping centre, raising money for charity.
39. Links with other schools, through for example team matches or singing and playing together, contribute positively to pupils' social development. The youngest pupils are helped to settle into school quickly and happily through the good communication which the school maintains with pre-school groups. Similarly, at the end of Year 6, pupils move on to secondary school with confidence because of good liaison. Many ex-pupils return for work experience.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides good leadership and very clear educational direction for the school. Governance is good with an enthusiastic and well-informed governing body. The leadership of other key staff is good with some weaknesses.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and provides good leadership
- Senior staff have a real sense of purpose and high aspirations to include and meet the needs of all pupils
- Subject leadership is good with some weaknesses
- There is a strong sense of teamwork throughout the school

Commentary

40. The headteacher leads the school well and ensures that the school provides a caring, safe environment where pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and parents are very happy with what is provided. She has a very clear vision for the school and is strongly committed to ensuring that all pupils derive the maximum benefit from their time in school. Since her appointment just over a term ago she had gained a very clear view of what the school does well and where there is room for improvement and has shared her vision with the rest of the staff. Her leadership provides the impetus for improving aspects of the school's work and a strong sense of the values the school should promote.
41. A strong sense of teamwork and purpose is evident amongst the staff who work hard to continue to raise standards. The deputy headteacher was appointed in the year prior to the headteacher taking up her post and was acting headteacher in her third term, with the senior management team acting as deputies. As a result, good working relationships were developed within senior management because of an awareness and understanding of the roles and responsibilities involved.
42. Subject leadership is good overall and very good in music. Subject documents are good and often provide detailed guidance for colleagues on lesson content and teaching methods. Subject leaders monitor plans and pupils' work, which gives them a clear view of what is being taught and the quality of pupils' work. They are less well informed of the aspects of teaching and learning that require further development to raise achievement, as the monitoring procedures and assessment information are not used in a rigorous and systematic way.
43. The management of the school is good. The school's performance management systems are well established and effective. The current school improvement plan details activities until the end of the summer term. The headteacher and governors are beginning to draft a new plan to be based on a four year programme. An early outline indicates that it has a clear focus on raising standards further and includes identified priorities and information as to how activities will lead to improvement. Performance data is analysed but the information is not always used well enough to plan or set targets for those pupils who could be achieving higher levels.
44. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs and pupils learning English as an additional language is good. Pupils' progress towards achieving their targets is monitored well and supported by a good range of evidence.
45. The management of the recruitment, retention, deployment and workload of staff is good. The headteacher and governors are giving appropriate attention and planning to managing the changes for the workload of staff. The headteacher provides a good model through her own working practice and governors have attended training sessions to raise awareness of the issues.
46. The management team has changed significantly over the last eighteen months. The new headteacher and deputy were appointed through the governors' rigorous selection procedures to ensure the school continues to benefit from committed staff of a high calibre. The school has been successful in recruiting senior staff despite the high cost of living in the area and good induction procedures, a strong continuous professional development programme and promotion opportunities are provided. Two newly qualified teachers have recently been appointed, which was a strategic financial decision, and the programme of induction and support by senior management is strong. The level of support staff is restricted by financial constraints and the governors are reviewing this aspect of staffing to ensure that the benefit to pupils' learning is maximised.

47. Governance is good. The governing body is organised well and has a range of professional expertise which is used effectively to assist and support the school, for example in financial and personnel matters. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and of what is needed to move the school forward. There is an appropriate balance of support and constructive challenge and areas have been identified where the role of governors could be developed further to support the headteacher and monitor the impact of actions taken.
48. The school's finances are well managed and governors are fully involved in spending decisions and in monitoring the budget. Expenditure is planned carefully and the school has set aside money for a refurbishment project. Day-to-day management of financial matters and the general smooth running of the school are undertaken by the welcoming and efficient office staff. The school effectively applies the principles of best value to major spending decisions, for example, carefully planning and monitoring the effect of expenditure on an outside area for children in the reception classes. This development has improved the curriculum opportunities for the youngest children in the school.
49. At the last inspection, leadership and management were judged as very good. Recent changes in leadership have resulted in the school being in a period of transition. It is, however, very well placed to continue to improve further under the good leadership of the headteacher who, with the governing body, has identified and implemented effective action to address areas of priority including workforce remodelling, improving standards in writing and provision for gifted and talented pupils.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,049,916	Balance from previous year	66,956
Total expenditure	1,034,632	Balance carried forward to the next	82,240
Expenditure per pupil	2457		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

50. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good.
51. Children currently start school full time in the term in which they become five. This means that a significant proportion of them attend on a full-time basis for only one term and this impacts on the progress they make in the Foundation Stage. Following consultations with parents, the headteacher is planning to amend this in the coming year so that children have the opportunity to start sooner. A small proportion of children starting school have limited experience of English as their first language and there are a few who have special educational needs. On entry to reception, children's knowledge and experience are above expectations for their age in their personal, social and emotional development, their knowledge and understanding of the world and mathematical development. The writing aspect of communication, language and literacy is in line with expectations. Very good teaching coupled with a wide range of practical activities ensures that children make very good progress in relation to their varying starting points. By the time they enter Year 1 most children have exceeded the early learning goals the standards they are expected to reach in all areas of learning.
52. Teaching in the reception classes is shared between three teachers during the week and the standard of teaching overall is very good. These teachers are supported well by two teaching assistants who work hard to ensure that they support and enrich the learning that takes place. Teachers plan very thoroughly and give clear explanations and introductions so children know what they will learn and what they have to do. National guidance is used very successfully to plan the curriculum. Although most of the learning is under the direction of the teachers there are opportunities for children to plan and organise their own activities in the classroom, which they do very effectively. The area outside provides very good opportunities for children to develop their learning and their motor skills through focused play with a range of play equipment. The covered space gives very good opportunities for children use resources such as large number tiles and apply new skills to their learning in areas such as sand and water play.
53. Improvement since the last inspection is good with the provision of this safe outdoor area that enriches the children's experience. The Foundation Stage is led and managed well.

Personal, social and emotional development

Provision for this area of learning is very good.

Main strengths

- Strong promotion of good behaviour develops very good attitudes
- Children work well together on activities that they plan for themselves

Commentary

54. Teachers work hard to make sure the rooms are attractive and welcoming. This ensures that children enjoy coming into class. At the start of the day they collect their name cards and "register" themselves before settling quickly into the activities set out. They initiate their own learning in a variety of ways, some reading, others writing or doing a task that involves co-operation with one another. A calm and ordered atmosphere supports the children well in becoming confident about school. Children respond well to staff and to each other. They listen attentively, are keen to learn and behave well. They play well together, make a wide circle of friends and share ideas and equipment well in play. This has a positive impact on their development and sets a good tone for the rest of their time in school. Children have

good levels of independence, wash their hands and change for physical education unaided. Children achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment and, because of the consistent and good routines, almost all are likely to exceed the standards expected by the time they start in Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

Provision in this area of learning is good.

Main strengths

- Teachers successfully extend children's vocabulary
- There is good promotion of listening and speaking skills with a strong emphasis on developing writing

Commentary

55. Children are keen to talk about things that interest them. The range of vocabulary used is wide with most children able to converse at a good level. A few children are still developing clear and accurate speech but teachers have good strategies to promote the development of a wider range of vocabulary by having key words on display, to which reference is made. All adults in the class work sensitively to help children use the correct vocabulary and grammar, gently but firmly correcting mistakes, prompting and asking questions to help children develop their skills in language. In one lesson seen children were able to suggest the words from a poem that the teacher had covered up. When sentences were copied on the word rack they could identify the capital letter in the sentence and explain the function of the full stop. Teachers and teaching assistants model language well in both the written and oral form for children to follow. This supports those children with special needs and those for whom English is an additional language well and they make good progress. All adults work to ensure that all children listen carefully to instructions and, in vocabulary work, to the sounds of the words and the letters. They use questions very well and all this support helps all children learn well. A wide range of writing activities ensures children make sound progress in writing and understand how it conveys meaning. By the end of reception, most of the older children are likely to meet the early learning goals in speaking and listening and the higher-attainers will meet them in reading and writing. Some of those who have only just started full time education will not meet the expected outcomes by the end of the Foundation Stage, mainly because they will not have had sufficient time in school.

Mathematical development

Provision in this area of learning is very good.

Main strength

- Children's achievements in numeracy are very good
- Practical activities are fun and fully engage children's interest in number

Commentary

56. Sessions are clearly focused on mathematical understanding. Teachers place a strong emphasis on developing mathematical vocabulary and use practical demonstrations to ensure that children understand key ideas and achieve well. For example, in developing the children's understanding of ordering numbers, the teacher had prepared a washing line on which the children pegged numbers in order before encouraging the children to write the numbers correctly on their own number line. They count accurately and identify missing numbers in a sequence. Recording is an important part of these activities and children do it well, forming numbers accurately. A good range of practical activities such as playing skittles and counting the scores ensures that children have opportunities to practise using numbers and values in "real" contexts. Opportunities are provided for children to develop their understanding of capacity and shape in the "play" activities with sand and water and construction toys. Charts and posters help children develop their understanding of number and shape. Almost all children are expected to meet or exceed the early learning goals in mathematical development by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision in this area of learning is very good.

Main strength

- Very good use is made of the outside area to study the environment
- A wide range of activities extends children's awareness of their world

Commentary

57. Children have very good opportunities to develop their senses and extend their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Teachers make very good use of the school grounds to help children recognise signs of new growth and ensure that children continue the interest in the classroom. Teachers use questions carefully and support children's responses through very good use of praise and sensitive correction where there are mistakes. Photographic evidence of work done throughout the year shows children learning about the main Christian festivals and celebrating the Chinese New Year. Displays show work done that represents children's growing understanding of the different seasons. They are encouraged to develop careful observations and develop their skills in a wide variety of activities. The resources for ICT are used regularly, and children are keen to use the power of the computer to complete activities that reinforce their learning. Children working on the computer use simulations to build model cities, using the mouse with great precision to drag and drop the items in the space desired. They treat all the equipment responsibly. Children achieve very well and are likely to exceed the expected standards in this area of learning by the time that they join Year 1.

Physical development

Provision in this area of learning is good.

Main strength

- Children show very good control of pencils, scissors and brushes

Commentary

58. Children's skills in this area of learning are generally good and they are encouraged to improve them through good teaching. Some children in particular showed very good co-ordination in a lesson with skipping ropes and develop this well in free play at break times. The improvements to the playground have provided children with more opportunities to develop their physical skills through the use of the apparatus, and using a variety of wheeled toys to ride, push and pull. Swimming is part of the curriculum and children look forward to this. Good opportunities are provided for children to learn to control small pieces of equipment, hold pencils, brushes and scissors correctly. They show good control when threading patterns and the handwriting shows that most have acquired a recognised way of holding pencils. Children achieve well and are likely to reach the expected standards in this area of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Creative development

Provision in this area of learning is **good**.

Main strength

- Adults make sure that the work in art and role play develop a good range of skills

Commentary

59. All adults that work with children have high expectations. In a lesson seen, the teaching assistant worked hard with the children in an activity on blending colours, ensuring that there was a rich vocabulary to support their work and that all children worked carefully and

thoroughly whilst developing their language skills well. Children respond very well to this and achieve well in the language they use to describe their work. Their art work showed good care and attentions to colour. Good teaching by the teaching assistants ensures that the opportunities to develop knowledge, understanding and language are taken. Children play well together in role-play situations in the “Bear’s Cave” that is part of the homes project. Well-organised resources help them learn to choose which role they will play. Children achieve well and are likely to meet the expected standards in this area of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils’ speaking and listening skills are very well developed throughout the school
- Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are well above average overall but stronger in reading than in writing
- Pupils’ story writing is more accomplished than their technical writing
- Pupils are not always given enough challenges to think things out for themselves

Commentary

60. Pupils’ abilities in language are lower than other areas of learning when they enter the school. Inspection evidence shows that at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are well above average for speaking and listening and reading and above average for writing, indicating good achievement during their time in the school. Achievement is very good in some lessons, particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6. Boys and girls achieve equally well, as do pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. Current standards show improvement on the 2004 test results as action has been taken to deal with weaknesses that were identified, for example, in writing. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.
61. In national tests in 2004 Year 2 results were well above average in reading and writing and a significantly larger percentage of pupils reached the higher level 3 in reading than was the case nationally. Results in Year 6 were above average in English compared with all schools and boys did better than girls. In comparison with similar schools, English results were above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6.
62. Speaking and listening are very well developed and the basis of pupils’ success in English. Class discussions provide many stimulating opportunities for sharing and developing ideas and understanding. Very purposeful discussion led to very good progress in a Year 6 lesson. The pupils explored and shared their ideas to write a mini-saga on a topic of “School under siege” and their discussion resulted in very good quality writing, which was powerful and expressive. Most lessons begin with a whole-class session where pupils are encouraged to listen to instructions and information for their work. In lessons where paired discussions are encouraged, pupils know they are expected to participate, are very attentive and work together sensibly. Pupils in Year 4 showed very good understanding and use of vocabulary and expressive voices when performing poems they had written on “The Blitz” and their achievement was very good. Good speaking and listening skills are evident in lessons in other subjects and in pupils’ ability and obvious pleasure to converse with adults and each other outside of lessons.
63. Reading standards are well above average. Pupils learn to read very fluently and confidently early in their school life. They read at home, where the good support they

receive consolidates their progress. Reading journals provide pupils with a means to keep track of their reading habits and excellent activities to develop their comprehension skills. By Year 6, many pupils are avid readers who read with great fluency and confidence, read regularly for pleasure, and recall enthusiastically what they have read. They talk about favourite authors and express personal preferences and opinions on different styles and genre. Their progress is enhanced by guided reading sessions, which develop their skills and understanding of texts. Pupils enjoy the good range of fiction and non-fiction books and have opportunities to browse and choose from classroom collections and from the well-stocked school library. Research skills using reference material, thesauri and other sources are very well developed.

64. Standards in writing are above average. Pupils' achievement has improved because of the recent focus and priority given to writing throughout the school which has included setting targets and involving pupils in evaluating their work. Pupils are given sufficient opportunities to write for a range of purposes. Pupils use dictionaries and thesauri well to improve their written vocabulary. Pupils have a good grasp of metaphors, similes and synonyms and understand that, when appropriate, their use can improve their writing. There are good examples of pupils organising their ideas well and using increasingly expressive language as they move through the school. Work on the theme of a School Under Siege in Year 6 was very personal, powerful and sensitive and well written with good use of grammatical features. Although pupils' story writing is imaginative and structured well, their technical writing is weaker. Pupils do not always have the skills and knowledge to produce really effective pieces of technical writing, even though opportunities for writing in a range of genre have improved.
65. Handwriting develops well and by the end of Year 6 most pupils write in a fluent, cursive style and presentation of work is good. Spelling is generally good though sometimes repeated errors are not dealt with.
66. Teaching and learning are good overall and pupils have very good attitudes to their learning which helps them achieve well. Planning is very thorough and lesson objectives are clear. Resources are well chosen to make tasks interesting although some of the good quality resources are underused. The best lessons were characterised by fast pace, excellent use of time, including tight deadlines, an enthusiasm on the part of the teachers that motivated the pupils very effectively and good subject knowledge. In a few lessons that were judged satisfactory, the task was not entirely appropriate for the full range of pupils. This is because teaching was too directed and did not provide appropriate challenges for pupils, particularly the more able, to decide how they could best tackle activities to achieve the learning objectives. Marking contains examples of very good practice, although some inconsistency in this is apparent and often marking does not always help children know how they can improve their work.
67. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader is aware of the need to improve the standard of writing and plans to develop this in the coming year. Staff training, target setting and increased opportunities for writing across curriculum have improved standards and achievement. Displays of key words in all classrooms benefit pupils' vocabulary. Most classes have good collections of books, prompts for writing and attractive displays of pupils' writing, which are used effectively as learning tools to motivate and inspire pupils. The quality however, is inconsistent. The work of teaching assistants is well managed and their impact, particularly on pupils' skills in reading is substantial. Work is monitored to assure standards and good practice is shared through staff meetings and informal discussions. The subject leader does not, however, have opportunities to work with colleagues in class to develop teaching further.

Literacy across the curriculum

68. Reading, writing, speaking and listening develop very well across the curriculum. Pupils' very good attitudes mean that they are attentive and well motivated; they listen carefully and contribute readily to discussions. Speaking and listening opportunities are evident in most subjects, particularly through sessions at the end of lessons where pupils recall and share what they have learnt and when teachers give time for talking to partners and group discussions. Opportunities have improved recently for pupils to use and develop their writing skills in other subjects, such as writing recounts of visits for history and persuasive writing in geography.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are well above average and pupils achieve well
- Teachers plan well to meet the needs of all pupils. Teaching is good
- There is insufficient monitoring of performance to guide improvements in teaching and to ensure the highest academic standards

Commentary

69. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are attaining standards that are well above national averages, maintaining the school's trend of high performance over recent years. Pupils make good progress in all years and achieve well because teaching is good and they are well motivated so want to learn. In Year 6 boys have slightly outperformed girls in the national tests in recent years up to 2004. Inspection evidence found no difference in their performance this year.
70. In all classes pupils have very good mental and written calculating skills for their age. Nearly all pupils in Year 2, for instance, add and subtract numbers to 100 or so and use their number skills well to work out simple problems such as shopping bills. Many know a good range of multiplication tables and use them to work out related division facts. The small number of lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make occasional computational errors due to faulty recall of addition and subtraction facts but even so they reach average standards in their work. By the end of Year 6 pupils work confidently with whole numbers, fractions, decimals and percentages. Work is generally accurate although a few pupils occasionally make slips when working with fractions and decimals. Higher attaining pupils understand ratio and they worked out, for example, the amount of money three children would receive if £90 was shared among them in the ratio 1:3:5. Throughout the school, pupils use their number skills well to solve problems and standards are good, following a greater emphasis on this aspect of mathematics this year. Pupils make good progress in work on shape and measures. For example, pupils in Year 2 described familiar two and three-dimensional shapes and measured in grams and centimetres. By the end of Year 6 pupils have a good grasp of angle, area, perimeter, the metric system of measurement and the mathematical transformations of reflection and rotation. Pupils have a sound grasp of graphs, for example to convert between different currencies.
71. The quality of teaching is good overall. Expectations are high, work makes increasing demands and pupils in all years sustain a good rate of progress over the longer term. Teachers plan well for the needs of pupils of all abilities in mixed classes. Teaching assistants support well small groups of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and in Year 6 the weekly "Booster" sessions are effective in helping these pupils to reach average standards. Lessons start with lively mental mathematics sessions. Good questions give pupils opportunities to show what they already know and help them to clarify their thinking where they are not so certain. Relationships between all adults and pupils are very good and as a result there is a very positive learning atmosphere. Pupils behave very well and they want to learn. Consequently lessons get on purposefully. Regular homework makes a valuable contribution to learning through further opportunities to practise new skills. Just occasionally teachers spend too long explaining and discussing work. This restricts the time pupils have to work on their own which limits their progress. Teachers write encouraging

marking comments on pupils' work but rarely is there enough detail to show pupils how to improve when their work is incorrect.

72. Leadership and management are good overall. There is a drive to maintain high standards and leadership shares the common school vision for improvement. However, subject leaders and school managers do not monitor sufficiently the quality of teaching or analyse in sufficient depth the results of annual tests to determine the progress of different groups of pupils in order to promote the highest possible standards.
73. Pupils' standards and achievement, the quality of teaching and subject leadership are all similar to the last inspection. Improvement is satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

74. Pupils use their numeracy skills satisfactorily to support learning in other subjects. For example, pupils use graphs to analyse experimental data in science or to explore climate information in geography. They measure materials accurately before cutting and older pupils make working drawings to scale in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6
- Teaching is good and pupils achieve well
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work
- Pupils record work carefully in their books and use specialist vocabulary well
- The wide range of assessment data available is not used effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses and set targets so that pupils know what they have to do to improve

Commentary

75. National test results at the end of Year 6 have been well above average for several years although there was a dip in 2003. In 2004, the results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 were above average at the expected level 2 and well above average level 3. National test results at the end of Year 6 were well above average. In Year 6 pupils achieved as well as might have been expected in relation to teacher assessments at the end of Year 2. The performance of boys was better than that of girls.
76. Current standards in Years 2 and 6 are well above average. This is due to a number of factors. Coverage of the National Curriculum is well planned with an increasing emphasis on investigative work. No significant difference was noted in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils are encouraged to use specialist vocabulary both in lessons and in their written work. They develop their understanding of how to set up a fair test and how to record their results accurately and draw conclusions from them. Their written work is neat with well-drawn annotated diagrams. Pupils use ICT effectively for research into a range of topics.
77. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Work is well planned to meet pupils' differing needs. Pupils are managed very well with a constant emphasis on encouraging them to work co-operatively and responsibly on practical tasks. Particular strengths in teaching include the use of specialist vocabulary and the development of pupils' note taking skills, for example when they watch videos. Teachers also place considerable emphasis on the good presentation of written work and diagrams. They use homework very effectively to consolidate learning and to develop pupils' research skills. Work in pupils' books is marked regularly. However, the quality of marking varies between classes. Some teachers write helpful comments on how work could be improved whilst others tend to simply put ticks on the page. The school has a wide range of information on how well pupils have performed in a range of tests. However, this is not used consistently to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance and set targets and improve standards.
78. The subject is well led and managed. Regular monitoring of planning takes place and this ensures the curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements. However, other types of monitoring such as observation of lessons need to be more consistent to ensure there is a clear understanding of areas of strength and those that require further improvement. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards have risen and the curriculum has been enriched by activities such as science week and a range of visits and visitors to the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are in line with national expectations and achievement is satisfactory, but both could be better
- Lessons are planned well around practical tasks
- Assessment is not secure enough to promote higher standards

Commentary

79. Throughout the school pupils have well-developed computer operating skills. Most pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 confidently use the computer network on their own although a few need help at times. Pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 are very experienced computer users and many effortlessly switch from one program to another. Pupils make good progress in work that combines text and graphics, often using information found on the Internet or other computer sources. Pupils in Year 2 for example write “My Good News” reports. These are edited carefully and attractively presented with appropriate pictures found in picture libraries. By the time they reach Year 6 pupils skilfully combine text and pictures in well-presented reports on topics such as Tudor armour or Trams in the 1950s. Pupils use the Internet well to find relevant information and, using skills learned in English lessons, they adapt this well for their own purposes. Throughout the school pupils use ICT satisfactorily to collect and analyse data. Older pupils understand the principles of mathematical modelling, for example using a spreadsheet to explore different possibilities when planning a party to a limited budget. Pupils in Year 6 are on course to attain expected levels in work on control technology and the use of ICT to monitor processes automatically once these aspects are completed later in the term.
80. Teaching is satisfactory overall. There is a good emphasis on practical computing, with pupils working in pairs or individually at a computer. Pupils enjoy ICT lessons and behave very well. As a result there is a very good learning atmosphere and lessons proceed purposefully. Teachers make good use of teaching assistants, for example to work with small groups of pupils researching information on animals from library reference books while other pupils use an on-line encyclopaedia. This works well to improve pupils' understanding of the wide range of reference sources that are available to them. At its best, teaching challenges pupils well. For example, Year 6 pupils are beginning to learn how to evaluate the reliability and accuracy of information found on the Internet. Taking the theme of life on Mars, good questioning by the teacher and a very good on-line learning resource guided learning well. By the end of the lesson pupils had learned how to examine a website to see whether the information is reliable and authentic, for instance through the use of correct scientific language, and whether the information is written by a respected authority on the subject.
81. Some teaching is less effective because tasks do not always build sufficiently on what pupils have already learned. In one lesson, for instance, pupils quickly learned how to make simple control systems using a switch and a light-bulb. However, the following task allowed pupils too much unguided experimentation. Pupils devised on-screen simulations of complex systems but had very limited understanding of how they worked, adding little to what they already knew. In another lesson, pupils had insufficient time to complete the practical tasks they had been set, which restricted their progress.
82. Many teachers are unclear how to judge accurately pupils' levels of attainment as set out in the National Curriculum for ICT and assessment is not yet firmly established in all classes. Consequently, overall expectations are not high enough and as a result standards of work and pupils' achievement in ICT are not as good as in English, mathematics and science. The school is aware of these weaknesses and satisfactory plans to deal with them are included in the school improvement plan.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

83. There are some good examples of cross-curricular use, for instance the examples quoted above in history. Word-processing is used well in English, for example to write descriptions of “Mythical Beasts” and in geography to describe life in St Lucia, for example. In other aspects of ICT younger pupils “paint” pictures of the Great Fire of London and pupils use computers to practise mathematics skills. Overall, cross-curricular use of ICT is satisfactory

and further development is included in the school improvement plan. There are good foundations on which to build.

HUMANITIES

Overall judgements about provision in geography and history cannot be made as it was not possible to observe enough lessons.

84. In **geography**, the lessons seen and pupils' past work indicate that, by Year 6, standards are better than those expected for their ages. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Younger pupils locate places on a map of Great Britain and understand that it takes longer to travel to more distant locations. They do this by enthusiastically following the travels of Barnaby Bear and have made a splendid journal from his travels with them and their families, developed with very good parental support and involvement. Pupils in Year 1 made very good use of the local area by observing the way parking is controlled around the school and the safety benefits of these controls. The first hand experience greatly benefited pupils' achievement in the lesson. Pupils in Year 4 studied the island of St Lucia and through maps and factual research pupils gained a good knowledge of the geographical features. In Year 5 pupils looked at river erosion as part of their water project. In a lesson seen, pupils achieved well because of good teaching which engaged and involved the pupils well and made good use of the interactive whiteboard to demonstrate changes over a period of time as a result of erosion. Pupils had a good understanding of the processes involved which they could explain using correct geographical terms.
85. In **history**, pupils' work indicates that, by Year 6, standards are better than expected for their ages. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. By Year 6, pupils show their ability to use a variety of historical sources to find out about the past, and they understand that sometimes events have been represented and interpreted in different ways. Pupils used and interpreted statistics well from census returns in their work on the Victorians. Pupils make effective use of their literacy skills to record their learning in a variety of ways, for example in letters about voyages of discovery in a study of the Tudors, designing quiz sheets about the Victorians, reports and recounts of visits and informative captions for artefacts. Year 6 pupils conducted personal research projects on changes in Britain since 1948. The work generated by this project showed a good range and depth in pupils' historical knowledge and they made good use of ICT through power point presentations. Pupils in Year 1 compared their toys and homes with those from the past and Year 2 pupils learnt about the Great Fire of London. Good use is made of the local area for example, to discover evidence of Victorian architecture and how life has changed. Pupils talked with enthusiasm about their work and what they had learnt and the well-planned programme of visits and visitors to school enhanced their learning and involved the community. Good links were made with other subjects including, geography and art, for example, carvings and clay pots during an Ancient Egyptian Day where pupils dressed up and took part in various workshop activities.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Overall judgements about provision in art and design, physical education, music and design and technology cannot be made as it was not possible to observe enough lessons.

86. Talking to pupils, looking at work on display around the school and in pupils' sketchbooks shows that standards in **art and design** are in line with those expected nationally. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection. Children have a good start to their work in this area in the Foundation Stage but this is not developed fully. For example, there are few examples of pupils developing their investigation with colour and form in Years 1 and 2 where much of the art work seen was illustration of work being done in other subjects, although colour blending and working with more than one medium was used effectively in the pupils' representation of the Great Fire of London.

87. In Years 3 to 6 pupils are taught some of the more advanced techniques of art and show a growing understanding of shape, form and scale. Pupils working on a montage of a journey through World War 2 were given good challenge and supported well in developing their representation of perspective and vanishing points. Currently pupils are given insufficient experiences of looking at the work of other artists and developing their appreciation of styles. They are, however, beginning to develop skills in assessing their own work and that of other children against the objectives for the lesson.
88. In **design and technology** pupils' work showed that they design and make artefacts using a range of materials and processes. Curriculum planning has improved since the time of the previous inspection and ensures good coverage of the National Curriculum. Pupils use motors, pulleys, pneumatics and axles in their designs and good links are made with other subjects such as science. For example, pupils in Year 1 used simple levers to create moving pictures. Pupils in Year 3 linked their work in history when they designed and made moving monsters using pneumatics. Pupils develop their research, design and evaluative skills systematically as they progress through the school.
89. In a Year 5 lesson pupils worked very effectively together when making a moving toy using a cam and follower. They had used a computer program to design their toy and had printed out an annotated and dimensioned drawing. They used tools such as a junior hacksaw safely and were able to mark out and cut strips of wood accurately. The quality of their work showed attention to detail and finish. Evidence from pupils work showed that they evaluate carefully how successful they have been and what could be improved. Overall, from evidence of work seen standards are above average.
90. **Music** has a high status within the school as a whole. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 sing well, for example in hymn practices. Words are clear, singing is expressive and well controlled. Hymn practices for pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 are very enjoyable, lively occasions. Pupils sing very well in unison. They have good dynamic control, varying the volume of sound to match the words. Singing is in tune and rhythmical. Standards in singing are above expectations for pupils of their age throughout the school. Provision for instrumental tuition has expanded since the last inspection and a large number of pupils take up the opportunity to learn to play string, woodwind and brass instruments in Year 3 to Year 6. Older pupils especially perform to a high standard because they receive high quality tuition from visiting specialists. Pupils have good opportunities to perform to others, for example in productions such as Gilbert and Sullivan's "Pirates of Penzance" and in the annual Year 6 leavers' concert. Pupils perform with great assurance. Opportunities such as these develop very well pupils' self-confidence and personal esteem. Pupils attain high standards of performance and leadership is very good, for instance in expanding the provision for instrumental tuition and directing musical performances.
91. In the few lessons which could be observed the difference between specialist and non-specialist teaching was very clear. The non-specialist teaching was satisfactory, but the specialist teaching was excellent. In the excellent lesson pupils improvised short passages to represent the different emotions experienced by a child during evacuation in World War II. Pupils played a wide range of instruments and the teacher made increasing demands as successive recordings of the whole musical story were made. Expectations were very high and musical direction was very good. Pupils worked very hard and performance improved very quickly with practice to reach a standard above that expected for their age. Overall, from evidence of work seen standards are above average.
92. In **physical education** evidence gained from the lessons seen and talking to pupils shows that standards are in line with those expected nationally, as they were at the time of the last inspection.

93. The school benefits from two halls and an all-weather pitch that enable pupils to play games for most of the year. In the games lesson seen this was exploited fully as a lesson developing throwing and catching skills could take place on the pitch despite heavy rain earlier in the afternoon. Teachers have a good understanding of the programme of study for physical education and all pupils complete this by the end of Year 6. Teachers have a good approach to teaching physical education. They expect consistent effort and concentration and build up pupils' confidence and understanding of skills and tactics and good attitudes to sport. In a Year 4 games lesson that was observed, it was clear that pupils do enjoy the subject and work hard to improve their skills.
94. The curriculum is enriched by the use of qualified sports coaches who run clubs in a variety of sports including golf. The children in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 go swimming and all pupils have swimming lessons in Year 4 and most can swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education and citizenship

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good planning links closely with the religious education programme so pupils receive consistent messages
- Pupils have very good opportunities to discuss and reflect and this contributes to their very mature attitudes

Commentary

95. The school has planned a very effective programme combining religious education and EPR (Education for Personal Relationships) so that pupils receive, for example, drugs and sex education from a moral as well as a factual standpoint. Friendly, positive relationships with others are linked to spreading the good news of the Gospel, so pupils learn to live what they believe. Circle time and other moments of reflection enable pupils to concentrate on their thoughts and feelings on a variety of topics and, by the time they reach Year 6, pupils have very mature attitudes.
96. Pupils have elected school councillors to represent their views and this council has led the development of the school code of conduct. Because of their close involvement in setting standards of behaviour, pupils respect the code and the school is a calm and orderly community. Pupils have also chosen equipment for the playground, working to a given budget. Such opportunities help to develop their sense of citizenship well, as do visits into school by the fire service and others.
97. The subject is well led and managed, well resourced and seen as an important part of the curriculum, helping to set the ethos of the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
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	2
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	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
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	3
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).