

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST JOSEPH'S STOCKPORT CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Stockport, Cheshire

LEA area: Stockport

Unique reference number: 106122

Headteacher: Mrs A Forsyth

Lead inspector: Mr P Bamber

Dates of inspection: 4 - 6 July 2005

Inspection number: 267840

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 – 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 127

School address: Etchells Street  
St Petersgate  
Stockport  
Cheshire

Postcode: SK1 1EF

Telephone number: 0161 480 5029

Fax number: 0161 480 5029

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of Mr W Walker  
governors:

Date of previous June 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This smaller than average Roman Catholic Primary School lies in an inner city environment with 127 pupils on roll. Around two-thirds of the pupils live in wards which lie in the 25 per cent most deprived in the country. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds with a lower than average proportion speaking any language other than English. A well above average proportion of pupils has special educational needs, with a very high percentage of pupils having a statement of special educational need. The number of pupils in receipt of a free school meal is above average. In some year groups, more pupils than the average join or leave the school at times other than normal. Attainment on entry to the reception class is broadly average with most children having benefited from a nursery education. The school provides breakfast and after-school clubs and is involved in the Sure Start initiative. The school achieved Investors in People and Healthy Schools Award this year. The nature of the school's intake and social context has changed considerably since the last inspection.



## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |               |                | Subject responsibilities   |
|--------------------------------|---------------|----------------|--|
| 15064                          | Mr P Bamber   | Lead inspector | Mathematics<br>Geography<br>History<br>Physical education<br>English as an additional language           |
| 1329                           | Mr K Oliver   | Lay inspector  |  |
| 30724                          | Mrs D Hiscock | Team inspector | Science<br>Art and design<br>Design and technology<br>Music<br>Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage |
| 23204                          | Mrs C Wojtak  | Team inspector | English<br>Information and communication technology<br>Special educational needs                         |

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

St Joseph's effectiveness is **satisfactory**. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. They achieve well in reception and in Years 1 and 2. Standards are average overall, but above average in English. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with consistently good teaching in Years 1 and 2 and in Year 6, but with unsatisfactory teaching for Year 3 and a small number of Year 4 pupils. Within the overall satisfactory curriculum, pupils have good enrichment. Behaviour and attitudes are good. Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory and there is a clear vision for improvement. The school offers satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Reading is a strength throughout the school.
- Pupils in Year 6 do not reach expected standards in the control and monitoring aspect of information and communication technology (ICT).
- There is consistently good teaching for children in reception and in Years 1 and 2.
- More-able pupils underachieve in mathematics.
- For pupils in Year 3 and for a small number in Year 4, the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory.
- The good provision for pupils with special educational needs enables them to achieve well.
- Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, which contributes very well to their good attitudes, relationships and behaviour.
- Pupils are very well cared for.

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. In the six years between inspections,

the school's context and population have changed considerably, making direct comparisons of little relevance. However, the school has addressed the key issues identified in 1999 effectively. It has improved the breadth of the curriculum and embraced the partnership with parents, the local community and other educational establishments very positively, with good benefits to pupils' experiences and competencies. Compared with the quality of attainment and teaching reported in 1999, standards are not so high.

### 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           | A    | E    | C               |
| mathematics   | B           | D    | D    | C               |
| science   | C           | D    | E    | E               |

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils' achievement is currently **satisfactory**. Children enter the school with skills broadly in line with those of children of a similar age. They make good progress in reception and most enter Year 1 having met the targets set for them in all areas of their learning, with the best achievement in language development. Results in the Year 2, national tests over the last four years reveal generally high standards in reading, improving standards in writing, but some underachievement amongst more-able pupils in mathematics and science. Currently, overall standards in Year 2 are above expectations. Standards are high in reading, above average in

writing and mathematics and in line with expectations in science and ICT. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good overall. The good improvements in pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 are the result of more focussed teaching and assessment.

In the Year 6 national tests, standards have declined over the last two years. In particular, in 2004, pupils in Year 5 suffered much disruption to their learning through staff absences and Year 6 was subject to unsatisfactory teaching. These year groups also had not had the full benefit of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies, which were implemented much later than in most schools. As a consequence of these factors and of a high degree of mobility, pupils' achievement between Year 2 and Year 6 was poor. The present Year 6 have done much better, achieving especially well since January, when strong action was taken by the headteacher and governors to address weaknesses in the teaching and learning of this class. The inspection findings are that currently standards in Year 6 are above expectations in English and in line with expectations in science and just below expectations in mathematics. Apart from underachievement amongst the more-able mathematicians, achievement is satisfactory. Although overall standards in ICT are in line with expectations, Year 6 pupils' attainment in the control and monitoring aspect fall below expectations, partly because of the lack of the necessary resources.

Pupils with special educational needs and those very few whose first language is not English achieve well. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 do not achieve as well as they should because of unsatisfactory teaching.

Overall, pupils' personal development is **good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Pupils' attitudes to school are good and most behave sensibly. Attendance and punctuality are good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory**. Pupils are well taught in the reception, in Years 1 and 2 and in Year 6. Teaching and learning is unsatisfactory for all Year 3 and a small number of Year 4 pupils. Assessment is satisfactory overall. The good assessment of the progress made by pupils with special educational needs contributes well to their good achievements. Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory and generally well matched to the pupils' needs. The good links with the community and partner institutions provide good enrichment. Pupils are very well cared for and receive good personal support and guidance.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The quality of leadership and management is **satisfactory**. Overall, the headteacher, senior staff and governors provide satisfactory leadership and management. They have a clear vision of how the school needs to improve, focusing importantly on raising achievement and the quality of teaching. However, as yet the action taken to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good has not been fully successful. Governance is satisfactory. Governors play a full role in supporting the initiatives agreed in the school development plan and have not shied away from taking difficult actions to help improve standards.

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

Overall, parents and pupils have positive views of the school. They both praise the school's friendliness and willingness to deal with any concerns they may have. Pupils are proud of their responsibilities as playground leaders, monitors and council members and report that most lessons are fun. Some parents feel behaviour is not good in some classes. The inspection did



not reveal any concerns about poor behaviour or bullying. Inspectors do agree with the views of some parents that staff absences (although unavoidable) have caused disruption to some pupils' learning.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Take rigorous action to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the Year 3/ 4 class.
- Make sure that the more-able pupils achieve better in mathematics.
- Ensure that pupils in Year 6 reach expected standards in control and monitoring in ICT.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Overall, standards and achievement are **satisfactory**. In Year 6, standards and achievement are average and above average in Year 2. Pupils in Year 3 and a small number in Year 4 underachieve. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils read very well.
- Standards are below those expected in the control and monitoring aspect of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Year 6.
- There is underachievement amongst pupils in the Year 3 /4 class and throughout the school for the more-able pupils mathematicians.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Overall, standards are above expectations in Years 1 and 2.

#### Commentary

1. Children in the reception class enter the school with standards just about in line with those expected. They make good progress and most meet the targets set for them in all areas of their learning by the time they enter Year 1. The good provision in their language and mathematical development enables them to achieve well and gives them a solid start in basic skills.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| Reading       | 17.2 (17.3)    | 15.8 (15.7)      |
| writing       | 15.5 (16.4)    | 14.6 (14.6)      |
| mathematics   | 15.7 (16.1)    | 16.2 (16.3)      |

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

2. The table above indicates much higher standards in reading than those found nationally, higher standards in writing but lower standards in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science show that all pupils attained at expected levels. However, in both mathematics and science a well below average proportion of pupils attained the higher Level 3. When compared with similar schools, a similar pattern emerges, indicating some underachievement by more-able pupils in mathematics and science. This is because, until recently, pupils have had too little opportunity to carry out their own investigations. In the current Year 2, standards are well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. They are in line with expectations in science and ICT. Achievement is good overall in Years 1 and 2 because pupils are well taught.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
|---------------|----------------|------------------|

|             |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| English     | 25.5 (28.3) | 26.9 (26.8) |
| mathematics | 26.3 (26.3) | 27.0 (26.8) |
| science     | 26.3 (27.7) | 28.6 (28.6) |

*There were 24 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. The results in the 2004 Year 6 national tests were disappointing, with standards well below average in English and science and below average in mathematics. These results were not altogether unexpected because the year group had suffered considerable disruption to their learning as a result of staff changes and some unsatisfactory teaching. There was also a much higher than average mobility in the class. This meant that less than three-quarters of the pupils who took the tests in Year 2 remained in the class by the time they took the test in Year 6. In addition, the class contained a relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, which lowered average standards.
4. When compared with similar schools, standards were average in English and mathematics but well below average in science. Currently in Year 6, standards are above expectations in English, particularly high in reading because of consistently good teaching, in line with expectations in science and just below expectations in mathematics. The low proportion of pupils who attained the higher Level 5 in science, in 2004, which resulted in the low standards has not been repeated this year. More focused teaching of investigative science has enabled more-able pupils to cope better with the open ended questions in the tests that they found difficult last year. However, again too few pupils attained Level 5 in mathematics this year. This is because some more-able pupils still struggle to apply their good understanding and knowledge to solve problems. In ICT, Year 6 pupils underachieve in the control and monitoring aspect, primarily because of the lack of resources. In all other subjects inspected, Year 6 pupils achieve satisfactorily and attain standards in line with expectations. Evidence from the analysis of pupils' work indicates much better achievement by Year 6 pupils since the change of teacher in January 2005.
5. Throughout the school reading standards are high. This is because pupils are taught letter sounds well from an early age and are introduced to a wide range of interesting non-fiction and fiction as they progress through the school. They also have good opportunities to read aloud in front of an audience to increase their fluency and confidence.
6. Because teaching is unsatisfactory, pupils in Years 3 and a small number in Year 4 do not achieve well enough. Their work is often unfinished and there is little guidance provided for them on how they might improve. In lessons, they often learn too little because instructions are unclear, or they are given work that does not match their needs.
7. Overall, pupils with special educational needs and those few pupils, whose first language is not English, achieve well. In recent statutory and optional national tests, pupils with individual education or behaviour plans attained at the expected levels. This is a testimony to the good management of their learning and effective support they receive in and out of the classroom. The school is in the early stages of providing specifically for gifted and talented pupils. Weaknesses in the achievement of the more-able mathematicians and to a lesser extent, the more-able scientists, highlight the need to attend to these pupils' needs urgently.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school and parents work well together to ensure that pupils attend regularly and arrive on time.
- Pupils, with few exceptions, reflect the Christian values promoted by the school both in class and during playtime.
- Most pupils are interested in their work and relate very well to each other and the adults who work with them.

### **Commentary**

8. The school has a calm and contented feel about it. The beginning of the day is happy and orderly. Pupils are open, friendly and get on well with each other and adults. They welcome visitors with cheery politeness and offers of help.
9. Overall, behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils respond very well to encouragement. They enjoy learning and thrive on lively and challenging teaching. Even in lessons, particularly in the Year 3/ 4 class, where this is not the case, they still respond positively and do their best. Pupils enjoy the wide range of out-of-hours clubs and community activities and appreciate the hard work that goes into making them happen.
10. During playtimes pupils make very good use of the available space and equipment. Some play football whilst others try short tennis. Many have fun running and chasing around whilst others chat to each other and their supervisors. Pupils look after each other and the Year 6 *buddies* play a key role in organising games, looking after anyone who is lonely or upset and helping the supervisors to ensure that playtimes are happy and trouble free.
11. In assemblies, times for worship and in Circle Time (an opportunity for pupils to discuss sensitive issues or to role-play, in order to prepare them better for a variety of situations), pupils have very good opportunities to reflect on the important principles the school values. Pupils reflect on the values of trust and respect. They consider what it is to be a good neighbour, both to people close to them and to others around the world. Their work in art and design and in singing makes a good contribution to this aspect. Pupils understand school rules, distinguish right from wrong and understand the consequences of their actions very well and show a very good understanding of feelings and the likely effects of their actions on others. They show concern and compassion in their conversations. Pupils' understanding of their own culture is good. This is aided by a range of visits to places of historical and cultural importance and interest and by the visitors to the school, who include local artists. The breadth of artefacts, posters and books about different faiths and cultures other than their own and the school's links with a school in Bethlehem, contribute significantly to pupils' multi-cultural development.
12. There is an effective approach to behaviour management, which results in positive attitudes to learning. Most children support and do their best to abide by the school's golden rules. The inspection team looked closely into complaints from a small number of parents that there were problems with poor behaviour and bullying. No poor behaviour or bullying was observed during the inspection, but it was established that there were

occasional problems with a small number of pupils. Inspectors were satisfied that the school takes prompt and appropriate action to deal with these situations.

13. The school and parents work well together to ensure that pupils attend and arrive at school on time. The school successfully discourages holidays in term time. There have been no exclusions in the last reported academic year.

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

| Authorised absence |     | Unauthorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data        | 4.8 | School data          | 0.1 |
| 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**

Overall, the quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching, learning and assessment are all satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory with good enrichment. Pupils are very well cared for and they have good personal and satisfactory academic, support and guidance. The quality of accommodation and resources is satisfactory overall. There are good relationships with parents and the effective links with other schools and local colleges contribute well to pupils' learning.

**Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is **satisfactory**.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are high expectations of behaviour and very good support for learning in the reception year.
- There is consistently good teaching in Years 1, 2 and 6.
- The quality of teaching and learning for pupils in Year 3 and a small number in Year 4 is unsatisfactory.
- Support staff contribute well to the pupils' good achievements.
- Teachers maintain good standards of behaviour.
- Although satisfactory overall, teachers do not always give pupils enough opportunities to work independently or to evaluate their own learning.

**Commentary**

14. In individual lessons, the quality of teaching and learning ranges from unsatisfactory to very good. Teaching for the children in reception is good, especially in providing them with a good foundation in language, in their understanding of number and in promoting their physical development.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons**

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0         | 2         | 15   | 3            | 3              | 0    | 0         |

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

15. In the Year 1/ 2 and Year 6 classes, lessons proceed at a brisk pace and pupils are aware of what they are to learn by the end of the lesson. Resources are used well, for instance, in a good Year 6 history lesson, to both capture pupils' interest and to clarify concepts, which they might otherwise find difficult. In the Year 1/ 2 class, the basics of reading, writing and number are taught very effectively, enabling all pupils to attain at the expected levels in national tests. In the Year 6 class, pupils' achievement has accelerated over the last two terms. This is because the teacher, who took over the class at that time, accurately assessed pupils' needs and through high expectations and well-focused teaching and support, has enabled them to succeed beyond the school's expectations, especially in English.
16. In all lessons observed in the Year 3 / 4 class, pupils did not learn sufficiently well because the tasks set were ill matched to pupils' needs and the explanations given and questions asked, confused rather than clarified pupils' understanding. In an unsatisfactory, mathematics lesson, Year 3/ 4 pupils were required to order a series of fractions, a task requiring knowledge well beyond them. Despite their willingness to persevere, they became frustrated with their lack of success and were left no wiser because of the lack of any recognition that the task was far too difficult for them or of how they could possibly have tackled it.
17. In most lessons, including the Year 3 / 4 class, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. As a result, lessons proceed in an orderly and positive manner in which good relationships and respectful attitudes are well promoted. This positive aspect of the teaching contributes well to pupils' moral and social development.
18. The teaching assistants, who work in partnership with class teachers to support learning, contribute well to pupils' achievements, especially those pupils with special educational needs. They play a major role in ensuring that all pupils play a full part in lessons by prompting and providing further explanations. Their work with small groups on very focused tasks enable pupils, who find learning or behaving well more difficult, to succeed and often reach expected standards. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. There are effective procedures for identifying pupils with learning difficulties. Close liaison with the nursery (which shares the same site) ensures that there is a smooth transition to the reception class. Most staff are highly sensitive to individual pupils' needs and are skilled at patiently identifying when pupils need a different approach, particularly when pupils from other schools join St Joseph's, which an increasing number do. Many staff have specialised knowledge and experience of working closely with pupils with behavioural and learning difficulties and support them well.
19. Although the school has acknowledged that pupils need to be more involved in evaluating their own progress and in working more independently, this aspect has still not developed sufficiently. As a result, pupils are sometimes reluctant to take the initiative and despite having targets set for them, in English and mathematics, are insufficiently involved in assessing their progress towards these targets or their achievements in other subjects. This is a relative weakness in otherwise satisfactory assessment. Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly and in the best examples give pointers about how to improve aspects of their work. Increasingly, class teachers are using test data to influence their planning to better match tasks to pupils' needs. However, this is not done as well when assessing the needs of the more-able mathematicians and as a result, some underachieve.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a **satisfactory** curriculum with **good** opportunities for enrichment. The accommodation and resources make a satisfactory contribution to the quality of pupils' education.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The key skills of speaking, listening, and reading are planned effectively and there is now a well-resourced library for the further development of pupils' research skills.
- The curriculum is good for pupils with special educational needs, but it does not fully meet the needs of the most-able pupils, particularly in mathematics.
- The curriculum is well-planned for Years 1 and 2 pupils where tasks are closely matched to their ability.
- There has been improvement in the accommodation and resources since the last inspection, but there are still some gaps in the range of resources for the Foundation Stage and for ICT.
- A good range of enriching experiences, including the teaching of Italian to the pupils in Years 3 to 6, lay strong foundations for later stages of education.

### **Commentary**

20. Since the last inspection, the school has developed a much broader curriculum that encourages pupils to be more independent and to take more risks in their learning. Pupils are given more freedom to think for themselves and to develop self-discipline, confidence and skills for life. The school has risen to the challenge of planning for the increasing number of pupils who have various barriers to learning and effectively meets their needs. It is not, however, as effective for more-able pupils, particularly in mathematics. The school is now developing investigative work in mathematics and science, but this is still not strong enough. Curricular development has been hampered by unavoidable staff absence.
21. The school has greatly improved the health and safety of the buildings and the playground. Because of the urban situation, the size of the playground and the lack of a playing field limit the physical education curriculum. However, the school has gone some way to overcoming this obstacle by the establishment of strong sporting links with another local school and invites external coaches to the school to work with pupils. Facilities for ICT have improved, with the establishment of a dedicated ICT suite, a number of interactive whiteboards and additional computers that will enable pupils to have access to the Internet in the classroom. The provision for outdoor play in the Foundation Stage has improved.
22. The school provides good enrichment opportunities and support for learning outside the school day. Although the school is smaller than average, it offers pupils a good range of opportunities. Although pupils have not participated in any residential visits since 2003, links with other schools have been strengthened and more creative approaches to history, art and design and religious education curricula have been developed, particularly through pupils' study of the school's Victorian heritage. The clubs on offer include a variety of sports and ICT. Enrichment activities include a good range of visitors from the local community, which complement the school's good provision for pupils' personal, social and emotional development very well. The school meets statutory requirements including those for sex and relationship education and making pupils aware of the dangers of the misuse of drugs. A good example is the sacramental programme, which embraces partnership and actively involves the local parish community. Pupils enjoy and greatly benefit from enrichment in the arts through

welcoming artists in residence, visiting an art gallery, and creating their own art gallery in school.

23. Innovative approaches to the curriculum include: Italian lessons, more emphasis on drama, music and active learning in religious education and personal development such as 'circle time', healthy school initiatives, and the development of the school as a living history resource. The legal requirements for collective worship are met. Teachers have started to organise tasks in creative subjects so that pupils can follow their projects through to a meaningful conclusion without interruption. There are also some imaginative links between different subjects, for example, linking writing in different styles with topics in history and geography.
24. The range of experiences provided for children in reception is satisfactory. There is a good balance of activities that are led by adults and where children are independent, but the range of resources is limited and this restricts opportunities for children to explore and investigate for themselves. Improvements in provision include the space for role-play, shared reading and a small outdoor area shared with the nearby nursery.

### Care, guidance and support

The school's arrangements for looking after pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are **very good**. The monitoring of pupils' achievements and personal development is **satisfactory** overall. There are good arrangements for involving pupils through seeking, valuing and acting upon their views.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school takes very good care of all the pupils, ensuring that they spend their days in a safe, secure and healthy environment.
- The staff and governors value pupils' ideas and opinions about how to make the school a better place in which to learn and play.
- There are good arrangements to ensure that new pupils get a good and happy start to their school days.

### Commentary

25. The school works hard to ensure that the pupils are safe and secure throughout the school day. There are good health and safety policies and procedures in place. Risks are dealt with promptly and there are staff trained in first-aid on site. The parking arrangements, which were criticised by the previous inspection, have been improved and are now very good. Child Protection arrangements are very good, fully meeting the new requirements and include very good links with all the appropriate local agencies.
26. Staff respect and listen to pupils' ideas, whether they come from informal comments in the playground or more formal ones, for example, during personal, social and health sessions. There is a shared belief that pupils, whatever their age and ability, have valuable ideas and opinions about how to make the school a good place in which they can learn, grow up and have fun. The well-organised, elected Pupils' Council is the formal link between pupils and adults.
27. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well. They are well aware of individual pupil's needs and give good personal guidance and support. Potentially effective systems for checking pupils' academic progress have been in place for a relatively short time and have had too little time to fully address underachievement amongst some groups of pupils or more accurate target setting.
28. The care of pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils with a statement of special educational need receive their full entitlement of support. Pupils' progress is monitored well



through the tracking of individual data. The individual educational plans prepared for pupils are implemented systematically by class teachers and support staff. The format of the plans is consistent from teacher to teacher. Targets are short-term, measurable and achievable. Support staff successfully structure precise learning steps. All pupils have equal access to the whole curriculum. There are good arrangements to ensure that pupils who start their schooling at St. Joseph's are made to feel welcome. Close links with the privately run on-site nursery and taster sessions for pupils, parents and carers ensure that pupils have a good start to their school life.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most parents are pleased with the way the school educates and looks after their children.
- The school provides parents with a good range of information about their children's progress and what is happening in the school.
- The school welcomes parents' involvement in all aspects of school life and values their ideas and opinions.
- There are good arrangements to ensure Year 6 pupils have a smooth and happy transfer to the secondary schools.

### **Commentary**

29. Most parents are pleased with St. Joseph's Primary. They rightly feel that it is a good and caring school which is committed to helping their children to learn and grow up in a happy, secure environment which has Catholic beliefs and values at its very heart. The school believes in working closely with parents because of the positive impact that collaboration has on pupils' education. The headteacher operates an open door policy and parents are always welcome in school. Two consultation evenings a year and annual reports provide parents with good, formal information about their children's achievements and targets. There are briefing meetings for parents whose children are preparing for the national tests. Notice boards, a comprehensive prospectus, the governors' annual report, newsletters and curricular information keep parents closely in touch with events in school.
30. The school has close links with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and their views are actively sought at consultation meetings or review meetings. Parents are kept fully informed about the progress and the needs of their children and the vast majority attends review meetings.
31. The school listens and responds to parents' comments. Complaints, such as those about the effect that bad behaviour by a minority of pupils has on teaching and learning, are treated very seriously and dealt with promptly. There is a very active Parent and Teacher Association, which raises funds and supports school and social events throughout the year. From time to time questionnaires are used to seek out parents' views. The current redesign of end-of-year reports is the result of such a survey. Parents contribute to their children's education in a variety of ways. The majority support homework. Some are employed as support staff and others come into school as volunteer helpers.
32. The school works very closely with other local primary and secondary schools. As a result, pupils' education benefits from teachers' sharing ideas and expertise with colleagues in other schools and from pupils mixing with and learning from pupils of all ages and abilities. The links with the local secondary school, to which most Year 6 pupils transfer, are very good. Teachers from the secondary, visit St Joseph's to meet and to talk to the pupils about their new school. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to visit their new school to familiarise themselves with the building and facilities.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. Governance is satisfactory. Key staff make a satisfactory contribution to leadership and management. The school offers satisfactory value for money.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Effective strategic planning indicates an adequate understanding of what needs to improve.
- The procedures to ensure good quality teaching throughout the school are not fully successful.
- All senior managers promote inclusion well.
- The school's leadership and management forge effective links with partner schools and colleges.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well led and managed, contributing significantly to their good achievements.

### **Commentary**

33. The headteacher, together with the deputy headteacher, senior staff and governors have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve standards and the quality of teaching. This vision is well articulated in a clear and accessible school improvement plan, which identifies the raising of standards and achievement in mathematics and science and improving the quality of teaching and learning in at least two classes, as paramount.
34. As yet, the procedures for managing performance are not fully successful. The unsatisfactory teaching in the Year 3/ 4 class is being addressed, but the provision for these pupils continues to be unacceptable. Inspectors acknowledge that procedures to bring about improvement can be lengthy and that the school has taken measures to alleviate the impact on pupils' standards and achievement. Positive decisions about the deployment of staff, made during this academic year, have resulted in much better achievement in Year 6 since January 2005. The information gained from careful analysis of test data has been used well to focus support for pupils who might not otherwise have attained the expected standards in the Year 6 national tests. However, the underachievement of more-able pupils in mathematics has not been adequately addressed.
35. The school's leaders are fully committed to including all pupils in all the school has to offer. For example, pupils with special educational needs are well provided for and achieve well. The clubs organised before and after school provide opportunities for pupils who might otherwise find it difficult to participate in activities and homework, to engage in them. Pupils who find difficulties in behaving acceptably have individual targets to help them modify their behaviour and to play a full part in lessons. The denominational nature of the school with its strong sense of spirituality promotes an inclusive and positive ethos.
36. The school is open in nature, a feature commented on by parents as a positive change since the current headteacher was appointed. This willingness to forge close links with educational partners, such as local schools, colleges and the local education authority has resulted in a richer curriculum, improvements in the range of teaching and learning styles employed in classrooms and in enhanced provision in physical education.
37. Governors carry out their duties conscientiously, providing keen support and satisfactorily performing their roles and responsibilities to hold the school to account for

its financial stability, standards and legal requirements. Governors have not shied away from making difficult decisions, in the face of some parental opposition, to address weaknesses in teaching and learning.

38. Overall, key staff contribute satisfactorily to the leadership and management of the school. The deputy headteacher leads and manages the provision for pupils with special educational needs well. This makes a significant contribution to their good achievements. The recent inclusion of the most-able pupils on the register of those who may need special teaching programmes, is a welcome initiative. This promises to address the issue of the underachievement of the more-able pupils in mathematics. The foundation stage is well led, enabling pupils to make a secure start to their education.

***Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005***

| Income and expenditure (£) |         |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Total income               | 512,870 |
| Total expenditure          | 431,276 |
| Expenditure per pupil      | 334,322 |

| Balances (£)                        |        |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Balance from previous year          | 62,424 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 81,594 |

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING and SUBJECTS**

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

39. Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**. When children enter the reception class their attainment is generally in line with children of a similar age. However, on average, children's personal skills are less well developed than other areas of their learning. In all the areas of learning observed during the inspection, all children, including those with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well due to good teaching. A significant minority of children are on course to exceed the goals set for them by the end of reception. Adults are knowledgeable about equipping children with the skills they will need for the move to Year 1. Accommodation is satisfactory. The school has made good improvements to the accommodation since the last inspection. Although the quality of resources has improved since the last inspection, they remain unsatisfactory to support children's learning in their creative development. There are too few resources for inventive play or for exploratory, investigative activity. Leadership is good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable about the children's needs and knows what is needed for provision to improve further. She provides a good role model for the supportive team in the foundation stage.

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

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

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

- Children benefit from increasing opportunities to learn independently, but when expected to manage activities for themselves, many are unsure.
- The good relationships and very well managed sessions help children to feel secure and happy.

#### **Commentary**

40. There are very caring relationships to ensure the children enjoy their learning. The quality of teaching is good and children achieve well because of the clear routines, very good relationships, close family ties and the proximity of the nursery, with whom the outdoor space is shared. There are a number of children who start in reception with fewer personal skills than most. They learn to manage their own belongings well and behave very well. They benefit from learning alongside their classmates in Year 1, but are less mature and confident when they have the chance to make choices for themselves. The children are well supported through conversation with adults and by appropriate intervention when needed. An increasing range of opportunities is provided to develop children's confidence and personal skills. Overall, children reach the targets set for this area of their learning.

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

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

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

- Children benefit from working within the expectations set for Year 1.

- Sessions led by adults feature plenty of productive conversation and develop good reading and writing skills.

### **Commentary**

41. Teaching is good and children achieve well. Conversations between children and adults help the children to speak confidently when together as a class with Year 1 pupils. The phrases they use show that they have an average grasp of language. Teaching ensures that they understand and retell stories well. Children have effective skills to tackle new or unfamiliar words using the letter sounds they know. They thoroughly enjoy reading and looking at books. Children write competently, selecting words they know sensibly and thoughtfully. Children's successes are a result of good planning that aims to prepare them for their work in Year 1. By the end of the reception year most children read and write simple sentences. Most are on course to meet the goals expected for this area of their learning.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Effective teaching ensures that children gain a good knowledge of basic number and calculations.
- Children apply their knowledge well to solve simple problems.

### **Commentary**

42. Teaching is good. The needs of most children are met and sessions emphasise number and calculation with a level of challenge to make the children think. As a result, they show a good understanding of numbers to 10 and count forwards to 100 in tens. Most children add and subtract numbers to 10 and use their mathematical understanding to deal with simple problems involving shopping and money. They understand the terms *less than* and *more than*. Children's learning is good where activities span several of the different areas of learning. For example, the breadth of children's knowledge of the various shapes and spaces in their cardboard *fire-engine* was richly linked to an exciting visit to the fire station. Overall, children achieve well and meet the goals set for them by the end of reception.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a good range of new and interesting topics and ideas within sessions that are well supported by teachers and support staff.
- Limited resources restrict children's learning.
- Children use ICT well to help them gain a good knowledge of the world around them.

### **Commentary**

43. Teaching is good and children achieve well. Teacher's plans show that children's awareness of culture, places, the past and beliefs are successfully promoted through a good breadth of experiences including the use of ICT. Children have a good knowledge of simple maps and features encountered on their route to school. They draw their own maps with interesting and accurate detail and describe their observations well to their classmates. The good progress they make is a direct result of effective teaching sessions where adults guide conversations well and help children to understand key ideas. At times, however, the quality and range of resources are not stimulating enough to enrich learning and help children to achieve more. For example, in this aspect, there are few resources such as photographs, maps and other materials to help children explore and investigate their findings. The school's investment in ICT has helped the children to make good progress in other areas of their learning. Overall, the ideas they encounter help them to make good, rapid progress. It is as a result of this effective guidance that children meet the goals set for them by the time they enter Year 1.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children thoroughly enjoy the activities planned for them, are sensible and respond enthusiastically and promptly to instructions.
- Good use is made of the school hall to promote children's physical skills.
- Limited outdoor playground space restricts children's physical development.

### **Commentary**

44. Because of good teaching, children exceed the expectations for their age in some aspects of their physical skills. Children have plenty of opportunities to develop their skills in the school hall, for travelling, balancing and practising a range of other skills that they will use later in a variety of games. Their skills in manipulating and handling small tools and materials show that they are on course to reach the goals set for them. However, their good achievement is tempered by limited outdoor space for them to move freely, run around and calculate the risks of an activity for themselves. Staff make a great deal of effort to ensure a good range of experiences each week and compensate by additional sessions in the playground.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

45. In **creative development**, no judgement could be made about provision overall. However, indications are that children's ideas for inventive play and their skills when using paint, materials and media develop satisfactorily. They have sufficient time in role-play situations and sessions are organised to ensure that activities are linked to new exciting ideas. Because there are insufficient resources to enrich independent play, sometimes adults intervene too much. As a result, the potential for children to develop their creative expression is restricted.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although standards in Year 6 have improved this year, there has been underachievement for some pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- Standards in reading are very high throughout the school.
- Standards, teaching and achievement are good in the Year 1/ 2 class.
- Literacy and speaking skills are used well in a range of subjects.
- The library is a very good resource for the development of pupils' research skills.

## Commentary

46. In the Year 6, 2004 national tests, standards were well below those achieved nationally. This was mainly because a much smaller proportion than was the norm attained at the higher Level 5. Compared with similar schools, standards were average. In the 2004, Year 2 national tests, standards were well above average in reading and above average in writing. Compared with similar schools, standards in reading were very high and standards in writing, well above average.
47. Standards in Year 6 have risen this Year. This is the result of strong, purposeful teaching since January, when a change of teacher raised the expectations and challenge for pupils of all abilities. Achievement for pupils in Year 6 overall, however, is only satisfactory because they have not been challenged to the same degree throughout their time in Years 3 to 6. Their skills and knowledge have improved well recently, but they have only made expected progress compared to their potential ability. Achievement is good for less-able pupils. Standards are good for pupils in Year 1/ 2 class, and they achieve well, particularly in reading where they make very good progress.
48. Since the last inspection in 1999, standards in reading have been maintained despite the instability of the staffing and the increasing proportion of pupils with special educational needs. However, there have been dips in the standards of writing both in the national tests and in the work analysed during the inspection. Pupils enter Year 3 with good standards in speaking and listening, generally good standards in writing, and very good standards in reading. The school does not always build on this strong foundation with pupils making only satisfactory progress. The main reasons for this include:
- Inconsistencies in teaching, which do not ensure that most skills are developed in a sequential and systematic way.
  - There is a lack of consistency in the setting of homework and the use of home-school diaries.
  - The level of challenging work for more-able pupils in writing is not as high in Years 3, 4 and 5 as in Year 6.
49. Pupils throughout the school speak with confidence and understanding. By Year 2, pupils talk maturely about their work, listen attentively and respond well to instructions and the opportunities they have for discussions. Parents state that pupils are encouraged to be more confident and that they make very good progress in reading. They enjoy books and show a very good understanding of phonics and alphabetical order. Reading books are matched well to pupils' ability, and the home-school diaries help pupils build up their accuracy and fluency when tackling unfamiliar words. The more-able pupils read with fluency, expression and insight. They predict endings to

stories and discuss the plot and characters in an interesting and understanding way. Pupils' make good progress in writing. Many pupils in Year 2 construct stories with sequenced events, for example, in the form of small books or personal news. Many pupils write independently with good basic skills in handwriting and punctuation, and with satisfactory skills in terms of grammar and style.

50. By Year 6, pupils talk enthusiastically about the challenging books they enjoy and contribute keenly to class discussion. They listen well to all concerned and have highly imaginative ideas, as they did during a lesson about narrative writing. In reading, most are skilled, fluent readers who read a good range of challenging and high-quality writers of classic children's literature. Most pupils discuss the complexities of plot, setting and character in a critical and perceptive fashion. Most explain the catalogue system in the library and find the reference books they need from the good range of non-fiction texts. Pupils write fluently in a wide variety of styles. Much of this writing is strongly enriched by its use and development in work in other areas of the curriculum, such as history and religious education. Basic writing skills are developing and the emphasis on the high quality of creative work since January is testimony to the skills, determination and high expectations of the teacher.
51. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Consistently good purposeful teaching was observed in the Year 1/2 class and in Year 6, where confident teachers had high expectations and promoted active learning. In these classes, teachers motivate and encourage pupils to accept challenges. Pupils' work is assessed accurately and tasks set to develop pupils' independent learning skills. In other classes, where teaching was less effective, the pupils were not excited by their learning and consequently their behaviour deteriorated. This adversely affected their progress. Appropriate support was not available for pupils who needed to be focused on the task in hand. Overall, assessment procedures are good. However, not all the comments in pupils' books are sufficiently linked to pupils' learning targets. As a result, pupils' understanding of how they can improve is only satisfactory overall.
52. Leadership is good because the co-ordinator has a strong vision and a good awareness of areas to develop. There have been limited opportunities to manage the subject effectively, mainly because of staffing issues. Management is satisfactory, with some aspects that are good. The energy and purpose that the co-ordinator has put into checking and analysing data, trends and shortcomings are having a positive effect on pupils' progress. The school provides a good environment for English and literacy teaching. Writing and books are prominently displayed about the school and this sets a good example to the pupils. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

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

53. Pupils have highly competent reading and competent writing skills that are used well across a range of subjects, such as geography, history and religious education. The school has invested heavily in the extensive library, which is now a very good resource for the development of pupils' research skills. The use of ICT in literacy is good and there are plans to increase day-to-day access to the Internet when the stored computers are put into classrooms.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**



- A much higher proportion of Year 2 pupils than is the norm attain expected standards.
- More-able pupils underachieve throughout the school.
- Teaching is good in Year 2 and in Year 6, but it is unsatisfactory for Year 3 and small number of Year 4 pupils.
- Too many pupils in Years 5 and 6 fail to calculate quickly enough nor do they apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding sufficiently well to solve problems accurately.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

## Commentary

54. Standards in the 2004, Year 6 national tests were below average compared with all schools and in line with the performance of pupils in similar schools. Data indicates that the progress made between Year 2 and Year 6 by these pupils was poor. However, a combination of high mobility amongst the cohort and considerable disruption to their learning because of staffing issues, limited their ability to progress as well as they should. Standards in the present Year 6 are just below expectation. Whilst the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 is in line with expectations, that attaining at the higher Level 5 is below what it should be.
55. In the 2004, Year 2 national tests, a similar pattern, as that found in Year 6, emerges. A higher proportion than average attained the expected Level 2, but a well below average percentage attained the higher Level 3. Compared with similar schools, standards were average overall. Currently, standards are above expectations in Year 2 and reflect last year's national test results with all pupils attaining Level 2 but with less than expected attaining at the higher Level 3.
56. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a good grounding in basic number work and an understanding of simple two- and three-dimensional shapes, enabling them to calculate accurately and to competently recognise the properties of shapes. The school's analysis of pupils' strengths confirms these. The same analysis reveals weaknesses in the speed of pupils' mental recall of number facts and relationships and in them checking the accuracy of their answers. This latter weakness exists throughout the school and contributes significantly to the fact that too few pupils attain higher levels in national tests in both Year 2 and Year 6. Although pupils are capable of understanding what they have to do to solve problems involving several steps, their slowness in calculating at each stage, often means that they lose the thread of what they are doing and fail to arrive at the correct answer. Even the more-able pupils fail to estimate initially and then to finally check their answer, which results in inaccurate answers to calculations that they are fully capable of solving.
57. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 2 and 6 is good. Brisk well-paced lessons, with clearly stated objectives, result in good achievement for most pupils. Teachers use resources such as interactive whiteboards and computer software effectively to interest pupils and to reinforce mathematical concepts and to clarify more complex ideas. Evidence from pupils' books indicates that, although more recently pupils have been required to apply their existing knowledge to solve more open-ended questions, the lack of this approach earlier in pupils' education has been a contributing cause of the lack of achievement amongst the more-able. Teaching for Year 3 and some Year 4 pupils is unsatisfactory. Too much of the work set does not match pupils' needs and they are often left confused by the teacher's questions. Marking is inconsistent, often cursory and somewhat negative. As a result, many pupils in this class make insufficient progress. In the lesson observed in this class, the main task set for pupils was far too difficult and pupils' learnt little about the ordering of fractions.

58. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. Data from national tests and the school's tracking system show many of these pupils attaining at the expected level, especially those in Years 1 and 2. In the main, these pupils are set tasks that challenge them and link well with the targets contained in their individual education plans. Good quality support from teaching assistants enables them to be fully included in lessons and to have the extra guidance and prompting required enabling them to keep up.
59. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator has ensured that the National Numeracy Strategy, which was implemented much later than in most schools, is now fully taught and that the curriculum is becoming more balanced with a sufficient breadth of topics. Whilst there is still some way to go in extending pupils' ability to speedily apply their existing understanding to solve problems and to use their knowledge of number relationships to simplify their calculations, there is ample evidence that these areas are improving well. The co-ordinator provides a positive role model for other staff through her good teaching. Assessment and tracking systems, although potentially useful in improving standards, have not been in place long enough to have their full effect. Resources have improved, especially to help address the relative weaknesses in mental mathematics, as a result of the co-ordinator persuasively lobbying for funds.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

60. Pupils' mathematical skills are promoted satisfactorily in other subjects. The pupils draw graphs and tables in science and geography. They apply their measuring skills in science, history and design and technology and frequently use ICT to solve mathematical problems and for pupils with special educational needs to reinforce and practise their basic skills in number, space, shape and handling data.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

- Pupils in Years 2 and 6 benefit from good teaching.
- Pupils' progress has been uneven in Years 3 to 6 because of staff absences.
- There is inconsistent challenge for more-able pupils and some unsatisfactory teaching for pupils in Year 3 and for some in Year 4.

#### **Commentary**

61. In 2004, Year 6 national tests pupils' attainment was well below that of similar schools and low when compared to all schools. The small number of pupils assessed or taking the national tests in any one year includes a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In addition, in recent years, as many as half of the pupils in Year 6 have started at the school in their junior years. The effect of this has been that results during this period have not been as high as they might. Teachers' assessments over several years indicate that nearly all pupils in Year 2 attain the expected level, but too few reach the higher Level 3.
62. Findings from the inspection show that the school has raised standards and achievement in Year 6, to a satisfactory level. This turnaround has come about by

swift action on the part of the headteacher to ensure that pupils in Year 6 have had good teaching after an unsettled first term. As a result, for the final two terms Year 6 pupils, achieved well. Unconfirmed 2005 national test results show that most pupils attained national expectations and that an expected proportion achieved the higher Level 5. These results are a fair reflection of pupils' good efforts and the effective teaching over the last two terms. However, the school is aware that there is more to do to consolidate these gains.

63. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Where teaching is best, in Years 2 and 6, teachers question and prompt pupils well. Instructions are clear and well-directed questions help pupils to discuss complex ideas. When teaching is good it helps pupils to clearly understand scientific facts and principles. In good lessons, pupils learn well through practical exploration, which gives them opportunities test hypotheses, compare their findings and to logically record their findings. Pupils have opportunities to apply their knowledge to solve problems and to organise themselves into teams to work together to complete tasks. For example, pupils in the Year 4/ 5 class have had opportunities to observe plant growth, to examine simple patterns in nature and to carry out a fair test. However, analysis of pupils' work in Year 3/ 4 class shows weaknesses because of unsatisfactory teaching. In recent months, these pupils have achieved very little and their work has not been marked sufficiently. They make great efforts to learn in lessons, but do not understand vital scientific ideas because they are not explained well enough nor are they given relevant explanations or examples.
64. Effective leadership has helped to ensure that the full breadth of scientific activities is provided. This has led to good improvements in scientific enquiry during this academic year.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well because they work effectively on their own at tasks relevant to many areas of their learning.
- Year 6 pupils do not have an adequate knowledge about control and monitoring because it is not fully resourced.
- The use of interactive whiteboards to support learning in other subjects is developing well.
- Currently there is insufficient information about how well pupils' progress in ICT.

### **Commentary**

65. Improvement since the last inspection, although satisfactory overall, has been impeded recently due to a high level of staff absence. This has affected several aspects of the subject, most notably, leadership and management, teaching and learning and achievement for pupils in Year 6. This particular class has not been able to consolidate its learning as the other classes have because they have experienced disruption to their learning over a period of time. The school has recently improved the curriculum, with help from external advisers, but because this change is so recent, pupils in Year 6 have not yet had the opportunity to cover all aspects of learning, notably control and monitoring. Currently standards and achievement, apart from in the latter aspect, are satisfactory.

66. Pupils' work, and their competence in ICT are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2, which is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities in Years 1 and 2 are confident logging onto computers and using a range of software packages, including CD-ROMs to support their work across the curriculum. They achieve well because teachers make the subject meaningful, make good links to literacy and numeracy, and explain procedures skilfully and clearly. Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are satisfactory.
67. Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are satisfactory overall, however, in some lessons pupils are not given clear instructions and do not progress at an appropriate pace. Pupils in Year 3 and some in Year 4 underachieve when familiarising themselves with search engines because teaching is unsatisfactory, and does not help pupils to progress sufficiently. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 demonstrate that they have learned a good range of ICT skills this year and are on course to cover National Curriculum requirements and attain at a level expected for their age. Some teachers are skilled in the use of interactive whiteboards in classrooms, but the pupils' role in this is not yet as active as it might be. There are appropriate plans to increase staff expertise even further in order to tackle any remaining weaknesses in provision and to fill any gaps in pupils' learning.
68. Since the last inspection, there have been good improvements in the accommodation available for ICT. In addition to the creation of a dedicated ICT suite, the school has furnished classrooms with interactive whiteboards and equipped the library with additional workstations. There is now a wider range of software to support learning in most branches of ICT. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator has been pro-active in introducing the wider range of resources and has very recently initiated a potentially useful system for assessment. However, this has not been in use long enough for it to have made an impact on raising standards and achievement.

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

69. Provision is satisfactory and is improving quickly. Although teachers plan meaningful links with most other subjects, they do not always make the most use of computers to give pupils regular opportunities to apply their skills to support their work. Pupils have a good understanding of the uses of ICT in everyday life. Work for Year 6 pupils in the ICT after-school club promotes the wider use of their skills. Literacy and numeracy lessons are timetabled once a week in the ICT suite for each class and this provides pupils with satisfactory opportunities to apply their ICT skills in these subjects.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography and History**

70. There was too little evidence to make judgements about provision in either subject. Evidence available indicates that pupils enjoy a **geography** curriculum that follows national guidelines and which enables them to acquire knowledge and skills about map making, physical and climatic features, environmental issues and to learn about how people live in other parts of the world.
71. **History** has a high profile within the well balanced curriculum, with a particular emphasis on the Victorian era during which the local area was vibrant with commerce and industry. The school is one of the oldest Victorian school buildings in the country and great emphasis is placed on this aspect of its heritage. Annually, pupils enjoy the

*Victorian week*, which incorporates many activities involving visits and visitors, adding considerably to pupils' knowledge and understanding of their history. High quality opportunities exist for re-enacting life in Victorian schools and workplaces and for extending the range of pupils' styles of writing. In the good quality Year 6 lesson observed concerning Britain since 1948, further evidence of imaginative teaching was in evidence. Pupils excitedly took turns to search in the *bran tub* for artefacts, which represented the everyday technologies of 40 and 50 years ago, so that they could compare and contrast them with those they use now.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

### **Art and design**

72. It was not possible to make a judgement about provision in art and design. Pupil's work in Year 6 indicates that they attain standards similar to most pupils their age and they produce detailed sketches of objects they have found. In Years 1 and 2, flowers were used as the stimulus for vibrant, expressive textile designs.

### **Design and technology**

73. Few samples of design and technology work were available during the inspection and, therefore, it is not possible to make a judgement about provision. However, pupils' work in Year 6 indicates that standards are satisfactory. Their sense of design is good, and the money containers they designed were interesting, individual and showed thought about purpose and construction. This was reflected well in their writing, in which pupils establish the strengths and weaknesses of their work.

### **Music**

74. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about provision in music. However, the teaching of singing is consistently good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy singing lessons and sing with great pleasure. Pupils in Year 6 achieve well. They demonstrate satisfactory understanding of musical terminology and the quality of rehearsal is good. Year 2 pupils sang Sea Shanties, in preparation for performing to the rest of the school, with a good sense of melody and harmony. Singing in collective worship is good and adds much to pupils' sense of spirituality.
75. Three sessions of music were observed, all of which were led by a specialist teacher. Pupils learn different kinds of songs and many of these are linked into their study of history, adding a breadth to their understanding of, for example, the Victorians. The teacher uses pupils' responses very well to blend in actions that add to their performance. Year 3 and 4 pupils demonstrate their good awareness of their audience and are disciplined in their pose and sing with good phrasing and clear diction. The specialist teacher's very good management of all pupils is combined with very good subject knowledge and the ability to get the best out of the pupils. The resources are satisfactory and instruments from around the world are well represented.

### **Physical education**

76. Due to limited time, it was not possible to make an overall judgement about provision. One lesson in the reception / Year 1 class was observed, discussions were held with staff and pupils and documentation analysed. From this evidence it is possible to say that the school offers a curriculum in line with National Curriculum guidance and that good efforts have been made recently to improve provision. As a result of perceptive leadership, relative weaknesses have been identified in pupils' skills in gymnastics and dance and effective steps have been taken to enhance teaching in these areas, through the employment of specialist teachers from partner schools and colleges. Year 6 boys, for example, enjoy dance because of high quality teaching from a lecturer from a local college. Good improvements in outdoor games, since the last inspection, have resulted from the close partnership with a local primary school, which offers an all-weather pitch that pupils in Years 3 to 6 use weekly.

77. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 choose to participate in athletics and basketball clubs. Those in Years 3 to 6 have a netball club and there is a thriving Irish dancing club, which pupils enjoy in good numbers and which reflects the particular history of the local area. Currently, there are few opportunities for pupils to participate in adventurous sports and there have been no residential visits for the past two years.

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

78. It was not possible to report in full on PSHE or to make an overall judgement about provision. One lesson was observed, documentation analysed and discussions held with staff. It is clear from this that pupils enjoy a varied and relevant curriculum, promoting their personal and social development well. Pupils have weekly circle time sessions, which are conducted sensitively, within a calm and positive atmosphere. In the good Year 6 lesson observed, pupils considered issues about forming new relationships at secondary school, rehearsing ways in which they might initiate conversation with potential new friends.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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



*poor (6); very poor (7).*