

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Henley-in-Arden

LEA area: Warwickshire

Unique reference number: 125711

Headteacher: Mrs E Taylor

Lead inspector: Mr C Parker

Dates of inspection: 27th to 29th September 2004

Inspection number: 267876

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	61
School address:	Arden Road Henley-in-Arden Warwickshire
Postcode:	B95 5LT
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Treacy
Date of previous inspection:	22 nd October 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

There are sixty-one pupils on roll, seven more than when it was inspected in 2002. All of the pupils speak English as their first language. The pupils travel from quite a large area although the majority live in Henley-in-Arden. The pupils come from diverse social backgrounds. About half of the pupils are from Catholic families. They are taught in three classes by three full-time and two part time teachers.

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average at nearly one third, and one pupil has a statement. The school has recently taken a few pupils who have experienced difficulties at other schools. The attainment of the pupils on entry to the school is broadly average but it does fluctuate from year to year with some cohorts having a higher proportion of pupils with below average attainment.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11897	Christopher Parker	Lead inspector	<i>Mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology geography, special educational needs</i>
9003	Bryan Findley	Lay inspector	
19387	Mari Powell	Team inspector	<i>English, history, music, physical education, Foundation Stage curriculum, personal, social and health education.</i>

The inspection contractor was :

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	14
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	16
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall **effectiveness of the school is satisfactory**. The school is continuing to move forward and there is a strong commitment to improve further. Currently, the pupils are achieving satisfactorily and standards are rising. The teaching is satisfactory overall. Leadership is satisfactory and management is good. The school currently provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are improving but are below average in geography
- Literacy and numeracy skills are not being promoted strongly enough across the curriculum
- Most of the lessons are well managed and organised by the teachers but marking is not consistently effective in helping the pupils to improve
- The development of the pupils' personal qualities is well supported
- Behaviour, attitudes and relationships are good
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good
- There is good parental support for the school
- Monitoring is comprehensive but not sufficiently focussed on outcomes

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the school was inspected in 2002 and standards have risen steadily. The proportion of pupils attaining higher levels has increased in English and science but not in mathematics. Although satisfactory overall, the proportion of good teaching has increased and the subject leaders are increasingly involved in school improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Overall **achievement is satisfactory**. The pupils are making a good start in the Foundation Stage and achieve well in Years 1 and 2; achievement is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Most of the children reach the goals expected by the end of the reception year. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in the core subjects are currently average overall and are continuing to improve.

Because all cohorts are small in number, there are inevitable fluctuations in the results of national tests from year to year but, overall, the trend of improvement exceeds the national average. In 2003 there was a significant improvement in comparisons with similar schools at the end of Year 6, on the basis of prior attainment, when they were average overall. The inspection found that although the pupils are achieving satisfactorily and standards are average in English and mathematics there are aspects of these subjects, notably in writing and using and applying mathematics where standards are not consistently as high as they should be. At the moment pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. In science and ICT standards are average; in physical education the pupils demonstrate good skill levels and achieve well. Inspection of the pupils' work in geography lessons and books shows their achievements are unsatisfactory.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	A	C	C
mathematics	E	D	D	D
science	C	D	C	B

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

Behaviour is generally good. In most lessons the pupils listen carefully, respond thoughtfully and concentrate on their work. Those pupils who find it difficult to settle to work are well managed. Most pupils have positive attitudes and enjoy school life. Relationships are good throughout the school. **Personal development, including the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** A sense of spirituality is present in assemblies and in the emphasis placed on the development of the pupils as individuals. The pupils are confident and accept responsibilities. Attendance is above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory.** The **teaching is satisfactory** overall. In the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 it is good. The lessons are well paced and tasks appropriately challenging. In Years 3 to 6 the teaching is satisfactory. In a number of the lessons seen the teaching was good and in one lesson very good. Most lessons engage the pupils who make secure gains in their learning. However, the pupils' work in their books, for the last academic year, highlights that expectations are not consistently high enough and that marking is not effective in helping the pupils to improve.

The curriculum is satisfactory and covers all subjects but the extensive use of worksheets restricts the opportunities the pupils have to write in different contexts across the curriculum. Similarly, opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills are not fully exploited. Resources are good but in some respects the accommodation is inadequate. Beneficial links with the local college overcome some of the limitations of the accommodation through the use of its very good facilities for physical education. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported and work well towards the targets set for them. The care, welfare and safety of the pupils are good. Provision of support, advice and guidance is good and based on effective monitoring of both academic and personal development. Good account is taken of pupils' views about the school through the school council. The school promotes a good relationship with parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, **leadership and management are satisfactory.** The leadership is satisfactory. Management and governance are good. The headteacher and governors work together well to shape the vision and direction for the school's work. The governing body supports the school effectively and make visits to the school so can see for themselves what the school does well and the improvements can be made. All statutory requirements are met.

The school has an improvement plan which provides a strategic direction for the school. There is a strong commitment to maintain and extend the improvements made in the last few years. The headteacher provides a good teaching role model and has established comprehensive systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and the pupils' work. However, at the moment too much emphasis is placed on the processes rather than their impact. Similarly good systems track the performance of the pupils through annual tests.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most of the pupils say they like school and the vast majority of parents are very satisfied with the progress the pupils are making. Some parents feel they are not given enough information about how their child is getting on. Inspectors agree that some annual written reports, although detailed, do not give a clear evaluation of each pupil's progress or how they compare with the expectations for their age.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school should continue its efforts to improve standards in writing and mathematics paying particular attention to:

- Creating more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum
- Ensuring the pupils' work is marked effectively so they know what to do to improve it

In addition steps should be taken to:

- Sharpen the focus of monitoring to give a clearer evaluation of the impact of the school's work
- Improve the teaching and pupils' achievement in geography

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, achievement is satisfactory. Standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved but they are not yet as high as they should be in writing and using and applying mathematics
- Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good
- The pupils are making a good start in the Foundation Stage
- Standards in physical education are above average
- In geography standards are not high enough

Commentary

1. In the Foundation Stage, most of the children attain the early learning goals set for them. At an early stage in the year most are settling well in to school life and achieving well in all areas of learning. Although there are good, well planned opportunities for outdoor learning these do not extend to working with larger apparatus. The inadequacy of the accommodation for physical development is, to some degree, overcome by using the facilities of the nearby college.
2. All cohorts are small in number and, therefore, the data from results of national tests must be interpreted with some caution. There are inevitable fluctuations from year to year but overall the trend of improvement exceeds the national average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Since 2000 when the results were very low there has been a steady improvement to a position where results in 2003 were broadly similar to the national average for Year 6. The results in 2004 maintain this trend. In the last two years girls have out performed boys but before that the position was reversed. The cohorts often have more boys than girls or visa versa; there is no evidence of significant gender variation in lessons.
3. While there are variations in the results between subjects a pattern of stronger attainment in reading and mathematics than in writing emerges from the Year 2 tests results. By Year 6 English and science appear stronger than mathematics. The results of the 2004 tests also extend these trends. Evidence from lessons indicates that improvements made by the school continue to have an impact and are steadily raising standards and increasing the pupils' achievements. Currently standards in the core subjects of English and mathematics are broadly average and the pupils are achieving satisfactorily. However, standards are not yet as high as they should in writing and pupils are not yet using and applying their mathematical knowledge as well as they should. Similarly, opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills are not fully exploited either in the pupils mathematics work or in other subjects such as design and technology or science.
4. Overall, comparisons with similar schools in 2001 and 2002 show the results to be well below average. However, in 2003 there was a significant improvement in comparisons with similar schools at the end of Year 6, on the basis of prior attainment, when they were average overall.
5. In science the results have been broadly average over the last four years and scrutiny of the pupils' work indicates that this remains the case. The pupils are achieving satisfactorily but here again some work sheets have a restricting rather than challenging impact on the tasks the

teachers' set. A recent monitoring exercise identified this and remedial action has now been taken to ensure greater challenge for the oldest pupils.

- Standards in ICT are in line with expectations; in physical education the pupils demonstrate good skill levels and achieve well. Inspection of the pupils' work in geography lessons and in their geography books shows that standards are not high enough and their achievements are unsatisfactory. The work set for the older pupils is superficial and expectations of what they can achieve are too low.
- The vast majority of parents feel that their child is making good progress. While discussions with the pupils suggest most feel they are doing well, some acknowledge that they could work harder.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.6 (17.6)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.1 (15.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.1 (17.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

The table showing standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 has been omitted because there were fewer than 10 pupils in the cohort in 2003.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Behaviour is generally good. Most pupils have positive attitudes to their work and enjoy school life. Personal development, including the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Attendance is above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are good throughout the school
- Pupils are confident and accept responsibilities
- Those pupils who are restless and find it difficult to settle down are generally well managed

Commentary

- In most lessons the pupils listen carefully and respond thoughtfully. They are interested and concentrate on their work but occasionally the tasks do not engage the pupils sufficiently. In one lesson where this was the case the pupils' behaviour also suffered but in almost all lessons they behave well and work together effectively. On the playground pupils of all ages play well together and, although pupils say that others occasionally fall out, parents feel that any difficulties are resolved quickly. In some instances the school council is involved, listening to the points of views of the pupils in dispute and helping them to find a resolution.
- Relationships are strong. This is very evident from when the pupils start school in the Foundation Stage, where the teacher very effectively fosters positive relationships which results in most of the pupils achieving the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, to Year 5 and 6 where the older pupils act as playground buddies to ensure that all pupils are happy and involved in activities at playtimes.

10. In conversation, the pupils are articulate and confident because the teachers give them good opportunities to talk to the class, for example, to explain the strategies they have used in mathematics. This also promotes the pupils' self esteem, as does the recognition of their achievements in the 'gold book' which has a prominent place in the foyer.
11. The school has a strong Christian ethos. The morning assemblies provide good opportunities for the pupils to consider issues that transcend the daily activities of the school. A sense of spirituality is present in assemblies and in the emphasis placed on the development of the pupils as individuals. The school seeks to give them an insight into their own worth, and their place in the school and the wider world. This was evident in an assembly which focused on Yom Kippur and ended with a discussion with the older pupils which heightened their awareness of racism. The strong moral and social development of the pupils is exemplified by the way all pupils are fully included in lessons. The teaching assistants are very active and successful in promoting the involvement of all pupils.
12. The pupils enjoy coming to school, and their parents say that they would willingly go to school in the holidays because they like it so much.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.2	School data	0.4
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The teaching is satisfactory overall, the curriculum is broad and the care and welfare of the pupils is good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are all satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 the teaching is good
- Many lessons encourage and engage the pupils
- The marking is not well focussed on promoting improvement

Commentary

13. The effective teaching in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 was evident both in the lessons observed during the inspection and the pupils' work and their achievements. The

teaching is based on a good relationship with the pupils and high expectations of behaviour. The one or two pupils who sometimes find it difficult to settle quickly are managed firmly and effectively, so there is no disruption to learning. The lessons are well paced and tasks appropriately challenging. A very good example was seen during a science lesson for Years 1 and 2 where the pupils were given wires, batteries and a bulb and asked to find out how to light the bulb. The teacher motivated and encouraged the pupils, who were very motivated by the task, to explore a range of possible solutions. Skilful questioning extended the task and challenged the pupils. As a result, they achieved very well.

14. The good working relationship between the teacher and her assistant ensures that effective support is given to all groups in the demanding situation where Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 are all taught in the same class.
15. In Years 3 to 6 the teaching is satisfactory. In a number of the lessons seen the teaching was good and in one lesson very good but the pupils' work in their books, for the last academic year, highlights that expectations are not consistently high enough and that marking is not effective in helping the pupils to improve. Expectations of handwriting and presentation are too relaxed and, on occasions, the pupils do not do enough work to complete tasks to the levels of which they are capable. Monitoring of the pupils' work by the headteacher has identified the need to raise expectations further and there is evidence in most lessons that successful steps have been taken to increase the level of expectations placed upon the pupils.
16. The English and mathematics lessons observed in Years 3 to 6 were well planned, had an appropriate level of challenge and engaged the pupils who made secure gains in their learning. In one very good English lesson in Years 3 and 4 the teacher's lively approach, challenging questioning and good use of resources provoked a very energetic response from the pupils who concentrated well on their work and achieved very well. However, in geography this was not the case and the leisurely pace of one lesson resulted in the pupils not making enough progress. In this case the teaching was unsatisfactory and an inspection of the pupils' past geography work also revealed that not enough is being expected of the pupils in this subject.
17. The assessment and recording of the pupils' progress are now well established. The school has clear processes, particularly in the core subjects, for assessing the pupils' attainment and recording it so that it can be used to inform the teachers' planning. This complements the increasingly effective tracking of each cohorts' performance as they move through the school. However, the school's assessment strategy is weakened by an inconsistent and in some cases ineffective approach to marking the pupils' work. The best examples of marking are in Years 1 and 2 where the teacher follows up any comments she makes on the pupils' work and records their responses so that the pupils know how well they are doing. In Years 5 and 6, the marking encourages the pupils but too often it gives praise where it is clearly not deserved and occasionally praises work which is wrong. While shortcomings in marking have been recognised through monitoring activities, the school has not yet established a consistent and effective approach that helps the pupils to improve their work.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 14 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	3	5	5	1		

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.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactorily broad curriculum covering all subjects. Resources are good but some aspects of the accommodation are inadequate.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has an inclusive approach that enables all the children to participate fully
- The provision for physical education is good and benefits from specialist teaching
- Pupils do not have frequent enough opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum

Commentary

19. The school staff has a high level of awareness of individual needs and ensures that regular, good quality additional support is provided. As a result, pupils with special educational needs work well towards the targets set for them and have a positive attitude to learning.
20. The planning for the curriculum draws heavily upon national guidance and provides a broad and balanced diet. However, in geography the coverage of some topics is quite thin and, in addition, the pupils' literacy skills are not always promoted in their recorded work. Whilst some opportunities are provided for pupils to use and apply their numeracy skills in science here too they are too infrequent and sometimes constrained by the use of printed worksheets. Good progress has been made in the development of the pupils' skills in the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Older pupils spoke enthusiastically and confidently about their use of the Internet to research historical information. One pupil said he really enjoyed using the Internet for research and found it interesting.
21. There is an adequate range of extra-curricular activities, such as a board games and art club. The strength of the broader curriculum lies in provision for sport through taught lessons, clubs and opportunities to engage in football tournaments. These opportunities also enhance the pupils' social development. The link with Warwickshire College is highly regarded by parents as it provides specialist tuition in very good facilities. One parent felt it was a 'fantastic' arrangement. The pupils also benefit from specialist music provision. Visits and visitors provide additional interest for the pupils and contribute to their work in art and history.
22. The accommodation is well presented and provides a pleasant learning environment. However, the lack of a hall restricts the way collective worship can be organised as well as opportunities for drama and on-site physical education. The library, although stocked with books in good condition, is too small to provide an area where a whole class might browse or carry out research. There is a fenced area where the youngest children can engage in

activities but it is inadequate for the provision of a wide range of activities which compliment the otherwise good curriculum for the Foundation Stage.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare and safety of the pupils are good. Provision of support, advice and guidance is good and based on effective monitoring of both academic and personal development. Good account is taken of pupils' views about the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Health and safety arrangements are good
- Tracking of pupils' progress is good
- Teaching assistants provide good caring support
- Training of all staff in child protection is not sufficiently up-to-date

Commentary

23. The school provides a safe and caring place for pupils to learn and play. Routine risk assessments are made for activities in which pupils are involved. A member of the governing body is involved in regular site inspections and the reporting of day-to-day matters are well documented. There is an independent audit of all health and safety practice in the school.

24. Tracking of pupils' progress continues to be the basis for effective intervention where pupils are not achieving as they should. The pupils' progress in numeracy and literacy is monitored through test results and areas of weakness are identified for target setting. Personal development is also monitored well by teachers and classroom support assistants. Records are made where appropriate and thorough procedures record incidents of bullying. All this leads to good quality programmes of support, at times drawing on the expertise of the learning and behaviour support service. Parents are involved appropriately through an effective parent partnership project.

25. Classroom support assistants provide good levels of support because they are so well informed about the pupils they supervise and show high levels of commitment to the pupils' well-being. The assistants are included in monitoring arrangements and often assess pupils during lessons. All support assistants are trained in first aid and there is always an assistant on duty during playtimes. Pupils have high levels of trust and confidence in staff and feel well cared for.

26. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory overall and the designated teacher is properly trained and also experienced in child protection procedures. The school has an effective system of monitoring concerns through confidential records. Adult members of staff are issued with the school policy on child protection but there is no programme of formal training.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school promotes a good relationship with parents. Links with other schools and colleges are good and links with the community are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents think highly of the school
- Written reports do not always convey enough about progress or of ways to improve
- The views of parents are used effectively
- Links with a local college significantly enhance provision for physical education

Commentary

27. Parents express satisfaction in almost all areas of the school's work. They are generally pleased with the range of activities for pupils, induction arrangements, the way the school encourages pupils to mature and work hard and they feel comfortable approaching the school over suggestions or concerns. The inspection findings support these positive views. Parents have no significant concerns but a few speak of some bullying in the school and others would like better information about their children's progress. Bullying is not a persistent problem in the school; however, such incidents that occur are usually handled well by members of staff.
28. Information to parents is good overall, especially about the life of the school. Frequent newsletters are well written and cover a broad area of topics, so parents are well informed about events and school procedures. Curriculum information each term provides parents with a good idea of how to support their child at home. The school has introduced an additional consultation evening in response to previously expressed parental concern over information about progress. Reports on pupil progress are very detailed about what pupils are able to do but there is often not enough information about the actual progress being made or how pupils can improve in areas they are weak. Targets for improvement are at times too brief and confined to a single subject.
29. The school consults very well with parents both through informal contact and through questionnaires. An active and very supportive parent teacher association organises events to raise funds for school improvement but also provides an informal forum between parents and staff. The school is also closely involved with the local parish community. Questionnaires are used very effectively for specific purposes, such as in conjunction with the healthy schools project and to review the performance of the parent partnership project.
30. Links with other schools are good because of the positive impact they have on pupils' development. Limited accommodation at the school restricts the scope for physical education but good facilities are provided through arrangements with the Warwickshire College. The school also works closely with other primary schools. There is a very good relationship with the adjoining primary school, for example, in a joint project to support renovation of the local Jubilee Play Area. The school has also drawn well on the expertise of a local beacon school to aid its own development. Transfer arrangements with the secondary schools include dual teaching of transition units of work to provide continuity in the curriculum.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership is satisfactory. Management and governance are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher, governors and staff team work together well
- The governors provide good support and clear direction for the school
- The monitoring of the teaching, learning and the curriculum is comprehensive, but not incisive enough

Commentary

31. The headteacher and governors work together well to shape the vision and direction for the school's work. The governing body supports the school effectively. It compares the school's performance with that of others both nationally and locally, consults with local education authority officers about the school's effectiveness, considers the views of parents and allocates the resources at its disposal to improve the provision made for the pupils. The governors visit the school to find out for themselves what is happening. They make visits to lessons and report their observations to their colleagues. Consequently, they can see for themselves how the school operates. They know what the school does well and that further improvements can be made. The governors ensure that the school meets all requirements, for example, in respect of the curriculum and health and safety.
32. The school improvement plan gives a clear outline of the areas for improvement. The plan is strategic and based on the monitoring of progress made during the last few years. It is backed by action plans and takes account of an analysis of the pupils' progress. The headteacher works with all staff and governors to identify issues and areas for improvement. This process has helped to focus, for example, on raising standards, which have consequently improved steadily. There is a strong commitment to maintain and extend the improvements made in the last few years. The headteacher provides a good teaching role model in this respect and has taken on a central role in raising standards of one year group through an identified priority within the school improvement plan.
33. The headteacher provides clear leadership. As a result, the school has a very caring ethos. Positive relationships and teamwork result in a shared direction for further improvement. The subject leaders monitor the provision made for the pupils, but not the effect that this has on the pupils' achievements. Similarly, the monitoring of teaching, while frequent and supportive, focuses heavily on lesson planning and the management of the pupils rather than on evaluating its effectiveness. At the moment too much emphasis is placed on the processes rather than their impact. Steps to remedy evident weaknesses are sometimes not taken rapidly enough and have yet to secure sustained and consistently high expectations of, for example, the presentation of the pupils' work or an approach to marking which helps the pupils to improve their work. Steps have been taken to lighten the teaching load of the headteacher to create more time to ensure improvements are implemented rigorously and consistently.
34. The school is continuing to move forward and to seek improvements in the pupils' achievements. There is shared desire in the whole school community to be successful. Initiatives, such as the learning partnership with some parents are helping to maintain the momentum, but at the present time inconsistencies in approaches and expectations in teaching and assessment are fostering steady rather than rapid progress. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	236,362
Total expenditure	211,701
Expenditure per pupil	3,994

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	25,615
Balance carried forward to the next	24,661

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

35. There are eleven children in the reception class. They are taught in a class with pupils in Years 1 and 2. Overall, they generally make good progress to achieve the early learning goals by the time they are ready to begin the National Curriculum; those children who have just started the reception years are settling into school life well.
36. The teaching is of good quality. The teacher and learning support staff communicate well and already know their children both pastorally and academically. The environment is orderly and adequately resourced. However, the school recognises that the outside area needs improvement to provide a more stimulating range of activities and to further facilitate the flow of activities from indoors to out. At this early stage of the year the pupils have settled well because routines are made clear and the children are well supported.
37. In three of the nationally defined areas of learning a judgement about the quality of the provision could not be made because insufficient evidence was available. In **knowledge and understanding of the world**, the teacher's planning indicates an appropriate range of experiences that will allow the children reach the levels identified for the end of the reception year. The children have access to a range of activities in science, history and geography and other areas that help them to make sense of their world. It was not possible to observe activities in this area other than some work in information and communication and information technology where the children were confident in moving the mouse to change images on the screen. Through assemblies and lessons in religious education, they are encouraged to appreciate that there is a dimension beyond the purely physical, tangible world.
38. In one lesson observed in **physical development** children participated happily and enthusiastically with Year 1 and 2 pupils to work in small groups, practising their throwing and catching skills. Many also demonstrated an ability to move quickly and to change direction during a whole class warm up session. The children are energetic in the designated play area but it is too small to fully tax their physical skills and engender rapid progress. However, the children have a weekly opportunity to use specialist facilities and staff to foster their physical development.
39. No instances of work were seen in area of **creative development** but the classroom contains resources for a range of activities in art. The teacher's planning shows that appropriate attention is given to providing activities in music and art.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children have learned to settle to a task when they are asked to do so

Commentary

40. The level of maturity of the children differs quite widely from those who find it relatively easy to sit still and concentrate for a time to those who have short attention spans. However, these pupils make good progress because they are all treated with patience and courtesy by the staff whose aim it is to have all the children listening well, speaking in turn and able to undertake activities with a degree of independence. The staff are vigilant, for example when children play on wheeled vehicles in the outside area. They ensure that the children take turns to use the equipment and as a result all of the children become increasingly willing to share resources.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children learn to speak clearly and listen to each other
- Early reading and writing skills are well taught

Commentary

41. The children have made a good start towards achieving the early learning goals in speaking. They eagerly answer questions and take an interest in the shared class reader. They gradually recognise a wider range of initial sounds which enables them to read appropriately simple texts. They know the sounds and their names. They are introduced to letter shapes and a few are making the relevant marks to represent writing or beginning to form recognisable letters.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Numeracy skills are at an early stage but some children have developed an appropriate recognition of numbers to six.

Commentary

42. A few children recognise the numerals for five and ten. At this early stage, the assessment of what the children can do ensures that new work either reinforces or extends earlier learning. This was evident during a lesson where the skills of counting back were emphasised. The activities are suitably practical. For example, the children count as they throw bean bags into buckets or set out equipment for other activities. They greatly enjoy chanting counting rhymes which the teacher uses regularly to reinforce number understanding.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in writing are improving but are not yet high enough
- Standards in speaking and listening are above average
- The marking of work is not used consistently to help the pupils to improve

Commentary

43. Standards in English are broadly average and the pupils are achieving satisfactorily. The results of national tests are improving steadily but standards in writing are not yet as high as they should be. In the national tests in 2004 at the end of Year 6 the pupils made significant progress and improvements on the results they attained at the end of Year 2.
44. By the end of Year 2 the pupils are achieving average standards. Their completed work includes stories that are generally logically sequenced and shows that they are striving to write evenly, spacing their words appropriately and joining their letters. In lessons the pupils are reminded to use full stops and capital letters and encouraged to use their spelling books to develop correct spelling strategies. The teacher supports the pupils well referring to targets when marking their work. As a result the pupils are making good progress.
45. In Years 3 to 6 the work in the pupils' books is not of the high quality it should be. Discussions with the headteacher and the subject leader show that they recognise the shortcomings in the pupils' writing and presentation and have begun to address this in order to raise standards further. The pupils often have imaginative ideas, for example, for the opening sentence of their stories, but errors in basic punctuation and spelling sometimes detract from the content. Some pupils make limited use of suitable connective words to increase the complexity and interest of their sentences. A concerted effort is now being made to improve basic spelling patterns by having spelling aids available which the pupils can access independently. A very good example of this was seen in the Year 3 and 4 class.
46. The expectations placed on the older pupils to present their work using neatly formed and joined handwriting are too low. On the basis of the pupils' work from last year handwriting and the presentation of work are inconsistent and in some cases unsatisfactory.
47. Whilst the marking in Years 1 and 2 is effective, this is not consistently the case in Years 3 to 6. The marking of some of the older pupils' written work is encouraging and positive but it is not sharp enough to secure further improvement and is not always followed up. However, there is secure evidence that the pupils are striving to write in a lively and interesting style. Awareness of the quality of their vocabulary and their descriptive powers are improving. This is more evident in the work done during this term than in the past year.
48. Most of the pupils speak clearly and can express themselves in a logical manner. The encouraging approach of the teacher in Years 1 and 2 drew lively responses to a phoneme recognition activity. In a very good Year 3 and 4 literacy lesson, the pupils enthusiastically responded to questions about a shared text, often spontaneously offering observations. A conversation with a group of articulate and engaging older pupils about their work confirmed that levels of speaking and listening are above average.

49. Overall, attainment in reading is broadly average. Time is regularly spent encouraging the pupils to read and the pupils are directed to the books that are at the correct level and reflect the interests of either boys and girls. Higher attaining pupils read fluently and expressively while the younger pupils satisfactorily read appropriate fiction and non-fiction texts. Some very good reading was heard in the Year 3 and 4 class as pupils and the teacher took parts to read a dialogue from 'Street Child'.
50. The literacy programme is carefully prepared by the teachers and the members of the support staff are well briefed. The pupils with special educational needs are satisfactorily developing their literacy skills because they are well supported. There is a good balance of reading, writing and speaking and issues such as spelling and grammar are now receiving close attention in order to raise standards further.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. The pupils' writing within literacy lessons is showing signs of improvement. However, the basic skills of punctuation, spelling and grammar are often not practised in other subjects where less demanding forms of recording are expected. In, for example, geography and history the pupils have too few opportunities to practise their writing skills. Over reliance on work sheets in some cases denies the older pupils purposeful opportunities to write for different purposes and in a range of contexts.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving
- Pupils are making increased progress because the teaching is good
- The pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to use and apply what they have learned

Commentary

52. Four mathematics lessons were seen. They were well planned and catered appropriately for the different age and ability groups within each class. Currently standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and the pupils are making good progress in the lessons. A scrutiny of the pupils' work from last year shows the pupils' achievements to be satisfactory and inspection evidence indicates that on-going improvements are having a positive impact on the pupils' learning. As a result standards and achievement are improving.
53. In Years 1 and 2 the cohorts are very small, however, the teacher meets their needs well. The pupils begin the lessons with a mental warm-up that practises their counting and adding. The teacher modifies these activities well so that the older and more able pupils, for example, add on nine or eleven while some of the younger Year 1 pupils are adding numbers to ten. A variety of tasks are similarly modified and supported by both the teacher using number squares and number lines to help the pupils' understanding. The needs of the more able pupils are managed well by the teacher skilfully targeting her questions to ensure

all are involved and all challenged. The results of national tests at the end of Year 2 have improved in recent years from well below average in 2000 to well above average on 2003. In 2004 the results were broadly average but the cohort was very small. The evidence from the pupils' past work also supports the view that standards are average and that pupils are making good progress because they are well taught.

54. In Years 3 and 4 the teaching was clear, systematic and logical and helped the pupils to increase their understanding of sequences and to achieve well. In this lesson, the pupils were challenged and well supported by the teacher. In Years 5 and 6 a good mental activity led to work on the problem solving. A useful approach to problem solving was discussed briefly but not fully exploited. Nevertheless, the pupil made good progress in the lesson. The pupils with the potential for higher attainment were set a more demanding task and they responded well. Pupils with special educational needs were set appropriate tasks and achieved well in the lesson because they were well supported by the teaching assistant.
55. Although the pupils are well taught and their achievement in lessons is good, this does not provide the complete picture. A detailed scrutiny of older pupils' past work and performance in mathematics reveals not only evidence of improvement, but also the capacity for higher standards particularly in the application and use of their numeracy skills. Currently the pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills across the curriculum.
56. The marking of the pupils' work is satisfactory but not enough consideration is given to ensuring the older pupils know what they have to do to improve. Few comments challenge the older pupils to identify where they have made errors, seek alternative strategies or clarify misunderstanding. Moreover, the marking does not ensure that the guidance on presentation pasted inside the front cover of the pupils' books is adhered to.
57. There is good evidence to support the view that standards are rising and that the school's overall development strategy is beginning to have an effect in mathematics but expectations expressed through the comments made on the pupils' work are currently not consistently high enough and approaches to marking are not precise enough to help the pupils make further rapid progress.

Mathematics across the curriculum

58. The pupils make little use of their mathematical skills in other subjects. In their science investigations they are required to record their findings in tables, but often these are provided for them. They present their results in graphs but rarely interpret the graphs to inform their conclusions. In design and technology there are very few examples where, for example, the older pupils have used their measuring skills or attempted to draw to scale. Overall, the range of opportunities to use and apply mathematics across the curriculum is not wide enough to contribute to a rapid improvement in standards.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of science is very good in Years 1 and 2

- The older pupils do not have enough opportunities to organise and carry out investigations

Commentary

59. Two science lessons were observed and a sample of the pupils' work was scrutinised. Standards are broadly average overall, but in Year 2 they are currently above average. In the lessons seen, the teaching was good and pupils were making good progress and achieving well.
60. In Years 1 and 2 the pupils are learning about electricity. They talked confidently about the dangers of electricity and about the appliance they had identified in school that used electricity. The teacher captured the pupils' interest and then set them a challenge to use batteries and wire to make a bulb light. They tried a range of combinations without success but the teacher skilfully questioned and encouraged while allowing the pupils to explore all the possibilities to find the solution. There was great sense of achievement with the first cry of; 'I've got it!' quickly followed by; 'So have I!'. By the end of the lesson all of the pupils had created a simple circuit and some had explored what happened when another battery was added, Some of the Year 2 pupils learned to use the correct vocabulary, such as positive and negative, to discuss their work. In a lesson in Years 5 and 6, the pupils made satisfactory gains in their learning about micro-organisms. The lesson began with an interesting introduction in which the teacher questioned and involved all the pupils in a recap of their knowledge from the last lesson and their research at home. A good range of tasks was set for the pupils but the pupils with potential for higher attainment, who set an experiment to carry, were not required to organise their own observations or collection of data. In this case the use of a structured worksheet restricted the opportunities for these pupils to make decisions the tests they were carrying out. In both of the lessons, the pupils collaborated well and shared their ideas. The provision for pupils with special educational needs was good, thereby enabling them to play a full part in the lesson and make steady progress. The resources were easily accessible and used well to support learning.
61. A scrutiny of work from last year supports the view that standards are average; most pupils are attaining the expected level and a few are exceeding it. It also shows that pupils are involved in an appropriate amount of investigative work in Years 1 and 2, and in Years 3 and 4 where the pupils are developing a greater independence in how they approach science experiments. This improvement is only just beginning to be built on in Year 5 and 6 as a result of a monitoring exercise which highlighted the inconsistency in approach. The pupils' past work in Year 6 contains too few opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills of scientific enquiry.
62. The pupils' work is not consistently well presented. Handwriting is printed rather than joined, common spelling and punctuation errors repeatedly go uncorrected. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use and practise their numeracy skills in science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The provision for ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils acquire good levels of skill

Commentary

63. During the inspection no lessons were taught in which ICT was the focus for learning but three lessons were seen where it was supporting learning in other subjects. Inspectors looked at a sample of the pupils' work across the curriculum and talked to some of the pupils about their use of ICT. The pupils demonstrated a good range of skills and their work contains examples that show standards to be in line with those expected by the end of Year 6. For example, they can communicate their ideas by generating, organising, editing and presenting text and adding both sound and images.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. The school makes satisfactory use of ICT to support learning in subjects such as mathematics and science. For example, software linked to the mathematics scheme of work provides enhancement and extension to the challenges set for pupils in Years 3 and 4. In science, the older pupils present their findings from science experiments in graphs, write poems in English and find information, for example, to support their work in history. The co-ordinator is working to extend the use of ICT across curriculum. They also use painting programs to create work in art.

HUMANITIES

65. No lessons were seen in **history** but a sample of the planning was scrutinised and examples of the pupils' past work was inspected. Two lessons in geography were seen in Years 3 to 6 but none in Years 1 and 2. In both subjects there is a tendency to over rely on work sheets for the recording of work but this is more in evidence in geography than in history.

Geography

The provision for geography is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is insufficient depth in the way geography topics are taught and recorded
- Marking does not do enough to improve work
- Too little use is made of pupils' literacy skills to record work

Commentary

66. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 are learning to use maps to locate different towns in the United Kingdom and to understand that the regions of the world have different climates. The older pupils have become acquainted with the map of Europe but some of their mapwork contains errors which have been marked as correct by the teacher. They have surveyed the shopping provision in the locality, discussed features of the area and begun to learn about important mountain ranges around the world.

67. From the recorded work seen, the treatment of each topic is often superficial. Expectations are not high enough and the teaching unsatisfactory. In a Year 3 and 4 lesson on litter and the practice of recycling and reusing materials, while the pupils responded satisfactorily during discussion, some of the follow up activities were not sufficiently challenging. The pace of work was consequently leisurely and had an adverse impact on the behaviour of a few pupils who became unsettled. In this lesson the pupils did not do enough work or make enough progress. In Years 5 and 6 the oldest pupils engaged more successfully investigate natural disasters. Although the lessons were satisfactory and the pupils made adequate progress, more could have been achieved in the time.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

68. No lessons in music, art and design or design and technology were taught during the period of the inspection. Two physical education lessons were observed, both in collaboration with the staff and students of the local college. Regular swimming sessions are also provided but these were not observed.

69. There is insufficient evidence, at this early stage in the school year, to make judgements about standards or quality of provision in music, art and design or design and technology. Discussions with the **music** subject leader who provides specialist teaching in all classes indicates that pupils have good opportunities to perform and compose; this is supported by planning and the pupils who say they enjoy music. They also enjoy the support of visiting instrumental teachers. In **art and design** the pupils have used the work of Cezanne as a stimulus and produced a range of interesting work using collage, pencil crayon and paint. They have also used computer software to experiment with shape and colour to good effect. In **design and technology** the work in the pupils' books show that they carry out research, for example, when they were embarking on a project to design and make containers. In their work on 'shelters' the pupils produced a series of labelled drawings and identified the tools and materials they needed to make a fairground ride. Some comments on the success of finished products are made by the pupils but the teachers' comments do not aid rigorous evaluation. On one piece of work the comment, 'This looks great' was made with no suggestion of how the pupils might seek to improve or enhance it.

Physical education

The provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The link with the local college provides good specialist teaching in very good facilities
- There is good collaboration between the staff at the school and those at the college
- The pupils are enthusiastic about sport

Commentary

70. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 participated in a range of catching and throwing activities having first thoroughly warmed up through a running and tagging game. The pace was demanding but the pupils received very sensitive support from school staff and the students at the college. All the pupils approached the games with enthusiasm. The oldest pupils in Year 2 have made good progress and attain well because their hand-eye co-ordination has

developed well over time. The very youngest children succeeded in bowling and throwing balls and bean bags to knock down skittles.

71. The pupils in Year 3 and 4, after a very well conducted warm-up activity involving changes of pace, eagerly proceeded to play a game of kwik cricket. They developed their striking and catching skills well because the techniques were explained clearly and their efforts were well evaluated. The plenary session provided a valuable review of the skills that had been learned and included suggestions about how to improve. Overall, the pupils' skills in this lesson were above average.
72. The teaching partnership between the school teachers and the college staff and students is very productive. The liaison between them is effective and also provides a useful link that is very beneficial to the school and its pupils because facilities on site are inadequate to provide a full physical education curriculum.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

73. During the inspection no personal, social and health education lessons were seen. However, the school does have a well developed programme of units of work that are carefully planned and co-ordinated with the topics and themes studied in religious education. The positive attitudes and the respect the pupils show for their peers and for the teachers indicate that this programme of work is effective. The school is currently working towards a healthy schools award.

74. PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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