

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Scarisbrick, Ormskirk

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119683

Headteacher: Mrs J McNally

Lead inspector: Mr J Heap

Dates of inspection: 16 – 18 May 2005

Inspection number: 267877

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:	99
School address:	Hall Road Scarisbrick Ormskirk Lancashire
Postcode:	L40 9QE
Telephone number:	01704 880 626
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Ormsby
Date of previous	4 May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Mary's is a smaller than average Roman Catholic primary school that caters for pupils between the ages of four and 11. It is situated in the village of Scarisbrick, near to the town of Ormskirk. There are 99 pupils on the roll of the school: 64 boys and 35 girls. The roll is increasing in recent years. Pupils arrive at school reflecting the full range of attainment levels, but overall attainment on entry is average. Pupils are organised into four classes, each of which has more than a single age group of pupils. The pupils come from a wide area, some of which is rural and the rest is urban. Overall, their circumstances are relatively advantaged. Housing is mainly private individual dwellings. All the pupils are white. Very few pupils are entitled to free school meals: this is below the national average. In total, there are 12 pupils (twelve per cent) with identified special educational needs. This is below average. The vast majority of these pupils have a moderate learning difficulty. Two pupils

have a Statement of Special Educational Need. A further three pupils are given support in the classroom through guidance and work that is set at a suitable level. The school has prioritised support according to need. The school has received the following awards:

- Activemark - 2005
- a School Achievement Award - 2003
- Artsmark - 2004
- Basic skills Quality Mark
- Healthy Schools – 2005.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18824	J Heap	Lead inspector	English Geography History English as an additional language
19557	E Hall	Lay inspector	
22421	V McGrath	Team inspector	Science Art and design Music Physical education Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage
23204	C Wojtak	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Special educational needs

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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	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	19
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school which has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection. Good academic standards and pupils' excellent attitudes are promoted by good teaching, learning and leadership and management. The school's supportive practices ensure that all pupils benefit equally from what it has to offer. As a result, the school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- By Year 6, pupils' standards and achievement are good in English, mathematics and science.
- By Year 2, standards in scientific investigations are below average.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior learning.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is very effective;
- Procedures and practices to support, guide and involve pupils are very good.
- The library stock is unsatisfactory and the reading scheme for infants is too narrow.
- The marking of pupils' work does not sufficiently refer to their individual learning targets.
- Links with parents, the community and other schools are very good.

Overall, improvement since the last inspection is very good. The school has maintained or built upon many of the strengths identified from the last inspection. Immediately following the last inspection, the national test results plummeted to much lower levels than seen previously, owing to significant disruption to leadership and management and staffing. There has been a steady improvement since, to the extent that standards are now back to comparably strong levels. There has been significant improvement in the standards and provision in information and communication technology; provision for the children in the Foundation Stage (reception) and assessment procedures and uses. Leadership and management are better, particularly the work of the governing body. Owing to this development in the way the school is run, the school is well placed to improve further.

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	A	B
mathematics	B	A	C	D
science	A	B	D	E

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those which have similar proportions of free school meals.*

Overall, pupils' achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their set targets. Children enter the Reception Year with standards that are average overall. Children achieve well and by the time they enter Year 1, standards are above average in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. There is insufficient evidence to judge securely the standards in physical and creative development. By Year 2, standards seen are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the results of the national tests in 2004 were well above average in reading and very high (top 5 per cent of schools nationally) in writing and mathematics

when compared to all schools. Furthermore, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher than average Level 3 was well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. However, the standards seen in science are not as high as they ought to be because pupils' knowledge and understanding of practical science work is below that found typically for the age of pupil. By Year 6, standards seen are well above average and much better than the picture presented in the 2004 national tests for mathematics and science. Targets in 2004 were challenging and only partially met, with a shortfall at the higher Level 5 in both English and mathematics. Over three years, results were well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. The performance in all subjects is well above the national average. The trend in results is above the national one. In national tests at Years 2 and 6, boys do better than girls, but the inspection did not provide secure evidence to say why. Standards in information and communication technology are average in Years 2 and 6.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are excellent. Pupils like school and parents support the priorities that the school promotes in personal development. Attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good. Across the school, the proportion of good and better teaching is high and far outweighs the amount of satisfactory practice observed. The use of information and communication technology by teachers in lessons is beginning to add to their classroom skills and further promote pupils' learning. Assessment procedures are good. Teachers use the information well to plan work. However, when books are marked there are too few links between teachers' comments and pupils' individual targets. This means that pupils' understanding of how they can improve is only satisfactory.

Overall, the curriculum is good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is strong and promotes their good progress. The programme is very well enriched by activities outside the classroom and the normal school day. In general, the level of resources is good. However, much of the non-fiction library stock is old and worn out and the reading scheme for infants is not challenging enough. The quality of care is very good and pupils are very closely involved in the work of the school. Links with parents, the community and other schools and colleges are very good and have a very positive effect on pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Governors are effective, supportive and know and understand the school. The headteacher provides very good leadership and has brought a great deal of stability and direction to the school since her arrival. She receives strong support from staff who undertake a wide range of responsibilities. Parents appreciate the hard work and expertise of all staff. Management of the school is good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The views of parents are very positive. There is very strong support for the values the school promotes and the standards achieved. Pupils are also very positive. They enjoy being at the school and they feel safe and secure. They appreciate the activities the school provides outside lesson times.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do are:

- Improve standards in science, particularly in investigative work.
- Set challenging targets for pupils' achievement which they understand and teachers use as the criteria for marking.
- Refresh the library stock and broaden the reading materials for infant pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented. Standards are average when children enter reception, above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are a major strength from reception to Year 6.
- In Year 6, the quality and amount of writing are high.
- There has been a very good rise in standards compared to the results which plummeted soon after the last inspection.
- Questioning skills and fair testing are weaknesses in science.
- Reception children make the most progress in personal, social and emotional development.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.5 (16.4)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	17.3 (15.7)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	18.7 (17.1)	16.2 (16.3)

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

1. Standards in the 2004 national tests for Year 2 pupils were well above average in reading and very high (top five per cent of schools) in writing and mathematics when compared with all schools. Compared with schools having a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, reading results were above average; writing and mathematics results were well above average. Compared to all schools, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3, were well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Compared to similar schools, results in reading and writing were average. Mathematics results were below average and science results were low. Over three years, results in reading, writing and mathematics were well above average. Boys do better than girls in reading and mathematics. The school trend is in line with the national one. The reading results are improving well after a period of much decline. Writing results have improved steadily since the low in 2001, albeit from a much lower starting point than reading.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.8 (29.3)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.5 (29.3)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.4 (29.3)	28.6 (28.6)

2. In the Year 6 national tests, results were well above average in 2004 for English, average for mathematics and below average in science when compared with all schools. When compared with similar schools English results were above average, mathematics were below average and science results were low. Overall, results were above average in comparison to all schools and below the average of similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was well above average in English and average in mathematics and science, when compared to all schools. In comparison to similar schools, results were average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. Over three years, results are well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Boys do better than girls. The performance in all subjects is well above the national average. The trend in results is above the national trend.
3. When children enter the Reception Year there is a full range of attainment, but overall the standards are broadly average for their age. Children achieve well as a result of the good teaching. However, in personal, social and emotional development achievement is very good owing to the high quality induction programme which helps them to settle quickly. By the time children enter Year 1, standards are above average in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. There is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about standards and achievement in physical and creative development. Children have successfully developed good basic skills in areas such as reading, writing, number and information and communication technology.
4. In Year 6, the standards judged during the inspection are much better than the results of the national tests in 2004. This is because the level of special educational needs was higher in 2004. Comparisons made with similar schools are on the basis of the proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, rather than on the basis of similar results for this year group when they were in Year 2. The reason for this is that the movement of pupils in and out of the school has been too high to make a secure comparison.
5. In English, standards in Year 2 are above average in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Pupils make good progress in all aspects of the subject. Basic skills in reading and writing are consolidated and then improved upon, such as the knowledge and use of letter sounds and the fluency of handwriting. However, reading materials for these pupils are narrow in scope and the highest attaining pupils do not progress as far as they might. In Year 6, standards are well above average in all aspects and pupils progress well. Recent acquisitions of fiction books have successfully broadened the challenge in reading, particularly for the highest attaining pupils. Pupils produce a lot of good quality writing, both in English lessons and, most importantly, across a wide range of subjects. Pupils' basic skills are very strong and the highest attaining pupils show great maturity in their writing. Library skills are good, but the range of non-fiction texts is small and many books are worn out.
6. In mathematics, standards in Year 2 are above average and pupils achieve well. Pupils have strong numeracy skills that are challenged regularly by teachers demanding improvements in mental and written work. Their knowledge and understanding of how to do practical work is good and supported by the good range of activities set before them. By Year 6, standards are well above average and pupils have built well on the skills, knowledge and understanding gained earlier. Progress is particularly good in Years 5 and 6 because the teaching and learning is strongest there. However, tasks to further challenge the highest attaining pupils are not always planned for because there are too few links between teachers' comments in books and the individual targets set for pupils.

7. In science, overall standards in Year 2 are average and achievement is satisfactory. This is not as good a picture as that seen at the time of the last inspection. Specifically, standards are average in scientific knowledge, but below average in scientific enquiry. The progress pupils make is satisfactory in relation to gaining knowledge, but unsatisfactory in terms of learning from practical work they have instigated. The biggest shortcoming here concerns the pupils' ability to devise questions and for higher attaining pupils to carry out a fair test and say why it is fair. By Year 6, standards are well above average because the school has recognised the need to develop a stronger knowledge base in aspects such as forces, materials and life processes. Overall, progress seen during the inspection is satisfactory in Years 3 to 5 but good in Year 6 when the teaching becomes more focused. Nevertheless, the shortcomings seen in Year 2 are still present in Year 6 and this means that the challenges inherent in investigatory work are being missed. As with mathematics and, to a lesser extent, English the comments written in books by teachers do not relate directly to pupils' individual targets. As a result, pupils have an unclear view of how they can improve their work.
8. Standards in information and communication technology are average and achievement is good. This is a much better picture than the last inspection and has come about because of:
- good leadership and management;
 - improved teaching and learning which is underpinned by a new and successful system for assessing and tracking pupils' progress;
 - significant improvements in resources and teachers' expertise.
- Standards and achievement are rising and the greater confidence shown by staff is enabling greater use of skills in other subjects, such as mathematics and science.
9. Standards and achievement in religious education will be inspected and reported separately by the diocese.
10. Work in other subjects were sampled and this means that there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about standards and achievement in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education.
11. Achievement for pupils who have special educational needs is good. Achievement for pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Need is very good because of the quality of support they receive and the work that is planned to meet their precise needs. Pupils make good progress throughout the school, and across a range of lessons. Many exceed the challenging targets in their individual plans each term.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school and learning are excellent. Behaviour and relationships with others is excellent. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' desire to learn and interest in lessons are exceptional.
- The total lack of harassment and excellent relationships leads to very confident pupils.
- The pupils' moral development is outstanding.

Commentary

12. The school has successfully improved the judgements made in the previous inspection and parents and pupils appreciate these strengths of school life.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.2	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.

13. All pupils like school and are keen to attend. They feel secure and are most enthusiastic about lessons and school life. They show a great deal of interest in their work and involve themselves fully in the wide range of activities. For example, in a very good literacy lesson in Year 6 pupils' eagerness and fun were evident and this promoted their creative writing. Children in the Reception Year are on target to exceed the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development and this has much to do with the good induction programme the children experience in their early days in the school.
14. Pupils behave exceptionally well and demonstrate high levels of self-control. Staff have very high expectations for behaviour and provide good role-models. On the rare occasions where behaviour is less appropriate it is always challenged with the result that there is little disruption to learning. There is a positive approach to behaviour management and any incident involving potential bullying or racial harassment is investigated thoroughly and dealt with effectively. There have been no exclusions.
15. Relationships between pupils are outstanding. Pupils' confidence increases as they move up the school. Their view of themselves and others develops very well because staff value them, make time to listen and praise effort and achievement by giving rewards. They are self-controlled, become more self-assured and listen to others very well. Pupils engage very well in the range of responsibilities given to them and carry them out willingly and with pride. The recently introduced playground buddies system that originated from the pupils themselves is particularly effective.
16. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very strong aspects of their personal qualities. Of these, pupils' excellent moral development stands out clearly. The most significant aspects are:
 - pupils understand, discuss and adhere to school rules;
 - pupils distinguish right from wrong and understand the consequences of their actions, for instance in their positive response to environmental concerns;
 - pupils are genuinely shocked when there are thoughtless acts;
 - pupils recognise that there is a moral duty to help the less well off and this is seen in
 - their response to charitable works;
 - pupils have great respect for older people, as was seen when local villagers came into school to talk about the Second World War.Pupils have an emerging understanding of feelings and emotions and their likely effects on others, while showing concern and compassion. The staff and pupils conscientiously uphold the school's caring code of conduct. Pupils become more self-aware and gain an understanding of the world and their own place in it. The quality of collective worship is good and contributes well to spiritual development. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures in their lessons and the curriculum is enhanced by additional activities and learning opportunities involving different groups that help children understand and value the diverse society they live in.

17. There is a highly effective approach to behaviour management, which results in very positive attitudes to learning.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education is good, including the quality of teaching and learning. The curriculum effectively promotes pupils' learning. Enrichment of the curriculum is very good. The school has very good procedures and practices for care, welfare, health and safety. The links with parents, community and other schools are very good.

Teaching and learning

Throughout the school, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching and learning of basic literacy and numeracy skills are very strong.
- Throughout the school, teachers encourage pupils very well and ensure that each pupil has an equal chance to succeed.
- Teachers are very good at controlling and managing classes.
- In science, the teaching and learning in investigative skills is weak.
- In the Foundation Stage, the teaching of personal, social and emotional development is very strong.
- When teachers mark pupils' work they rarely seek to clarify or challenge pupils' progress towards their individual targets.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7	13	3	0	0	0

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

18. Compared to the findings of the last inspection, the quality of teaching and learning has improved. For example:
- there is now more very good and good teaching than at the last inspection;
 - teaching and learning in information and communication technology are now satisfactory, whereas it was unsatisfactory last time;
 - teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is much improved.
19. Across the school there are some very good features, for example:
- the very strong teaching of basic literacy skills leads to high levels of productivity and maturity. Furthermore, the effect of using these skills in a range of subjects gives pupils confidence and pride in their work;
 - teachers are very good at encouraging pupils and getting them to join in with a wide variety of activities. In lessons, they are very skilful at using questioning to bring all pupils into the lesson, even those who are reticent;
 - teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and pupils respond outstandingly. As a result, very little teaching time is lost and levels of concentration are high;
 - teachers all respond very well to the school aim of promoting equal opportunities. This shows itself well in the use of assessment to match work to individuals and in the effective support given to pupils with special educational needs.
20. In the Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching and learning is good. There have been significant improvements in lesson planning which is now very good and in the procedures and uses of assessment. Consequently, children's learning is particularly good in personal, social and emotional development and precisely in the way that the children are developing as independent and collaborative learners. Writing is taught well and the children are confident and skilful at this early stage. Good partnership

with home ensures that reading skills are consolidated after school and this fosters good attitudes and progress.

21. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good. As a result, standards have remained high in English and mathematics. In this class the teacher clearly builds on the skills, knowledge and understanding developed previously. The focus on consolidating and developing basic skills is strong and successful for the most part in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. As a result, pupils have a strong foundation that prepares them well for future learning. However, there are some shortcomings in two areas:
- in science, the way teachers plan for pupils to learn through experimentation are weak;
 - the use of the reading scheme is too rigid for the higher attaining pupils to make their fullest gains.
22. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Consequently, achievement is good and pupils' standards, seen in English, mathematics and science are well above average. This has much to do with greater rigour being present in Year 6 and this prepares pupils very well for the national tests and for learning at secondary school. Very useful links are planned between subjects and this has a good effect on standards all round. For instance, pupils' listening skills are strongly developed in a history lesson about the Second World War. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 listened to and questioned villagers who had been through the conflict. Again, in science the emphasis is too small on practical and investigative work, even though their levels of knowledge are high.
23. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and there are effective procedures for identifying pupils with learning difficulties. Close liaison with the pre-school setting ensures that there is a smooth transition to the reception class. Staff are highly sensitive to individual needs and skilled at patiently identifying misconceptions, particularly when pupils join from other schools. Many of the staff have specialised knowledge and experience of working closely with pupils with behavioural and learning problems and support them extremely well.
24. The school has well developed procedures for assessment. Children's achievements and stage of development are diligently recorded when they enter the school and further assessments in English and mathematics take place throughout their time in the school. These results are tracked well to analyse and compare pupils' standards and progress, both within subjects and against the national context. These findings, together with the teachers' day-to-day assessments, assist the teachers to:
- identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses;
 - set targets for groups and individuals.
25. Much work is matched accurately to pupils' prior levels of attainment and help teachers plan appropriate lessons. However, the information is not always used effectively to prepare and set work at an appropriate level, most particularly for the higher attaining pupils in mathematics and science. Furthermore, teachers' marking is conscientious, positive and supportive. There are good examples of challenging comments, particularly in writing. However, it is rare to see comments in pupils' books that refer directly to pupils' individual targets and this is a weakness. As a result, pupils' understanding of what they need to do to improve is only just satisfactory.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum with very good opportunities for enrichment, enabling pupils to achieve well. The accommodation and resources make a good contribution to the quality of pupils' education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although the curriculum is generally well-planned, there is not enough emphasis on provision that matches ability in science and mathematics, particularly for the higher attaining pupils.
- The school has significantly improved the accommodation and resources since the previous inspection, resulting in a very good Foundation Stage environment, and improved provision in information and communication technology.
- A very good range of enriching experiences lays strong foundations for later stages of education and employment.

Commentary

26. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, and is broad and balanced to meet the needs of pupils of all ages and capabilities, including those with special educational needs. This is a notable improvement since the previous inspection, when there were weaknesses in curriculum planning for the youngest children, and in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Although there has been improvement in these subjects, there is further to go in a closer match of work to individual ability in mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported through carefully written individual education plans and very good professional support.
27. Overall, the accommodation is now good, and much improved. The suite for information and communication technology has an interactive whiteboard, additional seating and a bank of laptop computers, enabling pupils to work more efficiently. Formerly cramped rooms have been doubled in size and provided with interactive whiteboards, which increase the interest and relevancy of lessons. The environment for the Foundation Stage area has been hugely improved by the additional space provided by a well-planned outdoor area. Plans for the much needed improvement to the entrance hall are in hand. Resources are good, including those for supporting the provision for information and communication technology, which is much better than at the time of the previous inspection.
28. The school provides very good enrichment opportunities and support for learning outside the school day. Although the school is small in size, pupils are offered an unusually wide range of opportunities. All pupils participate in several residential trips, all with a different focus. Clubs include craft and information and communication technology as well as sporting clubs. Enrichment activities include a good range of visitors from the community, which complement the school's good provision for personal, social and emotional development very well.
29. Pupils enjoy and greatly benefit from enrichment in the arts through regular visits to the theatre and museums, for example they have watched professional performances of Shakespeare and Jungle Book and have visited museums in Halifax. Visiting artists have also made a good contribution to the art curriculum. They have supported pupils in Years 5 and 6 when designing and making textile pictures, and have provided expertise for compiling teaching resources for art and design units of work.
30. Recent innovative approaches to the curriculum include: topic weeks, using new technology in French lessons, and healthy schools initiatives. The legal requirements for collective worship are met, and the colourful prayer ribbons are one illustration of how the pupils themselves help to plan the curriculum. Teachers have started to organise units of work in creative subjects so that pupils have less frequent but longer blocks of time to follow their projects through to a meaningful conclusion without interruptions. There are also some

imaginative links between subjects. When Year 3 and 4 pupils learn about structures in design technology, for example, they build on this theme with an artistic dimension, creating delightfully interesting and attractive pieces that reinforce their learning in mathematics and science. There is further work to do, however, in planning even more opportunities for pupils to practise their skills through investigative work in science, and in ensuring that pupils from different abilities and age groups receive their full entitlement to work that is sufficiently challenging.

Care, guidance and support

The steps taken to ensure the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are very good. Support, advice and guidance based on monitoring are very good. The school involves pupils very well in its work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- School actively promotes healthy lifestyles.
- Staff provide very good care for each child and their individual needs are known well.
- Pupils' relationships with staff are excellent.
- The quality of, and support for, pupils' personal development are strong.
- Good support is available for pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

31. Since the last inspection, high standards of care and support have been maintained and there have been good improvements to monitoring. Staff are vigilant in safeguarding pupils' welfare. It is clear in this school every child does matter and this means that pupils have the greatest trust in staff and relationships are excellent. Pupils feel very safe and happy. It is evident that the approach to pupil support is enabling all pupils to benefit equally from what the school has to offer and enjoy their learning.
32. Child protection and the arrangements for health and well-being are very good. If they have a problem, pupils are confident they can go to any member of staff and get help. They know who to go to when they are feeling unwell or need first aid treatment. Pupils confidently talk to staff, who listen carefully and always provide help or re-assurance.
33. Overall, there are very good procedures and practices for monitoring personal development, behaviour and attendance. This has a significant impact on the development of pupils' personal qualities. There are good procedures for monitoring academic achievement. Staff cater for the individual needs of each pupil well because they have effective tracking systems to monitor the progress of every pupil, particularly pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented. Consequently pupils are becoming increasingly independent, self-confident and knowledgeable about themselves and healthy and safe living.
34. Although there is no school council, the views of pupils are regularly obtained and the school takes their concerns seriously and acts upon their suggestions. The school equips pupils very well with the skills necessary to move on to the next stage in their education and become good citizens. Induction arrangements for pupils ensure that all are assured of a caring and sensitive beginning to their life at this school. For the youngest children, this is based on very good opportunities for

parents and their children to get to know the school, supported by good information and close links with the pre-school prior to starting. For some pupils who start school at other times, the thorough assessment of each child ensures that an informed picture is identified early, they are welcomed and they settle quickly.

35. Pupils with special educational needs are very carefully assessed and staff diligently follow the pupils' individual education plans. The co-ordinator ensures pupils who require further support have access to it. Pupils with a Statements of Special Educational Need receive additional support that meets their needs.
36. The care of pupils is very good. Pupils with statements of special educational needs receive their full entitlement of support. Pupils' progress is monitored 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.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with the community and with parents and other schools are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The partnership and effectiveness of a wide range of links, both in the educational and local community, has a positive impact on pupils' learning experiences.
- The school's work to promote parental involvement in learning very effective.

Commentary

37. The school has maintained and continued to develop the very good partnerships with the community, parents and other schools. The school very successfully helps parents to manage any concerns they have. Parents are very appreciative of the opportunities they have to find out about how their children are taught and how they can support learning.
38. Parents are kept very well informed by regular, well-presented newsletters. The pupils' annual progress reports are detailed and very effective in enabling parents to understand what their children need to do next. Information for parents whose children have special educational needs is very good.
39. The school is doing all it can to encourage a strong partnership with parents based on mutual trust and confidence. The school is highly approachable, very welcoming to parents and fosters very good relationships with parents. Consequently, parents are very committed to the school and a number provide valued help in the school.
40. The school is keen to seek, value and act on parents' views and provides very good opportunities to help parents support their children's learning by:
 - providing very good curriculum information for each year group;
 - setting up a very good range of courses for parents and regular in-school events that

help parents understand how and what their children will be taught and how to help them at home.

41. Parents are very supportive of the many events the hard working Parents Teacher's Association arrange which raise significant funds for the school. They have used these funds to provide additional equipment and resources. Their support is much appreciated by the school.
42. The school is well supported by the local parish and the community. The links with other primary schools are effective and enhance learning opportunities. For example, the school hosted an art exhibition involving its educational partners in learning. The school works hard to strengthen its links with secondary schools but these are only satisfactory, despite their very best efforts to increase the number of visits for Year 6 pupils.
43. 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 although a significant minority do not attend review meetings.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Governance is effective. The headteacher provides very good leadership. Key staff support the headteacher well in leading and managing their areas of responsibility. Management is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is well placed to continue improving in the future.
- The forward-looking vision for the school is driven by the headteacher and supported by the whole school community.
- The governing body has significantly increased its knowledge and understanding of the workings of the school and its strengths and weaknesses.
- The effective approach to special educational needs is based on good communication and the development of strong partnerships.

Commentary

44. At the time of the last inspection, the school was experiencing severe difficulties in three main areas:
- the level of staff mobility was high;
 - standards and pupils' progress were at risk and the results in the 1999 national tests plummeted to a much lower level than previously;
 - the school was facing a significant financial deficit.
45. As a result the local education authority declared the school to be in difficulties and having serious weaknesses. The last inspection also identified weaknesses in important areas, such as:
- standards in information and communication technology were below average;
 - provision for the under-fives was unsatisfactory;
 - assessment of pupils' progress and the way that it shapes individual pupils' learning was unsatisfactory;
- In addition, there were several minor issues related to leadership and management and, in particular, the role and work of the governing body.
46. Overall, the weaknesses identified in the last report and those that were concerning the local education authority, show very good improvement and the school has a good capacity for further improvement. It is to the great credit of the governing body, headteacher and staff that these major improvements have been made.
47. The school is very well led by a dedicated and capable headteacher. She is well supported by the governing body and by a team of staff who recognise and subscribe to a common vision. The school aims seek successfully to establish a caring community committed to the Catholic faith, in which all strive for the highest standards in conduct and achievement. Staff create a wholesome and mostly stimulating environment to which pupils respond very positively. All pupils are provided with appropriate opportunities to learn and grow in maturity and to play a valued part in the life of the school.

48. The governors have confidence in the staff and the parents share this. The governing body is fully committed to the school and there is very useful expertise amongst the governors that is proving to be useful. Individual governors continue to actively develop their roles with a view to becoming even more effective. For example, several governors have been appropriately involved in monitoring classroom practice and are rightly satisfied that the quality of teaching and learning is good. Governors successfully hold management to account for the decisions made, accepting the professional expertise of the headteacher, but finding information for themselves through monitoring and evaluation. They use the information they acquire through their well planned 'information gathering' visits to classrooms to identify strengths and weaknesses in the school and prioritise these for development over time. Consequently, the governing body is good at being a 'critical friend'.
49. The headteacher has been very effective in identifying relevant priorities for improvement and in taking the necessary action towards them. She takes an active role in prioritising targets that are realistic. In evaluating the school development plan she ensures that money is directed to support it. The planning is well structured, detailed and costed. There is good, careful monitoring of long and medium term targets and there is good, periodic assessment of standards which is used to inform future planning. A strong team spirit has been established and in-service training is used well to raise staff awareness and skills.
50. Leadership and management of special educational needs are good and owe much to the skill of the headteacher who has ensured that communication and liaison are particular strengths of this small school, embracing partnership working. The headteacher has also played a key role in succeeding where other schools have failed, in removing barriers to learning, and in her rigorous approach to the monitoring and training of staff. Parents, pupils and outside agency staff were full of praise for the welcome and the ongoing support they received from the school. Management, whilst effective, has scope to develop even further in helping pupils with additional needs to understand how to meet their learning targets.
51. The development of the school is properly supported by prudent financial planning. The headteacher and governors give careful consideration to all spending options and recognise the staffing of the school as its most precious resource. The finance committee take their responsibilities seriously and with the headteacher have agreed a priority list of needs for effective school development. The day-to-day administration of funds is very effective and this is recognised in the most recent audit report from the local education authority. There is a very large surplus at present and this is earmarked for the necessary building improvements which are going to cost in the region of £120000. The size of the surplus has much to do with the generosity of the local diocese in providing substantial funds for earlier projects. The finance committee is clear that once the present balance is used on the latest, and needed, building project, they will set a limit on any future amounts of underspend. However, insufficient funds have been spent on reading materials for the infants and in refreshing the library and the school recognises this. Overall, the school has good procedures and practices to ensure that they obtain value for money when they purchase supplies and services.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
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Total income	281,363
Total expenditure	249,825
Expenditure per pupil	2,576

Balance from previous year	70,996
Balance carried forward to the next	102,535

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Very good leadership and management have led to very good improvement in the curriculum, accommodation, teaching and learning since the last inspection. Standards on entry to Reception Year are in line with those expected for their age, with the full range of ability represented. By the end of reception, children attain standards above those expected and achieve well in communication language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. Standards in personal, social and emotional development are also above average, but following a very good induction programme children achieve very well. Very good relationships and a routine which allows children to select from a range of practical and creative activities is effective in promoting very positive attitudes to learning. Teaching is good in communication language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world, but very good in personal, social and emotional development. Very good assessment procedures ensure the planned activities build on previous skills, knowledge and understanding, and are well matched to the needs of the pupils and the curriculum.

There are good procedures for sharing information with parents about the curriculum and their children's progress. This, along with home visits at the beginning of the year, contributes to good partnerships with parents. Indoor accommodation and resources are good, and the outdoor learning environment is very good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are very well motivated and engaged because the routine is well planned to meet their needs.
- Very good behaviour and social development are promoted by very good relationships and positive encouragement.

Commentary

52. Home visits prior to the children starting in the reception class and a flexible start to school promote very good emotional development. Clear expectations and purposeful activities lead to very good pupil engagement in tasks. There is a good balance between the number of activities that children initiate and those led by staff. This promotes good levels of concentration and perseverance. Children share equipment and accommodate each other's needs very well. They are confident and independent because their individual responses are valued and encouraged. The outdoor environment, which is regularly used during lessons and playtimes, provides very good opportunities for children to learn by being active and practical in their approach. This promotes very good social development and has a positive impact on pupils' motivation and enthusiasm for learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Writing is taught well, leading to good levels of confidence and competence in word and sentence building.
- Children's interest in reading is promoted well through the use of stimulating story sacks and big books.
- The reading scheme does not give children a wide enough range of texts.

Commentary

53. Children are regularly assessed and those showing slower or faster rates of progress are quickly identified. Assessment information is used to ensure planned activities are well matched to children's' competencies. This contributes to good achievement in speaking, listening, reading and writing by all pupils, including those with special educational needs.
54. Parents are well involved in reading. They are encouraged to share story sacks and reading books with their children. The range of reading books, however, is constrained to one reading scheme and a supplementary set for some children. This is not broad enough for all children's needs and competencies. The use of big books for teaching specific reading skills and good individual support in small groups leads to good achievement. Lack of space in the reading area constrains the display of books and does not provide a quiet and comfortable reading area. Consequently, few children were observed electing to use this area during the daily routine.
55. The teaching of writing is good. Children achieve well because they are given good individual support as they write and are actively encouraged to apply their knowledge of sounds and letters when building words and sentences. Misunderstandings and handwriting errors are promptly and supportively corrected. There are good opportunities to write independently, for example in the café and writing area. The vast majority of children write for a range of purposes, using plausible spelling and simple punctuation. This shows good achievement in writing, and competencies above those expected for their age.
56. Children respond confidently to questions, and express their views and feelings very well. They are encouraged to re-enact stories using puppets and pretend play. This provides good opportunities for children's talk, which is also promoted well in collaborative play.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Practical activities are well planned, providing good opportunities to solve simple mathematical problems.
- Lively demonstrations illustrate mathematical ideas well and promote good learning.
- The pace of learning slows when mathematical symbols are introduced before pupils are secure about calculating.

Commentary

57. Most children do simple calculations, count accurately in ones, twos and tens and have a good understanding of shape and measurement. They recognise simple number patterns,

such as predicting the decreasing pattern as they subtract one more several times. Overall, children are demonstrating competencies above those expected for their age.

58. Teaching is well planned and the activities are stimulating and practical. A good lesson led to children understanding how to subtract using cubes, fruit and fingers to complete their calculations practically. They were particularly excited about using real money in the café to solve simple addition and subtraction problems. The pace of learning slowed, however, when children were required to use abstract mathematical symbols. The teachers' lively presentation promotes good learning by demonstrating:
- the correct use of mathematical vocabulary;
 - practical ways of doing subtraction.
59. Support for children in small groups is well managed, leading to good achievement by pupils of all abilities. Teaching, learning and achievement are good for children with learning difficulties and ensure their needs are continually assessed and met well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good improvement in the use of information and communication technology.
- The outdoor learning environment is used effectively to provide good practical experiences.

Commentary

60. The curriculum enables children to enjoy a stimulating range of practical activities and maximises the use of the outdoor learning environment to promote learning. Children enjoy:
- planting seeds and observing growth;
 - following routes and drawing maps;
 - practising road safety rules and exploring forces as they push and pull toys.
61. There are good links with literacy. For example after reading about bears they used torches to explore light in the 'bears cave' and planned menus for the bears picnic. They regularly use the computer to read, write, count and explore shape, with good control of the mouse. Photographs and assessment records show they have learned about human growth following a visit from a mother and baby and have studied the life cycle of a frog. As children research and record facts about pandas and polar bears, and followed simple routes outside, they demonstrate competencies above those expected for their age. Teaching, learning and achievement are good.

CREATIVE AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

It is not possible to make a judgement about provision in these areas of learning because no teaching was observed, although these areas of learning were sampled. Displayed work shows children have used found materials to create chairs for toys, and model boats for teddies. They complete observational paintings and drawings of old teddies, with good attention to detail. Children are encouraged to select from a range of art materials, which enables them to show some originality in their responses and to follow preferences. The school acknowledges improvement is needed to the creative area in order to make

materials more accessible and visible. This is necessary in order to enable pupils to undertake creative activities independently.

Outdoor resources for physical activity are very good. The children frequently enjoy climbing and balancing in a safe area adjacent to the classroom. The climbing frame offers good levels of challenge and the hall is also used regularly for movement. Good use is also made of the outdoors for exploring sounds and music, painting, building dens, constructing models and for imaginative play.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Writing standards in Year 6 are well above average.
- Literacy and speaking skills are used well in a range of subjects.
- The co-ordinator analyses data very well and identifies possible shortcomings and suggests remedies.
- Elements of the reading resources are restricting progress.

Commentary

62. Since the last inspection, the good standards in national tests and in the work seen during the inspection have been maintained in most respects. However, there have been significant improvements in:

- the quality of writing by Year 6;
- the way pupils in Year 6 bring texts to life by reading expressively;
- the ways that pupils' progress is enhanced by the good use of information and communication technology, most particularly in word processing and finding information.

Parents and pupils are satisfied with the standards and progress achieved.

63. Pupils throughout the school speak with confidence and understanding. By Year 2, pupils are able to talk about their work, listen attentively and respond well to instructions and opportunities to discuss. Pupils make good progress in reading. They enjoy books and show a good understanding of phonics and alphabetical order. All children read simple texts accurately and they will attempt to read unfamiliar words. The highest attaining pupils read with fluency and some expression. Some predict ending to stories and nearly all discuss plot and characters in an interesting and understanding way. The over-reliance on a single reading scheme limits pupils progress and love of reading. Pupils' progress in writing is good. 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 and fluent basic skills, such as handwriting, punctuation and grammar.

64. Pupils come to Years 3 to 6 with good standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing. The school builds well on this strong foundation and pupils make good progress. The main reasons for this include:

- thoroughly planned and effective teaching which ensures that most skills are developed in a sequential and systematic way;
- challenging work for all pupils, particularly in the reading and writing work that they do;
- the good support for pupil with special educational needs who progress well towards their targets.

65. By Year 6, standards are well above average. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the challenging books they like and contribute keenly in class discussion. They listen well to all concerned and adjust or elaborate their own views accordingly, as they did when local people came to talk to them about experiences in the Second World War. In reading, most are skilled and 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 use the catalogue system in the limited school library and find the reference books they need from the too small 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. Basic writing skills are very strong and the large amount produced is testimony to interest and the demands of the teachers.
66. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Particular strengths of the teaching were:
- the very effective planning. In particular, the building in of high challenge for the oldest pupils in reading and writing that often contributes to learning in other subjects as well as English. This allows the teachers to find some extra curriculum time for extended pieces of work to be completed;
 - the development of pair and group activities improves pupils' independent learning skills and their all round confidence;
 - the development of very good basic skills enables pupils to work hard and produce a lot, particularly in writing;
 - the way that teachers encourage pupils to accept challenges and ensure that the support is ready and available.
67. Teachers assess pupils' work well and accurately, but the comments in books are not sufficiently linked to pupils' individual learning targets. As a result, pupils' understanding of how they can improve is only satisfactory.
68. Leadership and management are good. The energy and purpose that the co-ordinator puts into checking and analysing data, trends and shortcomings are having a good effect on pupils' progress. The school provides a mostly good environment for English and literacy teaching. Writing and books are prominently displayed about the school, and set a good example for the pupils. However, the school library has an unsatisfactory range of books, many of which are old and worn out.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

69. Pupils have highly competent reading and writing skills that are used well across a range of subjects, such as geography, history and religious education. The school does not have an extensive library, but the present stock is supplemented by loans from the local authority library service.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are well above average, which is higher than at the time of the last inspection.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve well because most of the teaching is good.
- Although assessment systems and procedures are now in place, there are shortcomings in linking day to day plans, marking and pupils' targets.
- The setting of targets does not consistently develop pupils' understanding of their next steps.
- Co-ordination of provision is effective, although the impact of the leadership has recently been blunted by staffing issues.

Commentary

70. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year but tends to be either similar to the national average or slightly lower than it. By the end of Year 2, however, standards are consistently above average and pupils achieve well. Standards in Year 6 are also consistent with good achievement. Most pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make good progress from their starting points. Progress is accelerated in Years 5 and 6 where the best teaching was seen.

71. Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection because of:

- increased confidence in teaching the structured approach advocated by the National Numeracy Strategy;
- guidance from the local education authority adviser;
- improved assessment procedures.

As a result, teachers are clear on how much progress to expect, and plan lessons that are

interesting and relevant. Practical activities allow pupils the opportunity to find out things for

themselves, and problem-solving activities are emphasised. Pupils in Year 2, for example,

had great fun using their measuring skills to fit a card into an envelope. Teachers encourage pupils to improve their ability to calculate mentally, and on paper and to explain their thinking, and they involve pupils in their own learning. This does not yet extend to precise learning steps in pupils' targets, which are rather broad. Teachers and support staff are particularly skilled in recognising when pupils have misunderstood a concept, or have gaps in their knowledge. Although lessons generally meet the needs of most pupils and significant attention is given to ensuring activities are planned for pupils with special educational needs, extended tasks for higher-attaining pupils are not always planned carefully. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the very good additional support they receive.

72. Leadership and management have made a good contribution to improving assessment and to raising pupils' achievement. Teaching and learning are becoming increasingly more effective because of the very strong emphasis on staff training, monitoring and evaluation and because of the way that teachers work as a strong team. The school has a good knowledge of its main strengths and areas for

improvement, as a result of looking closely at pupils' national test papers and observing teachers in lessons. Effective systems are in place to track pupils' performance over time.

Mathematics across the curriculum

73. Provision is satisfactory and improving. Teachers plan some meaningful links with other subjects, particularly information and communication technology. Pupils' understanding of collecting and presenting information in graphs, for example, increases well as a result of learning to use computers to record their work. However, opportunities are limited across other subjects, particularly those that help pupils learn about solving problems, and those that increase their ability to talk about mathematics more fluently.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain well above average standards by Year 6 because of good preparation for national tests.
- There has been an improvement in the use of information and communication technology to promote learning.
- Mathematics and literacy skills are well utilised.
- Knowledge and understanding of science facts are better developed than scientific enquiry skills.
- There has been unsatisfactory improvement in standards by Years 2 and 4.
- The marking of pupils' work is not effective in helping pupils understand how they can improve.

Commentary

74. Since the last inspection, there has been unsatisfactory improvement in standards by Year 2. Standards have declined and are now in line with national expectations in scientific knowledge and below average in enquiry skills. National tests show standards by Year 6 declined between 2002 and 2004. An improving picture is emerging this year following thorough preparation for tests. Current Year 6 pupils have well above average standards in scientific terminology and facts, but skills in investigating and problem-solving continue to lag behind other aspects of science. Achievement in science is satisfactory in Years 1 to 5 and good in Year 6.
75. By Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of how a simple electrical circuit works. They have a satisfactory understanding of:
- forces, such as the effect on an object of pushing or pulling;
 - the conditions needed for growth.
- There are gaps in learning about materials. They have not developed the skills needed for raising questions and deciding how they might answer them, and have little experience of fair testing, such as recognising when comparisons are accurate and how to set up questions that will assist this judgement.
76. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrate a good knowledge of forces, materials and life processes. They know a number of methods for separating mixtures; know about light and reflection and how forces can be measured. They take accurate readings using different

measures. Written reports are thorough and detailed, and include tables, graphs and conclusions based on observations. Pupils apply well their literacy and mathematical skills and have a rudimentary understanding of scientific prediction. There are missed opportunities, however, for pupils to raise their own questions and devise investigations which test their hypotheses.

77. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The best teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2; the main strengths were:
- a stimulating practical task, which involved making an electrical circuit to light a bulb;
 - questioning and praise were used very effectively to promote exploration and the involvement of all pupils.
78. Across the school, teachers have very good relationships with pupils who respond very well and show very good levels of concentration and collaboration. Teachers' planning is satisfactory, with a clear focus for each lesson. However, planning does not take sufficient account of how the teaching of practical skills will build on previous learning or how activities will be extended for the higher attaining pupils. There is good coverage of the science units of work in Years 5 and 6, but in Years 3 and 4 there is insufficient quantity of science work, partly as a consequence of disrupted teaching in the last year. Marking does not promote improvement in science because teachers' comments tend not to refer to the main purposes of the lesson. There is an improvement in the use of information and communication technology, particularly in Years 5 and 6 where applications are used for simulating processes such as evaporation. Skills are still developing, however, with only occasional independent use for recording and handling data.
79. The headteacher has taken over subject leadership since September, and shows very good vision for improvement following a good, comprehensive review of the subject. In view of the changes needed for improvement, she plans to continue leading the subject next year. There is an acknowledgement that science needs to become a main priority in the school's development, with advanced plans to invest in staff training and resources. Monitoring procedures are good, involving observations of teaching and reviews of planning and assessment. This has highlighted the shortcomings in scientific skills and the need to increase expectations for higher attaining pupils. Overall, leadership is now good and management is satisfactory, as changes are at an early stage and have not yet had an impact on learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The rate of improvement has accelerated in the last 18 months, as a direct result of improved resources and facilities.
- Standards and achievement are now rising.
- The subject co-ordinator is managing the provision well.
- Teachers' use of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects is not yet consistently effective.

Commentary

80. Improvement has been rapid since the new facilities were ready for use. In addition to the upgraded suite, all classrooms have additional computers and all have interactive white boards. Good software resources are in place to support learning in all branches of information and communication technology. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection, when resources were unsatisfactory. Teachers have embraced the new technology with enthusiasm and they are beginning to find ways of making learning more interactive for pupils. The school has sought help from other professionals in order to improve the curriculum and teaching. There are now good plans in place to give pupils every possible opportunity to do well.
81. Pupils' work and competence are average by Years 2 and 6, which is better than the findings of the last inspection, when they were below average. Achievement is satisfactory. With the improved teaching and learning that is now much in evidence, standards are on target to rise in the next year or so. Pupils in Year 2 achieve well when learning basic keyboard skills. They have plenty of help from adults who explain things clearly and are aware of pupils' learning needs, including those with special educational needs. Pupils in Year 4 achieve well when learning how to add the information they have gathered to a database. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrate that they have learned a good range of skills this year, and many have increased their skills through attendance at the after school club.
82. The subject leader, strongly supported by management and governors, has managed the recent changes well. She has also worked hard and skilfully to improve teaching and learning through:
- increasing the opportunities for staff training;
 - monitoring the work of colleagues across the school;
 - introducing a new system for assessing pupils' progress.
83. Teaching and learning are sound overall. Good training and better resources are improving the ways in which teachers teach and, consequently, pupils learn. Teachers are also facilitating collaborative work in pairs so that pupils support and challenge each other as they work together on tasks. The good support given to pupils with special educational needs enables them to achieve well. Some teachers are skilled in the use of interactive white boards in classrooms but the pupils' role is not yet as active as it might be. Staff know that there are still a few aspects of the curriculum that the highest attaining pupils need to cover fully, and some aspects

where other pupils need more practice in order to reach the levels expected for their ages. There are good plans to increase staff expertise even further in order to tackle any remaining weaknesses in provision and to fill any gaps in pupils' learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

84. Pupils' competency is satisfactory and improving rapidly. Teachers plan some helpful links with most other subjects. Pupils have a sound understanding of the uses of information and communication technology in everyday life. Work in the after-school club also promotes the wider uses of pupils' growing skills, and in many lessons, teachers' use of the interactive white boards demonstrates wider uses in a range of contexts. However, they do not always make the best use of computers in classrooms on a daily basis. Consequently, there are not the regular opportunities for pupils to practise applying their skills across the subjects.

HUMANITIES

During the inspection, two history lessons and one geography lesson were observed. Although work analysis and discussions provided good sampling information, it is not possible to make judgements in these subjects on the quality of provision, standards, achievement, teaching, learning and leadership and management.

In **geography**, it is clear from the work in books and teachers' planning that the programme followed is typical for primary-age pupils. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have a good knowledge of their local area, find landmarks on a map and know about simple environmental issues. They are looking at the 'Isle of Struay' as a comparative area and learning about the special circumstances of living on an island. They are gaining a wider geographical perspective by following the exploits of 'Barnaby Bear' as he travels throughout the United Kingdom and more widely in the World. Further comparative work is being done by studying a family living in Mexico. By Year 6, the skills, knowledge and understanding developed earlier are used to good effect when pupils do a lot of work about:

- the environment and the need to look after it;
- comparing home with more distant places, such as mountainous areas of Peru and the Alps.

Pupils do a lot of reading and writing, including letters to the council about environmental issues. This subject makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy skills. In the Year 1 / 2 lesson observed, the pupils learned about foods eaten in Mexico and explored some of the similarities and differences with home. As a result, pupils gained an insight and further knowledge into the human geography of Mexico in the past and present.

In **history**, the evidence is that the programme is one typically found in primary schools. Again this subject plays a significant part in the development of literacy and speaking skills. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have written a newspaper report about the Great Fire of London and compared present day toys with those popular in the early 20th century. By Year 6, there are plenty of examples of extended writing and good research as pupils find out more about the Victorians. Pupils' topic folders are full of interesting facts, images and timelines that bring the period to life. In Years 3 and 4, the main topic has been about the Second World War and the content has been brought to life by visits and visitors, such as villagers to talk about their wartime experiences. Both of the lessons observed were good and there was a heavy reliance on practical, first-hand research. Year 3/4 pupils met with the local villagers, while Year 5/6 researched from a range of sources, such as books, articles and internet. There are good and interesting artefact displays that bring reality to bygone days.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

During the inspection, one lesson of music, art and design and design and technology were observed. No lessons of physical education were observed. Consequently, it is not possible to make judgements in these subjects on the quality of provision, standards, achievement, teaching, learning and leadership and management.

In **art and design**, the evidence available in the sample of pupils' artwork, in sketchbooks, portfolios and displays shows pupils successfully undertaking a range of work that is typical for their age. However, the picture is unsatisfactory as pupils move through the school in the use and development of graphical skills. Consequently, by Year 6 most pupils have not developed the necessary skills to communicate three-dimensions through shading, or to record detail with increasing accuracy in their observational work. Pupils participate enthusiastically and produce good work when creating sculptures, using natural materials outside. Year 6 pupils identified art and design as one of the subjects they enjoy most in discussions. This indicates pupils have very good attitudes to their work. The school achieved an Artsmark Silver award in 2004, reflecting a commitment to allocating the required time to the arts within the curriculum, and to offering extra curricular activities. There has been an improvement in evaluation and planning since the last inspection, but links with information and communication technology are not yet well developed.

In **design and technology**, the curriculum provides interesting opportunities for pupils to learn to design and make things, and then to evaluate their finished products. Teachers have started to plan longer blocks of time for design and technology work, and indications are that this is improving the quality of provision. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, made detailed plans of the puppets they later made, paying good attention to the quality of the finish. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 undertook more complex projects, involving research, for example designing and making slippers. They used a satisfactory range of materials for making things and for joining the materials together. A very good example of a lesson that brought together the school community was seen during the inspection when pupils in Years 3 and 4 discussed, planned, created and evaluated amazing environmental sculptures. The atmosphere was alive with focused concentration throughout the afternoon, as adults and children worked together as equal partners in the enterprise.

In **music**, guitar and recorder clubs have ceased because of the long-term absence of the specialist teacher and the opportunity to have music tuition from visiting specialists has not been taken up by pupils. This indicates that the status of music has fallen and pupils are not participating as they once did in playing tuned instruments. Currently, a single teacher teaches music, and a sample of activities indicates there are good opportunities for pupils to create, record and perform their own compositions. The shortcoming identified at the time of the last inspection, relating to insufficient use of graphical and pictorial notation for recording music, has been improved. There has been good improvement in the provision of musical instruments since the last inspection. There is also good improvement in the procedures for assessing pupils' progress. Good assessment systems are now regularly completed and monitored by management.

In **physical education**, there has been good improvement in accommodation since the last inspection. There is now the potential to use the playing field all year round, since new drainage has been installed. Assessment procedures are better, owing to regular completion and monitoring.

The school has achieved Activemark accreditation, demonstrating a commitment to provide at least two hours of physical education each week and further enrichment through extra curricular activities. Pupils have very positive attitudes when discussing the programme. Junior pupils participate in a broad curriculum, which includes the main activities of games, dance, gymnastics, swimming and athletics. Infant pupils talk enthusiastically about their

sequences in gymnastics, but have relatively little recollection of games lessons outside. Pupils are taught swimming every year from Years 3 to 6. There are also opportunities for all junior pupils to undertake a residential visit each year, during which they undertake outdoor and adventurous activities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Since the last inspection, there has been a good improvement in this area of the school's work. The school has recently restructured the programme and, as a result, the curriculum is good. Although it has only been running since December, weekly lessons of 45 to 60 minutes are resulting in a very focused approach, enabling pupils to deepen their knowledge, and to gain a better understanding of their own emotional health and well being. The importance of nurturing personal development is at the heart of the mission statement, and is evident in the religious education programme, the residential trips, and many curriculum areas. Pupils are encouraged to make choices, and to link thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

The school is also very committed to raising self-esteem through its system of rewards. Special stickers are awarded as an effective means of showing pupils that they do achieve on a daily basis. Most importantly, excellent relationships underpin everything. A very good example was seen in a lesson with Year 5 and 6 pupils, as they discussed life changes. They chose to share private information and were openly supportive of one another, showing empathy and a maturity in the comments they made to each other.

The co-ordinator has well-conceived plans for development that are in the school development plan. All elements are now carefully integrated into a new comprehensive scheme that includes citizenship. Pupils' weekly lessons are evaluated, and checked. The coordinator actively promotes training, invites visitors into school, keeps the governing body fully informed, and has a clear vision for future developments. The school is pacing its involvement in the Healthy Schools initiative to fully develop each strand and it is rightly proud to have just received its second Healthy Schools Award, celebrating community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	1
Attendance	3
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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