

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Studley, Warwickshire

LEA area: Warwickshire

Unique reference number: 125710

Headteacher: Mrs Mary Johnson

Lead inspector: Mr David Carrington

Dates of inspection: 16th - 18th May 2005

Inspection number: 267878

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:	234
School address:	Pool Road Studley Warwickshire
Postcode:	B80 7QU
Telephone number:	(01527) 852 140
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Alexis Yearby
Date of previous inspection:	21 st June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is situated in the large village of Studley in west Warwickshire, close to the Worcestershire boundary. The school draws pupils from a wide area around the village and from nearby Redditch. It is of average size for a primary school, with 119 boys and 115 girls. The school will reduce in size to one class per year-group in September 2005. The school is over-subscribed.

The background of the pupils has changed significantly since the previous inspection in 1999 due to new admission arrangements introduced by the diocese. Currently, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs, whilst below average, is almost twice that in 1999. There is an average proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs. Overall, most special educational needs are for learning difficulties.

Just over ten per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a very small proportion speaks English as an additional language.

When pupils start school they have average levels of skills and knowledge.

The school was awarded *Healthy Eating Awards* in 2004 and 2005.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15414	Mr David Carrington	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education
10965	Mrs Pat Edwards	Lay inspector	
3751	Mrs Trudy Cotton	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology English as an additional language
30144	Mr Edgar Hastings	Team inspector	Science Music Special educational needs
2818	Mr Graham Warner	Team inspector	Geography History Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a **very effective** school. Pupils' achievement is very good, and standards are well above average overall. The school is very successful in developing the *whole child*, because pupils' personal development is very good. The school is led very well by the headteacher who has formed a very strong partnership with the deputy headteacher and all other staff. Teaching and learning are of very good quality, and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils is excellent. The school gives **very good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- By the end of Year 6 standards are well above average in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Pupils' achievement is very good overall. This also applies to pupils with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and the gifted and talented pupils.
- Teaching and learning are of very good quality. The strongest teaching is in Years 4, 5 and 6, and teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning.
- The headteacher leads the school with determination, vision and great commitment. Her very effective deputy headteacher and all other staff fully support her quest for high standards.
- Pupils think their school is excellent; they have very positive attitudes, they behave very well and they develop into children who are friendly, polite, considerate and very hard working. Relationships are excellent.
- Good improvement has been made to provision for children in the Foundation Stage and they are getting a good start to their education.
- The curriculum is rich, relevant and enjoyable, and is enhanced by an excellent range of additional activities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is excellent. The celebration of minority faiths and cultures is a particular strength of the school.
- The care, guidance and welfare of pupils are very effective and the partnerships with parents and the community are very good. These qualities have a very positive impact on pupils' achievement.
- The identification of step-by-step targets for pupils with special educational needs, the match of work to these targets, the informative nature of comments when marking, and the opportunities for pupils to self-assess their own work at the end of lessons all require sharper focus.

The school has made **good** improvement since 1999. Despite the falling number of pupils in school and the great pressures this has placed on the budget, the school has held its eminence well. Standards have been sustained at well above average levels in Year 6, and good improvement has been made to the resources and accommodation for ICT, the curriculum, and the overall quality of provision. Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools praised the very good quality of provision in English in 2003 during their survey of boys' achievement at St Mary's.

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	C
mathematics	A	A	A	B
science	A	B	A	C

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

The school has maintained this level of well above average (grade A) standards in English, mathematics and science this year (2005). In addition, standards in ICT are well above average and there are strong indications of similar standards in music and physical education. Children make a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage and pupils' achievement is **very good** overall, with particular spurts in the final three years of school.

Attendance levels are well above average and pupils' punctuality is good. They behave very well, have very good attitudes to their work and relationships are excellent. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is **excellent**. The school is highly successful in its work to produce very well educated pupils who are very pleasant children.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **very good**. Teaching and learning have many strengths and are **very good** overall. The minimum quality of teaching is good in each class, and it is particularly strong in Years 4, 5 and 6. Chief amongst the strengths are the very effective work of teaching assistants, the successful encouragement given to pupils to work hard, the insistence on very good behaviour and the equal treatment of pupils from all educational backgrounds. In return, the pupils build skills, knowledge and understanding at very good rates, and they work very productively and purposefully. Overall, there is a good system of assessment, and the target setting, sharing and tracking system is developing well. The identification of very precise targets for pupils with special educational needs and the close matching of their tasks to these targets, the use of marking to support best possible achievement, and pupils' self-evaluation of their work are all ripe for enhancement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership, management and governance is **very good**. The headteacher leads the school very effectively, and is very well supported by the very skilful deputy headteacher and very competent team of staff. Management systems are honed extremely well to support pupils' very good achievement. The staff know their pupils very well, and they all work hard to ensure that St Mary's provides an educational experience of high quality for its pupils. The governors are very knowledgeable of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are very influential and successful in their work to manage the radical transformation that is emerging from the downsizing of the school and the changed educational backgrounds of pupils.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very few concerns and they hold very positive views of the school. The pupils are very proud of their school and share excellent views of life in school. The school takes parents' and pupils' views very seriously when planning for change.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- Bring greater precision to the identification of step-by-step targets for pupils with special educational needs, match work to these targets, give clear pointers for improvement when marking and provide opportunities for pupils to assess their own work at the end of lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is **very good** and standards are **well above average** by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 6 standards are well above average in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Pupils' achievement is very good overall. This also applies to pupils with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and the gifted and talented pupils.
- Boys and girls work equally well and their achievement is similarly very good.
- Good improvement has been made to provision for children in the Foundation Stage and they are getting a good start to their education.
- The identification of step-by-step targets for pupils with special educational needs and the match of work to these targets require enhancement.

Commentary

1. The educational profile of children when they start school has changed considerably since the previous inspection in 1999. Now, nearly five in every six pupils come from homes outside the parish, with a large number from nearby Redditch new town. Additionally, the diocese has changed the admission arrangements for Catholic Primary schools locally, and the school will have just one class per year group from September 2005. This is the end result of a gradual reduction in the number of pupils in school. Both of these factors are significant when evaluating the school's results, as for example, there is now nearly twice the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties than in 1999, and the level of skills and knowledge when children start school is generally lower than previously. For example, the current Year 6 pupils showed an above average starting level but the current children in the Foundation Stage have an average starting profile.
2. The school has worked successfully to improve its provision for the youngest children in school, those in the Foundation Stage. Provision is effective and the children make a good start in school. School leaders are continuing the process of improvement in the Foundation Stage in order to build achievement to the very good rate found in later years.
3. Achievement continues at good rates in Years 1 and 2 and pupils work well to achieve average standards generally, but above average standards in some subjects. The following table shows the Year 2 national test results in 2003 and 2004. The difference in the results in school across these two years is indicative of the different educational background of pupils in the distinct classes. The class of 2003-4 started reception at a lower level than that of 2002-3. Overall, standards were above average in 2004 in all tested subjects. This marked good achievement from the pupils' starting points.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.6 (17.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.3 (16.7)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.3 (18.5)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 31 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. This year, standards in Year 2 are average in reading, writing, mathematics and science and above average in information and communication technology.
5. In general, achievement in the first part of school is not as brisk as it is in the later part. The school has a tradition and reputation of very good achievement overall, which has been well earned. In the past, the proportion of pupils from higher attaining groups was even greater than the significantly above average proportion found today. There is now a more comprehensive range of attainment in school, with more pupils in the middle and lower attaining bands than previously was the case. The school has adjusted its provision well for this more diverse cross-section of attainment but there remains the need to enhance aspects of assessment and planning further, in order to ensure that pupils, regardless of background, work from consistently well-matched work programmes. Thus, the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs have some merits, but they are insufficiently precise in the identification of the small step by small step development of skills and knowledge, particularly in reading and writing. In practice, this means that the work set for these pupils in some classes is little different from that completed by the other pupils and this slows achievement. This is compounded by the over-use of worksheets in some subjects, especially in the early part of school. Attention to these matters has the potential to raise achievement to very good values consistently across the school.
6. Achievement accelerates quite dramatically in Years 4 to 6 due to the generally very effective quality of provision in those years. This trend is shown very clearly in pupils' books. For example, in science, standards show a level, average profile to the end of Year 3. With the increase in achievement to very good rates in Year 4, science standards begin to rise. By the end of Year 6 they are well above average, which demonstrates the overall very good progress made by pupils in the junior years. The same trend is seen in English and mathematics. Nowhere in school does achievement dip below a good level and the impact of the progress in the final three years is such that overall achievement is very good in school. There is however, a need to make achievement more consistently very good. School leaders recognise this requirement and are working in positive ways to continue to raise achievement.
7. Last year, Year 6 pupils attained well above average standards in English, mathematics and science in their National Curriculum tests. These results are shown in the following table and very favourable comparison can be made between standards in school and those found across the country.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.7 (30.3)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	29.2 (28.7)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.0 (29.5)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 39 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

8. Standards are again well above average in these subjects in Year 6 this year. They are also well above average in ICT, and there are strong indications of similar standards in music and physical education. Achievement is very good in these subjects. It was not possible to judge standards and achievement in the other subjects due to the particular focus of the present inspection.
9. It is evident from lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' past work that pupils from different backgrounds generally achieve equally successfully. Despite the imprecision of aspects of their individual education plans, the requirements of pupils with special educational needs are met very successfully, especially by the teaching assistants. The overall achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The level of challenge provided for higher attaining pupils is very good and this ensures that they achieve very well.

Ethnic minority pupils are very well included in all school activities and their achievement does not differ from that of the other pupils.

10. The very good provision for gifted and talented pupils is a particular strength of the school. These pupils are provided with very many opportunities to excel, especially in arts, sports, music and academic areas. Many such pupils attend summer schools or events sponsored by industry and community organisations. These activities and events tax their gifts and talents but also provide enjoyment and relaxation. Parents are fully supportive of the school's priority to cater very effectively for the very top achievers across the academic and pastoral fields.
11. There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. They achieve very well and all pupils whose home languages are not English become very fluent in their reading, writing and speaking skills.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Relationships between all members of the school community are excellent. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **excellent**. Attendance is well above the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils very much enjoy being part of the school community.
- Relationships are excellent.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils very successfully learn to respect others and develop values of honesty and fairness.
- Attendance is well above the national average.
- There are excellent opportunities provided for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

12. Pupils' attitudes to school have remained very good since the time of the previous inspection. They are very proud of their school and enjoy being part of the school community. They know they need to work hard in lessons in order to do well. Their relationships with each other and adults working in the school are excellent. They think staff treat them fairly.
13. Pupils' behaviour at break time and in lessons is very good. Pupils know and discuss the school rules and they know the behaviour expected of them. Parents and pupils were involved in the development of the school's anti-bullying policy and they agree that staff deal promptly and fairly with any reported incidents. All adults working in the school apply the agreed behaviour policy consistently, which ensures the school is a harmonious community.
14. The excellent levels of personal development displayed by most pupils are due to the provision made by the school, which successfully encourages pupils to take responsibility and develop independence and maturity. Spiritual awareness and knowledge is fostered well through the strong Christian ethos of the school. The opportunity to develop pupils' self-knowledge is consistently promoted in personal, social and health education lessons, through assemblies and the very strong links with the local parish church. These links complement the school's own commitment very effectively. Pupils and visitors make an excellent contribution to assemblies, which are spiritually uplifting. Pupils are encouraged to write their own prayers and spirituality is enhanced well by opportunities to reflect in lessons such as art and design, music and dance.
15. The provision for pupils' moral development is excellent. The consistent emphasis on respect for others and in taking responsibility for one's own actions helps pupils establish for themselves what is right and wrong. All adults in the school provide excellent role models;

they have very high expectations and adopt a consistent approach to encouraging good behaviour. Pupils learn by example that it is important to value each other and the environment.

16. The provision for pupils' social development is excellent and all pupils are supported very well. Pupils are encouraged to form constructive relationships. All classes have a range of monitors who are responsible for many and varied tasks. Their involvement in the school council, in the peer mediation scheme, and in sporting, musical and other community activities further develops the pupils' social confidence.
17. The provision for pupils' cultural development is excellent. They develop an excellent understanding of local culture through research, visits and visitors to the school. Their knowledge of other cultures is greatly enhanced by topic work such as that on Indian culture which was supported very well by the Parent Teacher Association Indian night. Pupils gain an excellent insight into the many cultures present in society today through their work in religious education, art, music and geography. An awareness of others less fortunate than themselves in other cultures is fostered very effectively through fund raising to support work by charities such as *Cafod* and the Tsunami appeal.
18. Attendance is well above the national average. Teachers call registers promptly at the beginning of every lesson. Staff monitor attendance carefully. Parents are familiar with the school's policy regarding absence. The home school agreement successfully supports the school's policy on attendance and punctuality.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.2	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides **very good** quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning, and the curriculum is **very good**. The care, welfare and guidance for pupils, and the partnership with parents and the community are all **very good**. Assessment is of **good** quality.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **very good** overall. Assessment is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are of very good quality. The strongest teaching is in Years 4, 5 and 6, and teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning.
- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and this quality is continued in Years 1 to 3.
- Chief amongst the strengths of teaching are the very effective work of teaching assistants, the successful encouragement given to pupils to work hard, the insistence on very good behaviour and the equal treatment of pupils from all educational backgrounds.
- Pupils build skills, knowledge and understanding at very good rates, and they work very productively and purposefully.
- Overall, there is a good system of assessment, and the target setting, sharing and tracking system is developing well.
- The identification of very precise targets for pupils with special educational needs and the close matching of their tasks to these targets, the use of marking to support best possible achievement, and pupils' self-evaluation of their work are all ripe for enhancement.

Commentary

19. It is evident from the school's results, both in academic terms and in the very successful development of the pupils as pleasant, polite, caring and considerate children, that the quality of teaching and learning is having very good impact. The evidence from lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' past work shows that teaching and learning are good from reception to Year 3 and very good thereafter. The school is working well to make the quality consistently very good in all parts of the school and the staff team is confident and cheerful as it works to this end. In all, teaching and learning are very good and there is no evidence of unsatisfactory teaching.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	12 (28%)	26 (60%)	5 (12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

20. There are a number of significant strengths of teaching. Teaching assistants work consistently and very effectively across all year groups. They support the pupils with special educational needs with considerable competence and with a very good focus on the development of knowledge and skills. Their input is a significant factor in the very good achievement made by these pupils. A second very good feature, which is apparent throughout the school, is the equality of opportunity given to all pupils to succeed in their work. Other strengths of teaching include the successful encouragement given to pupils to work hard, the insistence on very good behaviour, and the provision of well-planned homework, which consolidates and extends the work in school in an effective manner.
21. Pupils really enjoy being in school and this shows in their very positive attitudes to work. Pupils work very productively and purposefully in most lessons. Where this dips, as seen very occasionally in the first part of school, the pace of learning and insistence on best behaviour was not up to the best practice found in school. Nonetheless, pupils work very effectively with other pupils and they develop very good skills of independent study. This was demonstrated time after time in the ICT suite where pupils worked cheerfully together in a mature and sensible fashion as they made very good gains in their skills and knowledge.
22. Assessment procedures are of good quality in most cases. Assessments for all subjects are of consistent quality across the school, regular, comprehensive in coverage and the outcomes are very carefully logged. The target setting, sharing and tracking system is emerging with significant strengths. The school uses very comprehensive data, such as that provided by the *Fischer Family Trust*, most effectively to identify pupils for additional focus and this data is also used to set very rigorous targets for all pupils' achievement. This is a reflection of the very high expectations of the headteacher.
23. There are however, aspects of assessment and its use that require strengthening. The identification of very precise targets for pupils with special educational needs and the close matching of their tasks to these targets, as discussed in the standards section of this report, are in need of enhancement. Additionally, the use of marking to identify ways in which pupils can improve their work in order to meet their targets, and pupils' self-evaluation of their work, particularly at the end of lessons, are not yet developed fully.
24. There is good potential for these aspects of assessment to be improved to very good quality; such is the determination of school leaders. This is illustrated by the good strides made to improve provision for children in the Foundation Stage. Teaching and learning are good in this stage, which is a positive reflection of the effectiveness with which this key priority has been fulfilled. School leaders know there is more to be done to continue improvement in the Foundation Stage, but there is a united resolve to do this and success is within reach.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is **very good** with some **excellent** features. The quality of the accommodation and resources is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good breadth and balance in the curriculum overall.
- There is excellent enrichment of the curriculum through its extra curricular activities.
- The provision for pupils with special needs is very good overall.
- Accommodation is cramped for many activities and resources are satisfactorily giving adequate support.

Commentary

25. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good. The school has worked hard at developing the areas of learning effectively. In the main the curriculum is well focused. There is a progressive development of knowledge, understanding and skills in the six areas of learning identified in the Foundation Stage curriculum. There has been a recent re-organisation of working areas, including an outside area. This has had a beneficial impact on the children's learning. However, in some aspects of physical development the children are still catching up on their skill development because of previously less than ideal conditions.
26. The curriculum for Years 1 to 6 has been well sustained since the last inspection. The school ensures that there are a wide variety of very relevant activities in subjects that interest and motivate pupils very well. Statutory requirements are met and teaching time is used very effectively. The school pays particularly good attention to balancing the work for pupils so that there is a broad range of understanding in their learning. Teachers make a whole team effort and teaching assistants and this impacts very positively on the skilful responses made by the pupils in most lessons.
27. All pupils are given equal access to learning. The school is rightly proud of its attention to the equal opportunities given to pupils. The quality of provision for pupils with special needs is very good overall. However, the lack of precise enough targets in some pupils' individual education plans limits their effectiveness. Special needs pupils are well supported by teachers and strongly committed support staff. This level of support commitment has a beneficial impact on the achievement of pupils with special educational needs.
28. Learning opportunities are particularly well extended. The excellent programme of after school activities in sport and the arts add greatly to the pupils knowledge and understanding. Their skills as potential good citizens are enhanced through the residential visits made in Year 5 and 6. Many visitors to the school, such as the older generation, give an extra dimension to the pupils learning for example in history.
29. Good arrangements are in place for pupils to move from one phase of their education to the next. The children entering the Foundation Stage class come from a large number of pre-school settings. Good liaison has been built and the school has wisely released a mobile building to a wrap around care facility that enhances this liaison. There are equally firm foundations to the transfer arrangements with the secondary schools to which pupils transfer. Pupils and parents are confident about the transfer from one stage to another as a result of the school's endeavours.
30. The school is very confident in the way that it is developing strategies used to teach the literacy and numeracy skills. This has had a positive impact on the standards achieved in the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Many opportunities are regularly created for developing mature discussion skills. This supports development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils write extensively in English lessons and on occasion in other lessons.

However, these skills could be more widely developed in some subjects such as geography and history.

31. Overall accommodation is satisfactory. However, some accommodation is cramped and does not always give pupils opportunity to make as much of their learning as they might. Nevertheless teachers are very aware of this restriction and they plan very carefully in order to overcome potential problems. The provision of materials to promote learning is satisfactory overall. The school is very aware of the need for improvements and has the will to make provision better than it is currently. A good example is the plan to cover in a courtyard. This will provide a whole research base, as it will be adjacent to the computer suite already created. The creativity of the school to overcome accommodation and resource difficulties is only held back through lack of funding. However, the parents' association is very helpful in making funds available to the school that drives forward some improvements deemed necessary.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides **very good** quality care and support for pupils throughout the school. The involvement of pupils in the work of the school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know their pupils very well and are supportive and caring of them.
- Pupils are aware of their targets for personal development.
- Parents are very happy with the school's induction programme.
- The school council provides very good opportunities for pupils to contribute to the life of the school.

Commentary

32. The school has maintained the high quality of care and support it provides for pupils since the time of the previous inspection. Teachers know their pupils very well and value them as individuals, which fosters pupils' personal development very effectively. Achievements in and out of school are consistently celebrated. Staff effectively monitor the personal development of pupils through individual and class discussions. Pupils are very aware of their targets for improving their personal development.
33. Child protection procedures are fully in place and training is regularly undertaken. Parents are very happy with the school's induction arrangements for those children entering the reception class. These allow the children to settle quickly and feel secure in their new surroundings. Pupils have trusting relationships with staff and feel confident in discussing any concerns they may have. The school council is successfully contributing to the life of the school through, for example, its discussions on school uniform and healthy eating.
34. Governors carry out regular risk assessments and all necessary safety checks are up to date. First aid boxes are appropriately stocked and sited and parents are kept fully informed of any accidents and any treatment given.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The information parents receive in regular newsletters and at consultation meetings is very good.
- The Parent Teacher Association is very supportive of the school.

- The school serves the community very well.
- The headteacher and staff are very approachable.
- Many parents, governors and volunteers assist in school.
- The school has very good links with the church and local schools.

Commentary

35. The school continues its very good partnership with its parents as found at the time of the previous inspection. It provides very good information in weekly newsletters, and parents are pleased about this. Most parents are very supportive of the school and are pleased with what the school provides. They feel comfortable about talking to staff regarding any worries or concerns. Parents and pupils are satisfied with the amount of homework received and feel it successfully reinforces and builds on work undertaken in lessons. The school encourages parents, governors and others in the community to help in school, and staff are very appreciative of all the help they receive.
36. Pupils' annual progress reports are clear about what pupils can do. However there is limited information on ways in which their parents can help them at home as some targets for development are too broad. Teachers provide parents with useful information about topics studied each term, which aids their understanding. The prospectus provides a useful, practical guide to the school. The school has consulted parents regarding their expectations for the school such as the anti bullying policy. Workshops have been held for parents on how they can help their children at home and there was a recent parents evening to explain the newly purchased reading scheme, all of which give parents a greater insight into their children's education.
37. The Parent Teacher Association is very supportive of the school and raises considerable funds to help with resources. This financial support is very helpful at a time when the school budget is falling, and helps maintain an acceptable level of resourcing in school.
38. The school has very close links with the local parish church. Business links are provided through the Education Business Partnership, which include participation in the *Rolls Royce Challenge*. Local businesses support the school with raffle prizes and a local Do-It-Yourself superstore recently assisted the school by providing funds for the environmental area. Local sports clubs are involved in coaching in the school. Such positive links enable the school to considerably broaden the scope and impact of the curriculum and to provide learning opportunities that otherwise might not be possible.
39. Good links with local schools provide specialist teaching especially for drama, sport and staff development opportunities. The links with other schools to enhance the provision for pupils who are gifted and talented are especially successful. There are good transition arrangements in place to support pupils' move to the next stage of their education, helping to ensure that this procedure is stress free.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance are all **very good**. The headteacher leads the school with determination, very high expectations and very much success. Financial management is **very good** and is enabling the school to meet the demands of providing very good quality education as the budget reduces due to the lower number of pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher leads the school very effectively.
- The deputy headteacher and other senior managers support the headteacher very effectively.
- Management systems are honed well to support pupils' very good achievement.
- The governors are very knowledgeable of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

Commentary

40. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school, and her inspirational leadership has ensured that everyone is committed to working to achieve the highest standards possible in all areas of the school's work. She has clear strategies for working towards the future and has shared them with staff and governors who are fully supportive of these aims. The task of downsizing the school has been firmly grasped and tackled in a positive way. This is directly linked to the shared commitment of the leadership team to continuous school improvement. The head and deputy share a very effective partnership, which in turn draws in the subject leaders whose role has developed most effectively. The strength of their successful working is down to enthusiastic and committed teamwork, and has created an ethos of mutual support and loyalty. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses well.
41. The senior managers have together put systems securely in place to thoroughly analyse data to see how well pupils are achieving and to set targets for their further improvement and to track their progress. Performance management has been used very well to bring about pupil improvement. This is underpinned by a systematic programme of the monitoring of teaching and learning, and has ensured that classroom practice is of high quality overall. Professional development has a whole school influence and includes teaching assistants as well as teachers. The sharing of good practice and Inset with neighbouring schools has been most useful in this aspect. The school has instituted very well refined systems for managing the school's finances to enable them to achieve their priorities.
42. The governors are very knowledgeable of the strengths that the school has, as well as the areas that require further development. Consequently, they are very influential in the management of the emerging changes that are taking place. The reduction of the school's size has been managed successfully, and key managers and the governors are now confronting the effect that the changed educational backgrounds of pupils are having upon achievement. The governing body are very committed and regularly visit lessons to improve their knowledge of classroom activity. A number very effectively bring other skills that are beneficial to pupils' education and personal development. An example of this is a governor who is a nurse and is heavily involved in the school's healthy eating project.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	542,815	Balance from previous year	25,361
Total expenditure	507,100	Balance carried forward to the next year	35,715
Expenditure per pupil	2,167		

43. Taking into account the standards achieved, the quality of education and its overall effectiveness, the school provides very good value for money.

Most significant aids or barriers to raising achievement

44. The balance carried forward at the end of the financial year is designed to meet the needs of all pupils in the forthcoming year when the school has just one class in each year group. It is particularly focused on maintaining staffing numbers in order to hold the quality of provision at very good levels. Further reductions in the budget anticipated by school leaders for the future are likely to present the school with major challenges. They recognise that budget constraints may become a barrier to the provision of optimum quality of education and the maintenance of pupils' very good achievement, but are determined to hold on to the school's many strengths.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good** overall where there has been a change in the range of the intake since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enter school with average levels of attainment in most areas of learning.
- Standards are average at the end of reception whilst children have made good progress and are well prepared for Year 1 work.
- Children are achieving well as a result of consistently good teaching and support.
- More emphasis needs to be given to developing children's physical skills.

Commentary

45. There is good overall provision in the reception class that forms the Foundation Stage in the school. The children come into school from a number of pre-school settings. They attend on a full time basis after a carefully staged induction procedure. This gives the parents and children confidence that the school is making effective provision to meet needs. As a result, the children speedily adapt to school routines. The children's attainment on entry to the school is average, although their communication skills are often more adept.
46. From this base the children achieve well and make good progress in most areas of learning. Consequently, children are well on the pathway to achieving their individual targets by the end of the reception class. This includes the children with special educational needs who receive a high level of perceptive support from teacher and teaching assistants. All children achieve well because care is taken with planning activities that are effectively balanced between those that are child -initiated and adult led. Good levels of attention are given to developing co-operative work so that social skills are enhanced. Staff encourage all opportunities to develop communication skills in full class discussions and group or individual activities. They also act as good role models by joining in all of the activities with enthusiasm and thoughtfulness. They often ask appropriately open-ended questions that help the children to think through how to respond to some of the problems set for them. A positive working atmosphere is created where both children and staff show their pleasure and enjoyment at being together with one another. All staff contribute to the observation and assessment of the children's skills and record their findings with care. This impacts positively on the progress and achievement of the children. The accommodation has recently been reorganised, but there remain improvements to make in order to best benefit the children's learning. Resources have been improved at the same time, which satisfactorily help the children in their learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children come into school with confidence because they are secure in their learning.
- Good achievement is promoted through good relationships between adults and children.
- This is supported by good relationships between adults acting as good role models.

Commentary

47. Children come into school with confidence that they are joining a secure and happy environment. They have a very good range of learning opportunities presented to them, which

they enter into with enthusiasm. The opportunities give appropriate choices to them to work independently, with partners or in small groups. Most children choose to work with partners or small groups because they realise that they gain a great deal from sharing their knowledge and understanding. The teacher and teaching assistants have equally good relationships with parents and the children. There is a very welcoming atmosphere in which adults share with one another as well as with the children. This good role modelling for the children sets a very good example. In an observed lesson, the teacher and teaching assistants joined in with the children as they sat comfortably with one another. The children talked freely about the differences in feelings that people have. This discussion had been triggered off as a result of the teacher reading *Mr. Grumpy* very expressively. When the children moved into the large hall for a physical development lesson they showed how concerned they were for one another. They moved safely and made sure that everyone had enough space to carry out their tasks accurately. Children regularly come together to share their findings with one another when they have been exploring in other areas of learning. They do this willingly and with good measures of enjoyment. The children are moving at a good pace towards achieving their individual targets. They are well prepared for work in Year 1 because teaching quality is good.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have standards above those normally found.
- Children have made good progress and are achieving well.
- Teaching is good and bases planning on the level of skills that children bring into school.

Commentary

48. The children are encouraged to use accurate language in all of their areas of learning. The quality of teaching is good. The teacher and teaching assistants all pay very careful attention to discussing aspects of their learning with children on an individual or group basis. The teacher uses the starting points for learning to provide whole group discussions. These are well paced. Although often of short length, they pick out the relevant factors for the children to pursue in their learning. When these times are specifically focused the children are carefully prepared for Year 1 work. For example, children shared a *big book* together in order to develop listening skills effectively. The teacher used the book profitably to draw out understanding of rhyming words. In the group work that followed the children very astutely recognise rhyming words that had been placed around the outside area walls and floor. They recorded the words found accurately. They used pencils to record with confidence as well as skill. Others completed complex rhyming word puzzles independently or worked with the teacher making their own books. These tasks were completed with equal amounts of skill and accuracy. The children talked in an informed, well structured way as they built cars with plastic materials. In role-play they “worked” in a laboratory, using microscopes to investigate bugs as part of their learning about mini-beasts. Children use books to inform them about their findings in a mature way. Their love of books as a useful tool for learning is developing in a meaningful way. Many children have already achieved the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning and will move into the Year 1 class with confidence.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are similar to those normally found.
- Children make good progress in their learning and achieve well.
- The teacher and teaching assistants combine together to give children good levels of support.

Commentary

49. The teacher plans a well-balanced amount of short and longer activities in order to promote learning in mathematics effectively. The overall quality of teaching is good. For example, in a short introductory session the children worked at a good pace as they ordered numbers to ten accurately. The teacher had prepared a visual stimulus as children held the numbers up at the front whilst they all sang *Ten green bottles*. The competency of adding the numbers was reversed with equal skill as the numbers of bottles lessened. Children worked with confidence because the teacher introduced the task logically and the teaching assistant joined in effectively so that all are encouraged to take part. The children also had their knowledge well extended later as they worked with numbers up to twenty. They were able to manipulate numbers backwards and forwards skilfully. At the same time they moved on to learn about capacity through involvement in a range of activities. The teacher gave them visual support to confirm their understanding of full, half full and empty. Paper glasses were pinned to the board and then covered with coloured paper to show the amounts suggested by the children. After this initial exercise the children moved into group activities that had been carefully organised in order to maximise the children's learning. They were given support when it was needed or worked independently with confidence. They filled beakers in the outside area with accuracy and sorted them by size effectively. A teaching assistant worked perceptively with the group, asking relevant questions to support them in the task. Others used the water and compost trays to fill containers to different levels. Whatever the task, the children work conscientiously and are well on the way to achieving the Early Learning Goals. They are being effectively prepared for Year 1 work.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are like those normally found.
- Children achieve well and make good progress.
- Teaching is good as relevant task support the children's learning well.

Commentary

50. The children have fewer competencies in this area of learning than in most other areas when they enter the school. Teaching is good and a good range of practical experiences is provided to develop the children's understanding effectively. Many of the activities give the children chances to explore and experiment. In a focused activity the children explored the school's wild life area to discover mini-beasts. They re-visited the site several times in order to develop understanding of the passage of time. They used magnifying glass tubs with care and excitedly discovered the difference this made to their ability to see things much more clearly. Clear instructions were provided, and the children carried out the task confidently with the support of a volunteer helper. The children were able to do this because they had already made a number of discoveries in the role-play area as they interrogated books about mini-beasts. As a result they were able to investigate possible areas for finding mini-beasts discerningly. They were well focused in their tasks as investigative scientists. They recorded findings carefully. They made use of the computer skilfully as they created and printed pictures of mini-beasts carefully because they have good mouse control skills. Children used colours thoughtfully as they made good use of the *Paint* program. The teaching assistant

worked perceptively with a group making an attractive number of beetles from junk materials. In their early morning tasks the children used plastic materials to build imaginative cars and aeroplanes. The children are working well towards the achievement of their individual targets and are prepared effectively for Year 1 work.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's achievement is satisfactory.
- Adults act as good role models and work hard with the children to develop their skills.
- There are different standards achieved in outdoor and indoor work.

Commentary

51. Teaching quality is satisfactory and children have appropriate tasks given to them in order to develop their physical skills. The teacher and teaching assistants work methodically with them both indoors and outdoors. They are better rewarded for their hard work indoors. In the outdoors activities the children pay careful attention to the use of space. They care for one another through giving appropriate space to carry out tasks. However, they still lack the control as they try to develop catching and throwing skills in pairs and individually. The teacher concentrates efforts very clearly through repeating exercises and gradually the children make small measures of improved control. This is much more fittingly achieved when the children move indoors into the large hall space. Children were observed to take great care of one another as they moved in different ways. The teacher skilfully built up the pace of the movements as children began by walking and moved on to jogging and skipping in a circle. The teacher and teaching assistants joined in with the children as good role models. Children were effectively chosen by the teacher to demonstrate good work. The children then showed that they could control movements much better in an indoor area. They balanced and jumped with good measures of control on a variety of apparatus. They landed with care and enjoyed the opportunity to show their skills to one another in the small groups that the teacher had formed. The smaller physical skills of building and cutting accurately are carefully targeted in tasks that also develop the children's creativity. The majority of the children are still working thoughtfully along the stepping-stones pathway of the Early Learning Goals. They are being effectively prepared for work in Year 1.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are achieving well and making good progress as they develop creative skills within other areas of learning.
- Good planning by the teacher enables the children to attain appropriate standards.

Commentary

52. Teaching and learning are good. There are good opportunities made for the children to develop their creative skills within other areas of learning. The teacher and teaching assistants carefully monitor their developing skills. However, the children are given every chance to develop these at an individual level. When they had studied the books about mini-beasts in the role-play area some children moved on to painting their favourite creatures. They select colours carefully. They chose a variety of different sized brushes that allowed them to make attractively composed pictures. They used junk materials skilfully, due to the effective support

from the teaching assistant, to make two and three-dimensional creatures. The *Paint* program on the computer was used equally thoughtfully in creating pleasing images that were printed off in order to display them in the classroom. Collage work was completed by larger groups of children as they depicted a favourite story of *The hungry caterpillar*. The children sang in tune as they built numbers in the rhyme of *Ten green bottles* as part of their understanding of numbers. The children are being well prepared for their work in Year 1 as they move along the pathway of the Early Learning Goals effectively.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**. The school has maintained the high quality provision in English identified by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools in 2003.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils take great pride in their work and are very keen to learn.
- Standards in reading and writing are well above average by Year 6.
- Pupils speak confidently and listen well.
- Basic literacy skills are taught successfully throughout the school.
- High expectations in Year 4, 5 and 6, mean pupils achieve their best.
- By Year 2, average and less capable readers lack fluency.
- Good or better teaching throughout the school is supporting learning.

Commentary

53. By the end of Year 6, standards in reading and writing are well above average. They follow the pattern of very good results in the national test in English over time. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading and writing are average. These findings are similar to results in last year's (2004) national tests in English in Year 2. Throughout the school, speaking and listening skills are above average.
54. Achievement in English is very good in Years 4, 5 and 6. Teachers and pupils have high expectations and lessons provide challenge for all levels of ability. This ensures pupils capable of reaching the highest levels do so. Achievement in Year 3 is good. Skilful support for pupils with special educational needs provides the relevant, targeted steps for their learning in this year group. A strength throughout the school is the high quality of presentation. In all year groups, pupils take great pride in their work and handwriting is very neat and tidy.
55. The school's profile has changed over time, and trends indicate that attainment on entry has declined and is now broadly average. In Year 1 and 2, pupils build on their prior attainment and achievement is good overall. Achievement in writing is developing effectively. A clear, planned focus on the use of different types of writing is improving pupils' skills and understanding well. Achievement in reading is sound.
56. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average. Pupils are confident and competent speakers, who are eager to ask and answer questions. In discussions pupils talk to adults and to each other in a mature way. Teachers' effective use of questioning in lessons encourages pupils to discuss their ideas and to put over their own points of view. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language speak fluently and achieve well.
57. By Year 6, standards in reading are well above average. Pupils enjoy reading, choose to read voluntarily and read widely. They have preferred choices of author and talk in depth about characters and plot. The story of *White Fang* by Jack London was chosen *because its descriptive language brought the story to life*. Pupils are enthusiastic about the range of books on offer in school and the fact that they can read books from home. Tighter monitoring of

reading is needed to ensure that less confident readers choose books that enable them to develop their fluency and skills successfully.

58. In Years 1 and 2, early reading skills are taught progressively. Pupils learn how to recognise words by sight and to link letters with their sounds to find out unknown words. However, average and less capable readers lack fluency in their reading, and use a limited range of reading skills. Teachers make effective use of guided reading time to provide a good range of reading experiences soundly matched to the pupils' need.
59. Historically, writing has been of a high quality, with boys and girls achieving similar levels. The effective links between speaking, reading and writing have been maintained in Year 4, 5, and 6 and so standards are well above average. Pupils keep the reader in mind as they structure a range of narrative and non-fictional writing. Expectations of finished pieces of writing are high and pupils rise well to these expectations in producing quality high work.
60. In Year 1 and 2, younger pupils make convincing attempts at spelling words by themselves and by Year 2, organise their stories successfully and punctuate their work well. Their good speaking skills are of benefit to the quality of their written work and so sentences are well constructed and vocabulary used precisely.
61. Teaching and learning is often very good in the junior classes and good in Years 1 and 2. Teachers have good subject expertise, high expectations of behaviour and work, and encourage their pupils to do well. Lessons move at a good pace and pupils work very hard. Pupils enjoy working collaboratively, and homework is effective in supporting independent learning. Marking is consistent, but varies in the way it helps pupils to improve their work. Whilst teachers track progress and set learning targets, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to self-assess their work.
62. Leadership and management are good. The role of the subject leader has been developed well since the visit of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools in 2003, and so the subject is moving forward. The school makes good use of test results and ongoing monitoring to ensure pupils make the best progress possible. In English, the teaching assistants provide skilful support in lessons and are well deployed.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. Provision is good. The school is proud of the way different forms of writing are used in other subjects, such as in ICT and geography to support learning. For instance, in Year 2 pupils write letters and postcards in connection with their *Isle of Struay* study, whilst older year groups write reports of visits to Land Rover in Gaydon. A useful portfolio of writing experiences across different subjects is being developed to share ideas and expertise. Opportunities for pupils to speak and listen in other subjects are good. Pupils' enjoyment of reading and their competent reading skills, enable them to research information from books and the Internet independently. There is still some dependency on worksheets, for instance, in lessons in history, which limits the range and opportunity for personal writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a very good track record of very effective achievement in mathematics.
- Standards are well above average at the end of Year 6 and achievement is very good overall.
- Higher attaining pupils, including those with gifts in mathematics, are challenged very well.
- Teaching and learning are very good, especially in the last three years of school.
- The quality of leadership and management of mathematics is very good.
- Assessment is of good quality but requires some enhancement.
- There are good cross-curricular links between mathematics and many other subjects.

Commentary

64. The school has sustained achievement in mathematics at a very good level for a number of years and is well placed to maintain the well above average standards and very good progress made by pupils in the future. The trend of standards obtained in the National Curriculum tests in Year 6 has been to well above average attainment. This is also the case of the current Year 6 pupils, two thirds of whom are working comfortably within the higher level 5. Their work is most challenging, it is very well motivating and it energises the pupils to some very high standards as they investigate patterns and relationships and look for effective ways to solve problems. The remaining third of the Year 6 pupils show a wide spread of attainment. In general the arrangements for setting in Year 6 mathematics work to pupils' advantage, though there now has to be sharper precision in planning to ensure that the work is consistently well matched to their needs.
65. Standards in the Year 2 National Curriculum tests have shown a fall over recent years. This reflects the changing origins of the pupils and their starting level of mathematical development. Whereas the starting level was rather above average at the time of the previous inspection, it is now average, though a minority of children do not have the mathematical competence expected when they start school. The current Year 2 pupils are likely to show an average level of attainment by the end of the school year. The wider base of attainment makes it necessary now for the school to hone its assessment procedures for mathematics to ensure that pupils consistently know and self-evaluate their targets and for marking to be linked to these targets and show ways for pupils to improve their work. This should benefit the middle and lower attainers in particular.
66. One of the school's great successes in mathematics has been in its provision for the very top attainers. Higher attainers do well, with consistent challenge through the school. The provision for the mathematically gifted pupils is very good. They take part in summer schools arranged by the University of Warwick and some younger pupils work with older ones, for example Year 1 gifted pupils work with Year 2 one day per week to maximise their achievement. Overall, the gifted mathematicians make very good progress and many reach very high standards.
67. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. As in other subjects it is strongest in Years 4 to 6, but nowhere does it fall below the good. Teaching assistants work very effectively to support their pupils, most of whom have special educational needs. Homework is very well designed to consolidate and extend mathematical achievement and the development of mathematical prowess in other subjects is very good. Pupils learn very effectively because they are very well motivated by the work and they concentrate very well. They work hard and sensibly and make very good gains in mathematical competence.
68. The many strengths of mathematical provision are due to the very good quality of leadership and management. Leadership of the subject has changed recently and the new leader, who has shown very good leadership in ICT and as the deputy headteacher, understands the strengths and areas for improvement in mathematics very well. She analyses subject performance very rigorously, using a wide range of evidence, and is already very influential in bringing improvement. Mathematics management is in very capable hands and the prospects for continued advance is very good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. The school approaches most of its subject planning on a cross-curricular basis and this has had particularly good impact on mathematics. Teachers are watchful of opportunity to develop pupils' mathematics skills, knowledge and understanding at all points of the day. There are very good links between mathematics and science, art and design, design and technology, ICT and physical education. Most of these links relate to problem solving, though measurement, data handling, number and arithmetic skills all benefit. Pupils' speed of mental calculation is also assisted well by the diverse use of mathematics in other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by Year 6.
- Teaching, learning and achievement are very good.
- The use of ICT supports pupils' learning very well.
- There is good provision for the gifted and talented pupils.

Commentary

70. Standards in Year 2 are average, and all groups achieve well and make good progress in their development of knowledge and understanding in how to plan simple tests and make predictions.
71. By Year 6 standards are well above average. This reflects the upward surge of standards as they rise rapidly from Year 4 onwards. Achievement is very good for pupils of all abilities. This includes pupils with gifts and talents for whom the school makes very good provision including attendance at Warwick University science summer school and links with Rolls Royce. Coverage of a broad curriculum has ensured that their scientific knowledge develops very well, and pupils are able to apply fair testing principles when setting up an investigation. Generally, however, there was only limited evidence of pupils being given the opportunity to devise and develop their own investigations. Pupils have well-developed speaking skills, and during discussion about seed dispersal they speculate logically about the different methods, and the seeds requirements for successful growth. They have a good grasp of scientific vocabulary and this was much in evidence during classroom discussion. '*Wind and animal born*' seeds, '*drop and roll*' and '*explosion*' are used to describe dispersal methods, and '*nutrients*' are essential for plant and seed growth.
72. The teaching is very good overall. Good levels of challenge ensure pupils are motivated to learn, and tackle their tasks with great enthusiasm and very positive attitudes. Teachers know their subject well, and use questioning effectively to assess or to extend learning. ICT is now used very well to support learning. The interactive whiteboard is used most effectively by teachers to present lesson material in an exciting way that engages pupils and develops their learning very effectively. Opportunities are provided for pupils to use science websites to carry out their own research, and their computer skills are growing at a fast rate. Teachers ensure there is broad coverage of the very well planned science curriculum with a wide range of activities to support learning. But in some classes an over reliance upon worksheets limits opportunities for pupils to use and develop their writing skills further.
73. The subject leader knows her subject well and is very experienced. Her leadership is very effective. She carefully tracks pupils' progress and carries out thorough analysis of data to target areas that need improvement. Teaching, learning and planning are all carefully monitored to ensure that pupils are enabled to achieve the very best they can. The high standards achieved at the last inspection have been maintained.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and well above average at the end of Year 6.
- Achievement is very good due to very effective teaching and learning.
- ICT skills and knowledge are promoted and developed excellently in other subjects.
- The quality of leadership and management is very good.
- There has been very good improvement of resources and the accommodation, which is impacting very well on pupils' achievement.

Commentary

74. The school has made good improvement to provision in ICT since the 1999 inspection. Despite the falling budget, due to declining pupil numbers, major investment has been made in the accommodation, resources and professional development of staff to enable very good quality ICT education. The school has good measure of the impact that this investment has made, and it upholds the principles of *Best Value* well in its evaluations of subject performance in ICT. This is all indicative of the very effective leadership and management of ICT and the tireless efforts of the subject leader to maximise pupils' opportunities to do well.
75. Due to the excellent links between other subject and ICT in all parts of the school, as discussed below, pupils have very many very well focused opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge across all strands of the subject. The results of these opportunities are to be seen in the very good achievement of pupils from a fairly normal starting point to well above average standards at the end of Year 6. In between these two points, skills and knowledge are built very effectively due to some very accomplished teaching and standards are above average at the end of Year 2. Staff have very good subject expertise, they teach confidently and they have a keen eye for the opportunities that can be provided through the use of ICT for the general academic and pastoral development of the pupils. The work in ICT, for example, makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
76. ICT is a considerable success story for the school and it stands out as a model for other primary schools. As in other subjects, some enhancement of aspects of assessment is due, but the potential to reach an excellent quality of provision is assured.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. There is excellent integration of work in ICT and that in other subjects. Much of the very high quality work in art and design observed during the inspection was based on the use of computers. Year 5 made some very effective digital enhancement of their original charcoal sketches of Kenyan artefacts, which all inspectors commented on in very positive terms. Pupils' multi-media presentations in Year 6 draw heavily on their learning in science and are of very good quality. Other ICT work shows very strong links to mathematics and geography in the Studley Village Study, and to English, history and to citizenship education. Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in ICT and the linked subjects profit considerably from this high quality provision.

HUMANITIES

The school is to have a separate inspection of religious education due to its Catholic background. Geography is treated briefly here because it was not possible to gather enough evidence to report fully on the quality of provision and standards in the subject. History is reported in full.

Geography

78. The school blocks the subject against history, and history is the focus this half term in junior classes. A sample of work and display around the school confirms the value placed on work in geography. It also shows that the range of work is appropriate. Work on local and national environments is covered and mapping and other aspects are being included. There are some very good opportunities for pupils to study other cultures, which broadens their knowledge of geography considerably.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Marking of work should be sharpened so that pupils know what to do in order to improve their work.

Commentary

79. Teachers plan a good range of experiences for pupils to experience throughout the school in history. Good use is made of artefacts, videos and documents that make learning more meaningful. Knowledge and understanding of the passage of time begins in the Foundation Stage class. This is then more firmly secured in infant and junior classes. Pupils attain average standards at the end of Year 6 as a result.
80. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. They achieve well because of the imaginative way that learning is presented to them. Teaching is well planned and thoroughly resourced. Visual prompts given to pupils in most lessons develops their understanding effectively. In a good lesson in Year 1 the teacher used picture and models to help the pupils thinking about holidays in the past. Pupils made many sensible contributions to the discussion that formed a central part of their learning. In a very good lesson in Year 4 about the Second World War sound effects as well as visual images enhanced the pupils learning. The signal to go to air raid shelters made them dive under desks and have the experience of being in a cramped space. This led logically to the consideration of moving to someone safer. As a result the writing produced by pupils as imaginary evacuees had the strength of real understanding. Team and paired work is a regular feature that enhances the pupils' social skills. In Year 6 an appropriate use of a video ensured that the pupils developed a sense of differences between life at the end of 1945 and now. A mature discussion supported the effective writing that was being further developed by homework research. The good attitudes of pupils to learning have a strong impact on their achievement. Pupils with special needs are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants and achieve as well as all pupils. Sharper marking of work would support pupils in knowing how to improve in their work.
81. The subject leader manages the provision of resources and information well. Colleagues appreciate the way that a team approach developed in the leadership of history allows ideas and contributions to be made by all. This is particular strength of the school.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

It was only possible to make a light sample of work in art and design, design and technology and music due to time constraints and the particular foci of this inspection.

Art and design

82. The planned curriculum for art and design is covered well, and standards of work are at least average. Painting, drawing and work in collage are often of a good quality. Pupils learn how to draw with growing accuracy and finer detail. They understand how to mix and apply paint and to create shading and texture in their paintings. Effective use of *Art Weeks* adds to the range of experiences on offer. Pupils explore art in other cultures and use a wider range of materials and techniques. In their study of Kenyan art, pupils are enthusiastic about using charcoal drawings as a basis for digital artwork in ICT lessons.

Design and technology

83. Knowledge, skills and understanding are built upon in a progressive way in design technology. The principles of planning, making and reviewing are developed soundly. There is every indication that standards are at least average. Food technology has a clear focus, with bread making proving successful. Work is purposeful and well linked to other subjects. For instance, planning and producing Anderson shelters for work in history, and *pop-up* books for younger readers in Year 1 and 2.

Music

84. Music has a high profile throughout the school with a very high proportion of pupils learning to play one of several instruments many of which are made available through the peripatetic music service. These include the violin, flute, clarinet, trombone, trumpet, guitar and keyboard. Pupils achieve very well in their playing, with some identified by the school as having musical talents. The school plays a significant role in the cluster project for music and pupils with gifts and talents in music benefit very much from this partnership. There are opportunities for them to take part in musical events including the Stratford Chamber Music Festival, the Stratford string group, the Redditch area music centre, and the county orchestra. Very little music was observed during the inspection but pupils' singing was of good quality, and they clearly enjoyed the experience. Standards in the school are likely to be above average. Some of the pupils take part in extra curricular choral singing at Ragley Hall, and in Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in St Stephen's church.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and achievement is very good.
- Talented sportspeople do very well in their achievements.
- There is an excellent range of sporting activities out of school time.
- Physical education is very well taught and the quality of leadership and management is very good.

Commentary

85. Physical education is clearly one of the school's great strengths. Whilst it was not possible to see many lessons in physical education, it is very evident that standards are well above average in a number of aspects, including swimming, where the school has ensured that there are ample opportunities for pupils from Years 3 to 6 to gain the desirable 25-metre proficiency. Achievement is also clearly very good across the school in other elements of the subject.
86. The school has strong sporting traditions and the successes of its many teams, whether athletics, swimming, football, rounders, netball, basketball or cricket, earn it headlines in the local newspapers. School teams have won a number of area and county championships and the netball team is due to play in the finals of the South Warwickshire league in the near future. The quality of extra-curricular provision in physical education makes a strong

contribution to such successes. Staff, parents and members of the community lead these sessions and some are open to pupils in Years 1 and 2, which starts the training process early. The demand for places is high.

87. Talented sportspeople are catered for very effectively. Professional coaching is arranged for them, there are strong links with local and regional teams, such as Warwickshire County Cricket Club at Edgbaston. There is a project amongst local schools to encourage the development of talents in dance, which is particularly well supported by the staff, pupils and parents from St Mary's school.
88. The school sports day and opportunities for pupils to take part in outdoor and adventurous activities during their residential visits make a valuable contribution to standards and pupils' achievements.
89. Physical education is very well led and managed by the talented subject leader. She has energy, insight and expectation in equal measure to ensure that provision for physical education remains very good and that the school remains to the forefront of local sporting activity.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

90. This aspect of the school's work was sampled during the inspection and is not, therefore, reported in full here.
91. Because the care, welfare and guidance of pupils is very effective and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is excellent, they benefit considerably in their personal, social and health education. There is also good focus given to citizenship education, as witnessed in the Year 5 village study of Studley where the pupils have been considering ways of making village life better.
92. The school provides a carefully evaluated programme of drugs, alcohol and tobacco education, drawing effectively on contributions from outside agencies and members of the community. The course of sex-education has been agreed with parents and is designed to complement the Catholic ethos of family, caring, spiritual education that is at the heart of the school's Mission. There is a very effective School Council, which unites pupils, staff and governors in seeking ways to make the life and education of pupils in school even more successful.
93. The outcome of the school's very good efforts to promote pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship education is the through development of the whole child. Pupils succeed very well in their academic work. They also grow in stature as pleasant, mature, sensible and considerate people. The pupils are at the heart of the school and they are its greatest asset.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2

Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	4
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	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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