

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **St Paul's Church of England Primary School**

Walkden, Manchester

LEA area: Salford

Unique reference number: 105937

Headteacher: Mrs Trish O'Donnell

Lead inspector: Mr Glynn Storer

Dates of inspection: 10 to 13 January 2005

Inspection number: 267918

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 controlled  
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 202

School address: Heathside Grove  
Whittle Street  
Walkden  
Worsley  
Manchester  
Lancashire  
Postcode: M28 3NZ

Telephone number: 0161 790 8915  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of Mrs Carol Millington  
governors:  
Date of previous 21 June 1999  
inspection:

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Paul's Church of England Primary School is in a residential area on the edge of Salford. Most pupils come from the local authority housing estates in the immediate vicinity, although some come from further afield. This school is similar in size to the average primary school. However, the school faces very challenging social and educational circumstances. During the last school year, the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals increased and is now well above the national average. Children's attainment on entry to the school is well below average for their age, although the number of pupils who have special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational need is normal for a school of this size. There are three pupils for whom English is not their first language, although neither needs help with English language development. In recent years, the pupils' performance has been adversely affected by staffing difficulties. Staff have also had to manage the impact of a high annual turnover of pupils. Last year, 49 pupils (almost one in every four) entered or left during the school year and in the Year 6 class of 2003/4, 40 per cent of pupils had joined the class since the 1998/9 intake in Year 1. These factors affect the school's performance in national tests. Staff work hard to combat the effects of the deprivation that affects many families. The school is part of the local education action

zone and in 2003, it gained the Investor in People award and in 2003, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Healthy Schools award.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19830	Glynn Storer	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Physical education Personal, social, health education and citizenship
9884	Maureen Roscoe	Lay inspector	
20646	Margaret Palmer	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music
8839	Mike Egerton	Team inspector	Special educational needs Science History Geography Religious education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

St Paul's Church of England Primary School provides a **good** education for its pupils. Many pupils make **good** progress. Most aspects of the school's work are improving rapidly because the headteacher provides very good leadership. The school gives **good** value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children get a good start to their education in the nursery and reception classes.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are rising throughout the school but remain below average in Years 3 to 6.
- Standards in religious education are above average throughout the school.
- Standards in information and communication technology are below national expectations.
- The headteacher provides very effective leadership.
- Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is very good. However, some teachers in Years 3 to 6 do not use assessment information consistently enough in planning pupils' learning.
- Other senior staff do not yet monitor standards and quality rigorously enough to ensure consistency and high standards in all aspects of the school's work.
- The curriculum is extremely rich. It inspires pupils with a strong desire to learn.
- Pupils have positive attitudes, behave well and form very good relationships with others.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively.

The school's rate of improvement is **satisfactory**. The high turnover of teachers and the prolonged absence of the deputy headteacher have caused considerable setbacks. Since the last inspection, standards have fallen but are now recovering rapidly. Staff are working as effective teams and the quality of education is improving. The school has successfully dealt with most of the issues from its last inspection. However, there are still weaknesses in teachers' use of assessment and in the monitoring carried out by staff with management responsibilities.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average;  
E\* - very low

*Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils' achievement is **good** overall. When children enter the school, most are at a level that is well below average for their age. Nevertheless, almost all make good progress in nursery and reception and for many, progress in personal, social and emotional development is very good. However, despite this good achievement, standards are below average by the end of the reception year.

In the 2004 tests for seven-year olds, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were in line with the national average and well above standards in similar schools. Pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 are also achieving very well. They are on course for similar overall standards, with the proportion of pupils achieving or exceeding the average Level 2 set to rise to around 90 per cent. Standards in science were

well below average in 2004 but in the current Year 2 class, standards are much higher and are firmly in line with national expectations<sup>1</sup>. In the 2004 tests for eleven-year-olds, standards in English, mathematics and science were well below the national average and the average for similar schools. However, these results do not do justice to pupils' actual achievements. In the Year 6 class of 2003/4, eight pupils arrived within a year of the tests. Pupils who had spent the whole of Years 3 to 6 in the school did considerably better. Whilst their attainments were still below the national average, their achievements were satisfactory in relation to their performance at the age of seven and good in comparison with those in schools facing similar social and educational circumstances. However, few pupils exceeded the nationally expected standard. In the current Year 6 class, the number of pupils attaining the average Level 4 is set to rise but, again, too few are on course for the above average Level 5. Standards in information and communication technology are below average, although standards in art and design are in line with national expectations. In religious education, many pupils throughout the school are exceeding the standards set out in locally agreed guidelines. There was not enough evidence to evaluate standards in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets and there are no significant differences between the attainments of boys and girls.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development **very well** and standards of moral development are **good**. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are excited by learning and proud of their achievements. Almost all pupils behave well and enjoy very good relationships with others. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and their punctuality is good.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching is stimulating and very successfully engages pupils' interest. All teachers insist on good standards of behaviour. The teamwork between teachers and support staff is very good and adds to the quality of pupils' learning. However, teachers in Years 3 to 6 do not use assessment information consistently enough in planning pupils' learning and so some pupils do not achieve as well as they might. The school enriches its curriculum with an excellent range of educational visits, visitors and special events that inspire pupils with the desire to learn. Standards of care and the partnership with parents are good.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership, management and governance are **good**. The headteacher provides very good leadership. With good support from governors, she inspires a strong sense of commitment and purpose amongst staff. Her personal example sets high professional standards for others in the school. However, other senior staff do not yet monitor standards and quality rigorously enough to ensure consistency and high standards in all aspects of the school's work.

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

Parents and pupils are very satisfied with the school. Parents particularly appreciate the ease with which their children settle down to school life and the approachability of the staff when there are problems. A few parents have concerns about pupils' behaviour, about the information that they receive or about the extent to which they are consulted. Inspectors found no evidence to support these concerns. Most pupils are happy at school and enjoy very good relationships with the staff.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6 and in information and communication technology throughout the school.

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<sup>1</sup> The nationally expected standard for pupils at the end of Year 2 is Level 2. Pupils who achieve Level 3 in Year 2 are exceeding national expectations. At the end of Year 6, the expected level is Level 4. Pupils who achieve Level 5 are exceeding expectations.



- Ensure that teachers in Years 3 to 6 use assessment data systematically to match work to pupils' prior attainment, to present tasks that challenge pupils of all abilities and to give pupils a clearer understanding of their own learning.
- Ensure that the monitoring carried out by staff with management responsibilities is rigorous enough to secure consistent practice throughout the school.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

By the end of the Foundation Stage<sup>2</sup>, standards in most areas of learning are **below average**. Standards in core subjects<sup>3</sup> are **average** in Years 1 and 2 but **below average** in Years 3 to 6. Children's achievements in the Foundation Stage are good overall. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve very well, whilst those in Years 3 to 6 achieve satisfactorily.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the Foundation Stage, children's progress in personal, social and emotional development is very good.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are rising throughout the school but remain below average in Years 3 to 6.
- Too few pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve above average standards in their work.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below national expectations.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

#### Commentary

1. During recent years, the school has experienced a period of almost continuous disruption in staffing, over which it had no control. The impact of these circumstances has been a decline in standards of attainment, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2<sup>4</sup>. However, the governing body has done a good job in bringing the school through this very challenging period by appointing a new headteacher and a committed team of teachers, who have the determination to continue the school's development. Although the governing body still has issues to resolve, standards are once again rising throughout the school.
2. Children currently enter the school performing at levels that are well below average for their age. Many have poor social skills, their language and communication skills are weak and most have very little experience of the world beyond the home. Nevertheless, almost all make good progress in the nursery and reception classes and for many, progress in personal, social and emotional development is very good. However, despite good levels of achievement, standards remain below average by the end of the Foundation Stage.

#### Key Stage 1

<i>Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004</i>		
Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.6 (14.4)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.0 (13.4)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.7 (14.2)	16.2 (16.3)

<sup>2</sup> The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception year. It is a distinct stage, preparing children for later schooling, and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and personal and social development, but also include knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development.

<sup>3</sup> The core subjects are English (reading and writing), mathematics and science.

<sup>4</sup> Pupils' primary education after the Foundation Stage is organised into two key stages. Key Stage 1 covers Years 1 and 2. Key Stage 2 covers Years 3 to 6.

*There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

## Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.3 (26.8)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	25.4 (29.1)	27.0 (26.8)
science	25.3 (29.0)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. In the 2004 tests for pupils at the end of Year 2, results in reading, writing and mathematics were in line with the national average and well above standards in similar schools. Pupils currently in Year 2 are also achieving very well. They are on course for similar overall standards, with the proportion of pupils achieving or exceeding the average Level 2 set to rise to 90 per cent or above, with further increases in the numbers of pupils attaining the above average Level 3, especially in reading and writing. Standards in science were well below average in 2004 but in the current Year 2 class, standards are much higher and are firmly in line with national expectations.
4. In the 2004 tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, pupils' results in English, mathematics and science were well below the national average and the average for similar schools. However, these results do not accurately reflect pupils' achievements. In the Year 6 class of 2003/4, 40 per cent of pupils had joined the class since the 1998/9 intake in Year 1 and eight pupils were admitted within a year of the tests. This high turnover of pupils affected the school's overall results. Pupils who had spent the whole of Years 3 to 6 in the school did considerably better than overall results suggest. Whilst their attainments were still below the national average, their achievements were satisfactory in relation to their performance at the age of seven and good in comparison with those in schools facing similar social and educational circumstances. However, few pupils exceeded the nationally expected standard. In the current Year 6 class, the number of pupils attaining the average Level 4 is set to rise but, again, too few are on course for the above average Level 5.
5. Standards in ICT are below average. Current standards of teaching and learning in ICT are satisfactory. Nevertheless, historic shortages of resources along with weaknesses in teachers' confidence and expertise have resulted in gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. In religious education, pupils in both key stages are exceeding the standards set out in the locally agreed guidelines. Standards in art and design are in line with national expectations. There was not enough evidence to make judgements about standards in other subjects, but examples of work seen were satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and make good progress towards their individual targets. There are no significant differences between the attainments of boys and girls or between pupils from different backgrounds.

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

Most pupils have **good** attitudes to school and behave **well**. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Attendance is satisfactory.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children quickly settle to school routines and grow in confidence.
- Pupils have good attitudes and are keen to do well.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and relationships are very good.
- The school has been successful in its drive to improve pupils' attendance.

## Commentary

6. The school has good arrangements for introducing children to school life. Staff create a welcoming atmosphere and the classroom assistants do a particularly good job in establishing routines and expectations and in supporting those children who have little experience outside the home. As a result, children feel secure in the nursery and reception classes. They settle and soon begin to adopt helpful patterns of behaviour. Most are happy, respond well to all adults and work and play co-operatively.
7. The pupils' questionnaire indicated that most pupils like their school because, although they are expected to work hard, teachers and classroom assistants help them when they are stuck. A feature of this school that has an enormously positive impact on pupils' attitudes is the very good range of sporting, cultural and other activities and events that the school provides in order to bring pupils' learning to life. Pupils are keen to do well because they think that lessons are interesting and fun. Inspection evidence supports these views. Pupils' positive attitudes and their consistently good response improve the quality of their learning.
8. Pupils behave well because teachers and supervisory staff insist on good standards of behaviour. They use rewards and sanctions consistently and explain why particular actions are unkind or wrong. Consequently, most pupils understand the consequences of their actions. Pupils play happily in groups that are mixed in age and gender. Pupils are very kind and considerate. For example, older pupils look after and play with younger pupils, particularly if they are alone or upset. Pupils from different backgrounds confirm that they do not suffer abuse or harassment at school. Pupils respect the school site. There is no evidence of damage caused by pupils. There have been four exclusions during the last school year, each of which was completely justified by the circumstances involved in the particular case.
9. Relationships are very good. Pupils respond well to the very good example set by staff. They listen carefully to what others have to say, respond thoughtfully and respect the views of others that differ from their own. Because pupils get along well with one another, they collaborate easily in joint activities and constructively support each other's learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 were keen to help each other by sharing tips that enabled friends to overcome complex ICT problems. Similarly, more able pupils regularly help those who have difficulties with their learning. This level of co-operation and mutual support improves pupils' learning considerably. Pupils also relate very well to their teachers and to other adults in school. The survey of pupils confirms that most believe that staff treat them fairly and that there is an adult to go to if they are worried or hurt.
10. The school promotes pupils' personal development very successfully. Pupils achieve very good standards in relation to their spiritual, social and cultural development and good standards in relation to their moral development. Because the school has a Christian character, prayer and reflection are part of pupils' everyday experience. Consequently, pupils are reflective and sensitive to others' feelings and to things of beauty. Clear moral values underpin all aspects of the life and work of the school and all staff are conscientious in promoting them. Therefore, pupils respect one another, follow agreed codes of conduct and act on an understanding of what is right and wrong. Current teaching also prepares pupils very well to be useful members of the community. Pupils are very involved with local and international charitable efforts and in the life of the church. Topics that give pupils in-depth insights into civilisations, literature and the arts promote cultural awareness very effectively. Similarly, topics concerning the everyday lives of people in other lands or the values and beliefs of people from other ethnic traditions prepare them very well for life in a multi-ethnic society. The excellent range of events and activities that the school provides also enhances this very strong area of the curriculum. During the week of the inspection, pupils in Year 1 visited the local church, those in Year 3 participated in the Egyptian Workshop and Year 5 received a visit from a Buddhist monk. Such activities, along with theatre and gallery visits, working with an artist in residence and playing with a samba band, are a regular part of pupils' 'diet' at St Paul's.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

<i>Categories used in the Annual School Census</i>	<i>Exclusions in the last school year</i>		
	<i>No of pupils on roll</i>	<i>Number of fixed period exclusions</i>	<i>Number of permanent exclusions</i>
White – British	192	4	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	7	0	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

11. Attendance is satisfactory. Figures for the first half of this school year are the best for some time and are in line with schools nationally. The school contacts parents promptly if their children are absent without reason. The school also promotes good attendance actively by giving awards to pupils with 100 per cent attendance. Punctuality at the school is good.

## Attendance

<i>Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)</i>					
Authorised absence			Unauthorised absence		
School data:	5.6		School data:	0.5	
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 a **good** education for its pupils.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. Assessment procedures are **satisfactory** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and very good in Years 1 and 2.
- Teachers engage pupils' interest very successfully and promote good attitudes to work.
- Teachers use support assistants effectively to help pupils to learn.
- In some classes in Years 3 to 6, teachers do not use assessment well enough to plan work that challenges pupils with different capabilities or to give pupils an understanding of their own learning.
- Teachers manage pupils effectively and insist on high standards of behaviour.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lesson

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (3%)	8 (22%)	15 (40%)	12 (32%)	1 (3%)	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.*

12. Since the school's last inspection, the good teaching in the Foundation Stage has been maintained. The quality of teaching has improved in Years 1 and 2, so that it is now very good. In some classes in Years 3 to 6, staff absence and teacher turnover have resulted in a drop in the good standard previously reported and teaching is now satisfactory overall. Nevertheless, there were examples of very good teaching in all phases of the school, most frequently in Years 1 and 2. One lesson was unsatisfactory.
13. In the nursery and reception classes, teachers plan a good range of activities that very successfully widen children's experience and stimulate their desire to learn. Teachers and support staff give particularly strong emphasis to promoting children's personal, social and emotional development. As a result, the children are very happy in school. They make good gains in confidence and willingness to settle to tasks so that they achieve well in other areas of learning. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is very lively, brisk and challenging. This ensures that pupils are interested and involved and promotes their very good achievement.
14. Most teachers have good subject knowledge so that they are confident, and almost all teaching is accurate. They plan carefully and add to the basic curriculum by providing an excellent range of activities and special events, such as opportunities for pupils to work with an artist in residence, to play in a samba band or to participate in cross-country running competitions. These events and activities successfully promote pupils' active involvement and enjoyment of learning and add to the progress that they make.
15. Teachers plan the role of support staff very carefully. This enables them to use their skills and experience very effectively to support the work of teachers and contribute significantly to pupils' learning. Those support staff working with pupils with special educational needs successfully ensure that they are fully included in activities and receive the support that they need to make progress alongside others in their class.
16. In all classes, teachers regularly assess pupils' attainment and maintain a range of records of their progress. The headteacher uses this information effectively to track pupils' progress and to target additional support to specific groups of pupils. In the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, teachers use the results of assessment well to match tasks to the needs and abilities of individuals and groups within the class. However, in Years 3 to 6, some teachers do not use the information that they have systematically enough to build carefully on pupils' prior learning. In many lessons, all pupils undertake the same work. This is unsatisfactory because it leads to some work being set that is too easy for some pupils and too difficult for others. In one particular mathematics lesson, teaching and learning were unsatisfactory because the tasks set were beyond the capabilities of most pupils. Consequently, the pupils did not achieve as well as they could. Teachers are beginning to use assessment information to set personal literacy targets, intended to help pupils to understand how well they are learning and how they can progress to higher levels of attainment. However, this important initiative is not established in other subjects and its application is inconsistent in some classes; therefore, it has yet to make an impact on pupils' learning.
17. Throughout the school, teachers establish good relationships with pupils and manage them effectively. Teachers and support staff consistently encourage and praise pupils' efforts. This very successfully motivates pupils and enhances their self-esteem and confidence. Pupils are keen to participate and apply themselves to their tasks with interest. Almost all persevere with their work when they are not directly supervised and

co-operate sensibly in small groups. The quality of pupils' learning is good overall and is boosted, particularly in Years 1 and 2, by their good attitudes and behaviour.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a **good** curriculum that is enriched by an **excellent** range of visits and visitors. Resources are **good** and the accommodation is **satisfactory** overall.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides an excellent range of activities to support pupils' learning.
- The educational action zone has enabled the school to broaden learning opportunities.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Curriculum development is innovative and is having an impact on standards.
- Accommodation in the nursery is restricted.

## **Commentary**

18. A major feature of St Paul's is the attitude the pupils have to their learning. They love coming to school and thoroughly enjoy their lessons. This is due to the effort made by the school to make learning interesting and exciting by providing an amazing range of enrichment activities in the form of visits out of school and visitors coming into the school. In the space of less than a year, the school was involved in nearly 40 events and visits, all of them of a high quality. Year 6 pupils enjoyed a week at a residential camp in Prestatyn whilst other year groups visited many local places of interest. There were numerous cultural visits, including theatre productions, musical events and visits to museums. During the inspection, Year 3 pupils had an Egyptian day, taken by a visiting actor who had great knowledge of Egypt and a range of interesting artefacts that the pupils could handle and examine. The experience brought the pupils' learning to life, stimulated great interest and plenty of enjoyment. In the same week, Year 5 pupils were visited by a Buddhist monk who opened up to them the beliefs of Buddhists and the origins of the religion in a lively and, at times, highly entertaining manner. The pupils loved it and at the end of the session queued to talk to him. The pupils at St Paul's are privileged to enjoy such vibrant and exciting learning experiences.
19. A powerful contributor to the school's ability to offer such a relevant curriculum has been its inclusion in the education action zone (EAZ) and the support this has been able to offer the school in a wide range of ways. The financial support from the EAZ has been immeasurable and has enabled the school to embark on curriculum support projects involving the local high school. Such projects would otherwise have never got off the ground due to the high cost of transport. Pupils have been able to see the ballet in Manchester, take part in Spanish lessons and engage in specific projects set up for boys and girls. Parents have benefited through very good work in supporting, particularly, single mothers and helping to raise their self-esteem. The EAZ makes an excellent contribution to the work of the school and the school uses this contribution to very good effect.
20. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The headteacher has a good deal of expertise that has enabled her, within a short space of time, to improve the provision the school makes for these pupils. The school also benefits from the fact that the lead teaching assistant was a member of the Salford special needs support team and brings all of her expertise to the school. Not only have resources been improved, but also

staff have shown strong commitment to supporting special needs by taking part in training in their own time. Links with outside agencies, particularly the school psychology service, are very good and the school is able to tap into a wide range of advice. Particularly impressive are the special packages designed to support those pupils with statements of special educational need. The packages not only include adult support but also strategies for the inclusion of other pupils. Support for pupils with special educational needs is very good in lessons and other activities.

21. The school is continually aware of the need to develop the curriculum, particularly in relation to pupils' speaking and listening skills. Without it ever becoming oppressive, opportunities are explored in every subject for pupils to be engaged in speaking, listening or writing. Pupils often know what they want to say but lack the vocabulary to put it into words. In many schools, this would lead to frustration in the pupils or to lack of confidence. Here, the curriculum inspires interest, involvement and a desire to become involved because supportive teaching enables this to happen and to raise the self-esteem of pupils.
22. Accommodation in the nursery is restricted. Staff make very good use of what they have got, and the external play area is currently undergoing considerable improvement. In the future, the school may consider if any amendments could be made that would increase the working space and give more flexibility to the nursery.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Arrangements for the care and guidance of pupils are **good**. Procedures for ensuring that pupils work in a safe environment and are involved in the school's development are **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers and learning support staff know pupils very well and understand their needs.
- The monitoring of pupils' personal development, including attendance, is good, but more work is needed to make the monitoring of academic achievement consistently effective.
- Pupils' views are respected, but not regularly sought on matters that affect them.

### **Commentary**

23. Pupils receive good support and advice, which helps to promote their learning. It enables them to be self-assured in lessons, where they are treated with respect and patience. They enjoy trusting relationships with adults in the school and feel confident to seek help or guidance if they are hurt or worried. The school's Christian ethos results in a positive and caring approach on the part of all staff, who know their pupils well and respond readily to their needs.
24. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Their achievements are carefully tracked and they, along with their parents, are included in regular progress reviews. This is not the case for all pupils. Systems for monitoring aspects of pupils' academic development are firmly established in the infant classes, where for example teachers set short-term targets to help pupils improve levels of literacy. However, this is not the case for the junior pupils. Whilst some teachers in Years 3 to 6 have begun to set similar targets, others have not. This means that some older pupils are not aware of what they have to do to reach for higher standards in their work.



25. The school is a clean and pleasant environment where most health and safety aspects are well attended to in practice. Child protection arrangements work well due to recent staff training. Systems for dealing with minor accidents and for following up absences are good. Formal risk assessments are completed and recorded, wisely drawing on specialist advice, for example related to current fire regulations. Existing sound practice should now be extended to cover pupils' and staff activities more systematically.
26. Pupils' concerns are usually handled with sensitivity and care, although some pupils express a wish to be shown alternative strategies for dealing with challenging situations that they say can arise during lunchtimes. Mechanisms for pupils to raise issues that are important to them are informal, but usually work well in practice, and it is good that the school has recently adopted pupils' suggestions for improving playground facilities. However, given pupils' willingness to participate, the governing body and staff could do much more to formally seek and act upon pupils' views when planning for school improvements.

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

Links with parents, other schools and with the community are **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Written reports on pupils' progress are of very good quality.
- Parents' involvement in school and helping learning at home are warmly encouraged.
- Informal channels of communication are strong, although the school could do more to ensure that a breadth of parental views influence school policy-making.
- Mutually beneficial links have been established with local schools and other organisations.

## Commentary

27. The information that parents receive about the school and about their children's progress is good. Parents receive good information before their children start school. This provision, along with useful and friendly contacts with teachers at the start and end of sessions, helps pupils to settle quickly into routines and become confident with their new surroundings. These good beginnings are reinforced by half-termly curriculum details that describe class topics or objectives and encourage parents to be involved in their children's learning. Pupils' annual progress reports have improved since the previous inspection. They are now very detailed when describing children's achievements. They give parents a clear picture of how well their children have done and of what they need to do in order to improve.
28. The school regularly seeks to involve parents in the life of the school and in their children's education. This is very evident in the type and tone of school newsletters. The headteacher strongly encourages parents to regard the school as open to them. She ensures that all staff are accessible to parents and that issues are dealt with openly. This openness creates very high levels of satisfaction from parents, because they value this prompt response. Because staff and parent governors have their respect, parents are confident in voicing their opinions, and informal channels of communication are strong. However, there are no formal procedures for seeking parents' views or involving them in the decision-making process.
29. Links with neighbouring schools make a good contribution to staff development and add to the quality of pupils' experience by providing opportunities for competitive sport or access to specialist teaching and resources, for example for ICT. Visits to places of interest in the surrounding district also enrich learning, as do partnerships with agencies such as the police, health service and Post Office, all of which contribute to pupils' learning. The school is very involved in activities promoted by the education action zone (see **curriculum** above). Funding and other resources and facilities provided by the action zone benefit pupils and all involved in the 'Family Learning' schemes. Links with the parish and church are good and make a significant impact on pupils' all-round personal development.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides **very good** leadership. Leadership by other key staff is **satisfactory**. The school is **well managed** and governance is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher inspires in staff a clear sense of common purpose and commitment to improvement in the school.
- The headteacher is putting in place a number of rigorous strategies aimed at improving standards.
- Staff with management responsibilities are not fully effective in contributing to school improvement.
- The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well and plays a valuable part in the everyday life of the school and its strategic planning.
- Prudent financial planning is very securely linked to the school's drive to raise standards.

## Commentary

30. The headteacher provides very good leadership. This is an improvement since the last inspection. She has been in post for one year and is already generating a strong sense of shared purpose amongst staff and governors by, for example, linking all governors with staff responsible for subjects or aspects of the school's work. Despite assuming additional responsibilities throughout the prolonged absence of the deputy headteacher, the headteacher has implemented changes designed to raise standards. She has observed teaching and learning, identified training needs and arranged a comprehensive programme of staff development. She has put in place new systems for tracking pupils' progress, and information from analysis is informing the targeting of additional classroom support. These measures are very well conceived but it is too soon to measure their impact on standards and quality.
31. School improvement planning is detailed and thorough. It provides a very clear agenda for raising standards in key aspects of the school's work. Teachers, support staff and governors have clear roles and responsibilities and know what they are working towards. Arrangements are now in place for staff with management responsibilities to evaluate areas of the curriculum and other aspects of the school's work. However, to date, this monitoring has not been rigorous enough to secure consistency and good practice throughout the school, but particularly in Years 3 to 6, where inconsistencies in teaching are slowing the rate at which standards are rising. This situation is exacerbated by the long-term illness and absence of the deputy headteacher, which presents a barrier to the development of management roles and responsibilities. This situation is unsatisfactory because it is inhibiting the pace of overall improvement in the quality of education that the school provides.
32. The governing body is very keen to support the headteacher and takes an active interest in the school's life and work. Governors are kept well informed by the headteacher and they gain first-hand information from planned visits and participation in school activities. They, therefore, have a good understanding of the school's strengths and of areas for improvement. They conscientiously oversee the work of the school and rigorously hold it to account for the standards that it achieves. They gain effective support and professional guidance from participation in a range of training events. These positive approaches to school improvement strengthen the governing body's capacity to further raise the quality of education that the school provides.
33. Financial management is very good and funds are administered efficiently. The governing body is committed to ensuring that all funds are wisely spent and due thought is given to the impact that spending decisions will have on pupils' education. Judicious budgeting has ensured that a small, but increasing, deficit has been addressed successfully, so that the school is now likely to end the financial year with a small surplus. In the light of pupils'

good achievement overall, the good quality of education provided, good overall standards of leadership and management and the very effective financial control, the school gives good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004			
Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	529,295	Balance from previous year	-283
Total expenditure	531,232	Balance carried forward to the next	-2,220
Expenditure per pupil	2,482		

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

### AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

34. Children enter school with well below average attainment. Teaching is good overall, and sometimes very good, so that children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes. This maintains the good standard of teaching and learning reported by the previous inspection. The staff work together as a very effective team, with the nursery nurse and classroom assistant supporting groups and individuals and promoting their learning very purposefully. Despite this, most children attain standards that are below average and few are on course to attain the early learning goals<sup>5</sup> for children of their age. The teachers and support staff assess children's skills very thoroughly and create a range of records. This information is used effectively in identifying individual children's development and learning priorities, particularly in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. Children with special educational needs receive lots of encouragement and perceptive support, so that they make good progress. The quality of leadership and management in the Foundation Stage is good. This area of the school is well resourced. Although the Foundation Stage accommodation is satisfactory overall, the nursery is small and cramped. However, staff make good use of all available space.

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers, nursery nurse and teaching assistant successfully ensure that the children settle securely into school life.
- All staff value each child's efforts and very effectively boost their self-esteem.
- With consistent and sensitive support, the children learn and accept the boundaries that are set in school.

#### Commentary

35. Parents and carers meet the class teachers and headteacher, and the children visit the nursery before they start. These arrangements successfully promote a smooth transition between home and school. The teachers and support assistants ensure that the nursery and reception classes are welcoming and classroom systems are firmly established. As a result, all boys and girls grow in confidence in their approach to activities and daily routines.
36. Staff give lots of individual praise and encouragement, so that the children are motivated to do their best and show pride in what they have achieved. The teachers plan topics such as, *When I was a Baby* and *Ourselves and Our Family*, and activities that involve looking closely at themselves and painting self-portraits that effectively extend the children's self-knowledge and awareness of others. In both indoor and outdoor activities, children are consistently encouraged to play co-operatively and take turns. These arrangements successfully build children's confidence in learning and in their relationships with others. Consequently, although a small number of children have difficulty in sharing, almost all achieve very well in this area of learning. Despite this, because of their very low starting point, many children's standards are below average by the end of their reception year.

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<sup>5</sup> Early learning goals are the standards normally expected of children by the end of the reception year

37. The quality of teaching is good. In the nursery it is often very good. In both classes the teachers have high expectations of children's involvement and behaviour. In the nursery, the children make steady progress in learning what is expected of them, so that by the time they enter the reception class they behave sensibly in their classroom and when they join the school for assembly, and almost all respond readily to instructions. They settle readily to tasks and most children concentrate hard for short periods, even when working independently. They handle books and equipment with care. The very successful teamwork between the adults in the nursery and in the reception class gives the children an effective model of co-operation and a thoughtful approach to work.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teachers carefully plan worthwhile opportunities for the children to improve their communication skills.
- The children enjoy sharing a varied range of books.
- The teachers successfully promote children's early writing skills through imaginative activities.

### **Commentary**

38. The quality of teaching is good in this area of learning. The teachers and support staff are consistently encouraging and patient. They value each child's efforts and so promote their confidence and willingness to communicate. The children have regular well-planned opportunities to talk purposefully to adults and to each other. For example, children in the reception class take turns to take home the Rockie Raccoon puppet and talk to the class about it the next day. In the course of all activities, staff ask well-directed questions and seize opportunities to extend children's vocabulary and promote their speaking and listening skills. As a result, all children achieve well and make good progress in developing these skills. However, because of their very limited skills on entry to school, many children do not reach the standard expected for their age.
39. The teachers successfully implement a programme of lively, early reading and writing activities. In the nursery, children begin to take books to share at home and this continues in reception with the addition of words and sounds to practise. However, many children are initially hampered by their underdeveloped speech and their difficulty in distinguishing one sound from another. Consequently, although children gradually associate letters and sounds and begin to recognise familiar words, many are not on course to achieve the early learning goals. The youngest children make good progress in understanding that writing conveys meaning and have frequent opportunities for meaningful mark-making. In the nursery and reception classes, they regularly practise writing patterns and begin to form their letters carefully. In the reception class, children continue to achieve well, with most writing their own names and a small number beginning to write simple words or phrases independently. However, most children's standards are below average for their age.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children make good progress in counting and recognising numbers.
- Teachers plan a good range of practical activities that make learning fun.

## **Commentary**

40. Children enter school with well below average knowledge and understanding of numbers or counting. Teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. The teachers plan stimulating activities that very successfully capture the children's imagination and motivate their interest, as when the nursery teacher played a game involving pulling numbers from a bag. The children squealed with delight and tried very hard to identify the numbers as they emerged. Children make good progress in developing their sense of number, order and sequence through regular counting routines and practical activities. They have frequent opportunities to play games that promote their knowledge of shapes and, in the course of these activities, staff constantly check and build on individual children's mathematical language. Consequently, children gradually extend their knowledge of colours and understanding of terms, such as 'tall', 'short', 'many' and 'few'. These interactions successfully promote children's progress and they achieve well. However, few are on course to attain the early learning goals in mathematical development.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children make good progress in extending their knowledge and understanding of the world through well-planned topics and practical activities.
- Well-planned visits successfully engage the children's interest and promote learning.

## **Commentary**

41. The teachers are committed to extending the children's experiences and the quality of teaching is good. However, although the Foundation Stage is rich in experiences in this area of learning, the children begin with such limited knowledge and understanding that, despite their good achievement, their standards remain below average by the end of reception. The children learn about the properties of sand, water and dough by handling and working with them. They make good progress in learning about living things through topics such as minibeasts, and activities such as planting seeds and bulbs.
42. Exciting activities, such as baking snowflake biscuits and snowmen buns, handling ice as part of their Winter topic and making soup using a range of winter vegetables, bring learning to life and make it fun. Children have regular opportunities to use a range of simple computer programs and become confident in using the mouse to select and move pictures on the computer screen.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

43. There was insufficient evidence to make overall judgements about the quality of teaching, children's achievements or the standards that they attain. However, daily outdoor sessions and a good range of outdoor equipment, including wheeled vehicles, provide opportunities for children to learn by working on a more active scale than is possible indoors. Children in the reception class also have physical education sessions in the school hall. In the lesson that was observed, almost all children responded appropriately to instructions and moved safely around the hall in a variety of ways, without bumping into each other. Within the nursery and reception classroom, there is a good range of equipment, such as jigsaws, construction materials and simple tools, including scissors, to promote children's manipulative skills.

44. Both teacher-led and child-initiated creative activities form part of everyday work and play in the nursery and reception classes. Children have frequent opportunities to paint, stick and engage in imaginative play. Children mix paints to create different colours, paint with their hands and extend their number recognition skills by printing with number-shaped sponges. They enjoy imaginatively planned activities, such as making patterns with 'shaving foam snow'. Their interest in making music is very positively promoted by a visiting musician. Well-thought-out role-play areas are carefully linked to topic work and very successfully engage pupils' interest, encourage collaboration and promote children's communication skills.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

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

- By the end of Year 2, standards are well above those in similar schools because teaching and learning are very good.
- Standards are rising throughout the school, but remain below average in Years 3 to 6.
- Teachers check pupils' progress frequently, although some do not make best use of assessment information in planning work for higher attaining pupils.
- Subject leadership is good, but current monitoring is not rigorous enough to ensure consistency and high standards throughout the school.

#### **Commentary**

45. In the most recent tests for pupils at the end of Year 2, results in reading and writing were in line with the national average and well above standards in similar schools. These results maintain the standards reported by the previous inspection. Pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 are also achieving very well. They are on course for similar overall standards in speaking, listening reading and writing. The proportion of pupils achieving or exceeding the average Level 2 is set to rise to over 90 per cent, with further increases in the numbers of pupils attaining the above average Level 3, especially in reading and writing.
46. In the 2004 tests for eleven-year-olds, pupils' results in English were well below the national average and the average for similar schools. Results in 2004 were lower than those reported in the previous inspection. However, these results do not accurately reflect pupils' achievements. A high turnover of pupils affected the school's overall results. Pupils who had spent the whole of Years 3 to 6 in the school did considerably better than overall results suggest. Their attainments were still below the national average, but their achievements were satisfactory in relation to their performance at the age of seven and good in comparison with those in schools facing similar social and educational circumstances. Pupils currently in Key Stage 2 are making satisfactory progress. In the Year 6 class, the number of pupils on course to attain the average level is higher than last year but standards remain below average, as too few are on course for the above average level. This is because work set for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 is seldom challenging enough to take them to this higher level.
47. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making very good progress because teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 are very effective. Based on a good knowledge of the subject, teachers plan their lessons imaginatively and often come up with appealing projects that really interest and motivate pupils to learn. They use a very good selection of resources, including ICT,



to reinforce pupils' understanding and promote effective learning. Teachers have warm and pleasant relationships with their pupils and they manage behaviour very well. In the best lessons, the teaching is brisk and challenging, with work that matches pupils' differing abilities and stretches pupils well through a very good range of activities. A key element in the raising of standards in Key Stage 1 has been consistency. Initiatives, such as the emphasis on speaking and listening in all lessons, the promotion of writing across the curriculum and the setting of individual targets, are firmly in place in Years 1 and 2 and beginning to deliver results. Teaching and learning in Key Stage 2, although satisfactory overall, are less successful because they are less consistent. This lack of consistency results in part from the turnover of staff in recent years, but also from a lack of rigour in the monitoring and evaluation that has taken place. Whilst the positive features mentioned above are evident in some classes in Years 3 to 6, the current degree of inconsistency is unsatisfactory, because it slows the rate at which standards improve.

48. The information that teachers gather about pupils' progress is extensive, and it is used well to plan the learning of children in the Foundation Stage and decide which pupils need to have extra teaching or small group support from classroom assistants. Teachers and classroom assistants plan carefully for these pupils and, consequently, these groups have been successful in raising standards for many pupils throughout the school. The information is also used effectively to draw up targets for pupils with special educational needs. These targets are a good guide to the areas that staff need to concentrate on. The result is that these pupils receive good support and make good progress in relation to the difficulties that they face. The accuracy and use that is made of assessment information are improving and becoming more valuable to teachers. The one unsatisfactory feature of the current arrangements is that some teachers do not look closely enough at the results of the tests to decide exactly how to stretch pupils to the full. Although teachers often plan work at several levels of difficulty and tasks make satisfactory demands on most pupils, they are often not challenging enough for the most able pupils. This is unsatisfactory because a small number of pupils, most notably in Years 3 to 6, do not reach their full potential.
49. Subject leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator is well qualified and has worked hard to raise standards in the subject. She has provided good support for less experienced colleagues and for those newly appointed to the school. She has organised or provided effective training for classroom assistants. Parents who have been trained in how to support their children's reading also provide valuable help. However, the co-ordinator has not yet been able to observe other teachers often enough to form a clear picture of English teaching in all classes. This is unsatisfactory because it limits her ability to ensure consistency and best practice throughout the school.

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

50. Teachers routinely provide opportunities for pupils to speak, listen, read and write as part of their work in other subjects and this satisfactorily promotes the development of pupils' language and literacy skills. There are worthwhile examples of the development of literacy skills in work associated with science, religious education, ICT and the humanities.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good.
- The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good.
- Some teachers in Years 3 to 6 do not consistently match tasks to pupils' abilities.
- Support assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory.

## **Commentary**

51. In the 2004 national tests for seven-year-olds, pupils' results were average for their age but well above average compared with pupils in similar schools. The work of pupils in Years 1 and 2 confirms that most pupils are again in line to attain the expected standard, with a quarter on course to exceed it. This represents very good achievement during Key Stage 1 in relation to children's attainment on entry to school. Current standards in Key Stage 1 are on a par with those reported by the school's 1999 inspection, although standards in Key Stage 2 are lower. In the 2004 national tests for eleven-year-olds, pupils' results were well below average. However, a high proportion of pupils in the age group moved into the school during Years 5 and 6 and their overall results were lower than those of the other pupils. This brought down pupils' overall attainments. Despite this, the results were in line with those in schools in similar social and economic circumstances. The work of pupils in the current Years 3 to 6 indicates that standards are below average, although the majority are on course to attain, and in some cases exceed, the expected standard for their age. This represents satisfactory progress during Key Stage 2 in relation to their attainment at age seven.
52. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and often very good in Years 1 and 2. Teachers consistently encourage and praise pupils' efforts and pupils work hard in lessons. Pupils are particularly responsive because teachers plan imaginatively and introduce opportunities for fun and enjoyment. For example, Year 2 pupils were very keen to participate and made very good progress in solving number problems that involved the use of a pretend mobile phone, secret code and locked suitcase.
53. In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Pupils learn well in those classes where teachers have high expectations and set work that successfully challenges pupils of all abilities. However, when the teacher is not clear about what pupils of different abilities can achieve in the course of a lesson, teaching lacks sharp focus and learning is not purposeful. Throughout the school, teachers regularly assess and record pupils' attainment. However, some teachers in Years 3 to 6 do not make enough use of the information they gain to plan work that builds on what pupils know, understand and can do. As a result, there are times when tasks either do not make sufficient demands on pupils or, on other occasions, are too difficult for pupils. This failure to match work accurately to pupils' abilities and prior attainment is unsatisfactory because it has limited the overall rate of progress of those pupils currently in Year 6.
54. In classes throughout the school, teachers make good use of teaching assistants to enable pupils to take a full and active part in lessons. This very effective additional support successfully boosts pupils' confidence, understanding and progress. Support for pupils with special educational needs is thoughtfully prepared and sensitively delivered so that pupils make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.
55. The mathematics co-ordinator is doing a satisfactory job in leading and managing the development of the subject. She is aware of the need to raise standards and has recently involved all staff in training. Working closely with the headteacher, she has introduced procedures for tracking pupils' progress in mathematics throughout the school. This is being used in target setting and to direct additional support to groups of pupils. However, the monitoring of teaching

and learning in mathematics is currently unsatisfactory because it is not rigorous enough to identify and rectify inconsistencies that are inhibiting pupils' progress.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

56. There are satisfactory examples of work in science, ICT and history that reinforce pupils' work in mathematics. For example, Year 2 pupils effectively extend their understanding of angles and direction when they program a toy to follow a route, involving right angles, to arrive at a planned destination.

## **SCIENCE**

The provision for science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well.
- Pupils enjoy their work in science, particularly their investigative work.
- Literacy skills are promoted well in science and opportunities are taken to use the pupils' skills in mathematics.
- Teaching in the junior classes is inconsistent; in some classes the level of challenge is too low.
- The subject is managed well.

### **Commentary**

57. The work pupils do in their books and the confident manner in which pupils of all ages set about their science work during lessons clearly indicate that pupils' achievement is very good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory through the rest of the school. Standards are in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 but below the national average at the end of Year 6. Test results in Year 6 in 2004 were particularly disappointing, but this was as a result of high levels of mobility in the term before the tests were taken and this disadvantaged a significant number of pupils. Results in the coming year will improve slightly, but in all classes, improvement is slow because a high proportion of pupils have restricted skills in using written and spoken language. As the work in science becomes increasingly dependent on their ability to articulate what they are doing and observing, these pupils respond more slowly. Although test results in Year 6 are lower than in most schools, they compare very favourably with those schools in a similar context. When pupils leave at the end of Year 6, they take with them a good understanding of what working scientifically involves and how the key ideas of science relate to the world around them. When this is compared with the very weak knowledge and understanding children have when they first enter the nursery, it is clear they progress well during their time at St Paul's.
58. Teaching and learning are very good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. In Years 1 and 2, there is a very consistent approach to the teaching of science and one of the important elements in the teaching is challenge. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, pupils are challenged to give explanations to back up their answers and they respond to this and enjoy it. Since the last inspection, teaching and learning have improved in Years 1 and 2. However, teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 have declined since 1999, because the work in some classes is not so rigorous. Pupils are given too much time to find things out, resulting in a slow pace to lessons and little challenge. Teachers' use of assessment information in planning for pupils with different abilities is

unsatisfactory. They do not use assessment information consistently or systematically enough to match work to the needs of pupils with different abilities and there is little evidence of extension activities for the more able. If the school is to improve the number of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment, the issue of carefully matched work needs to be addressed.

59. Teachers and classroom assistants seize every opportunity to promote pupils' use of literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils of all ages are required to record what they are observing during their investigations. Year 1 pupils drew up a recording sheet with the title of the task and the date it was carried out. As they completed these, a number of them came to show what they had done and they were obviously proud of their writing. In Year 5, pupils produced annotated diagrams of the experiments they were doing. Consistent use of speech, writing and numeracy is giving the pupils increased confidence in their abilities.
60. The subject manager has only been in post for one year but clearly the quality of leadership and management in science is good. She understands current needs in the subject and has already improved resources to a good level and increased the profile of investigative work. Both these actions have led to pupils being more involved in practical work and developing an excited and positive view of science. Her enthusiasm and understanding of the subject will enable it to continue to develop in a positive way. Arrangements that enable the co-ordinator to monitor standards and quality have recently come into force, but have not been in place for long enough to secure consistently good practice throughout the school.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in ICT are below national expectations.
- The school has improved its resources and facilities for teaching ICT.
- Teachers have the knowledge, understanding and confidence to teach ICT skills effectively.
- Teachers are not using assessment data thoroughly enough in planning work for pupils with different capabilities.

### **Commentary**

61. Teachers' planning and lessons observed during the inspection indicate that pupils are making satisfactory progress and attaining nationally expected standards in the work that they are currently undertaking. However, overall standards are below national expectations and pupils' achievements over time are unsatisfactory because there are gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills caused by the school's historic lack of resources and weaknesses in teachers' expertise.
62. There is not enough evidence to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching throughout the school. However, in the lessons seen, teaching and learning were good. Teaching and learning are improving because teachers have successfully undertaken a range of training and received effective input, advice and support from the headteacher and the subject co-ordinator. As a result, teachers have the skills to teach ICT well and are competent and self-assured when

teaching ICT. Teachers structure sessions carefully and they demonstrate new skills and techniques effectively, making good use of resources, such as projection equipment or sound recording equipment, to engage pupils' interest and involve them in the lesson.

63. Teachers are successful in establishing good patterns of behaviour and a sensible approach to work, with the result that pupils are attentive to instructions and share equipment co-operatively. In the Year 6 lesson on PowerPoint presentations, higher attaining pupils gave advice to less confident pupils. Pupils' keenness to be actively involved and to share their understanding with others improves the quality of their learning.
64. Teachers and classroom assistants sensitively support pupils who are having trouble and use the knowledge of more able pupils to modify tasks or pose additional challenges. However, because procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and for planning work for pupils with different capabilities are currently under development, these arrangements do not always ensure that tasks are set at the right level for all pupils. For example, all pupils in a Year 6 lesson were given the same task and, whilst it was pitched at the right level for many pupils, there was nothing to take the more able pupils to above average standards. Consequently, some pupils did not make the progress that they should.
65. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory. Pupils are now learning more effectively because, since the last inspection, the school has greatly improved its resources and facilities for teaching ICT. Consequently, teachers have the necessary programs and equipment to teach the ICT curriculum thoroughly and pupils have planned opportunities to use a good range of ICT equipment, including computers, programmable toys and sound recording equipment. The subject leader, with considerable support from the headteacher, has planned thoroughly for these developments to the curriculum. The school has introduced a new scheme of work that provides improved guidance and both the co-ordinator and the headteacher give good 'in-house' support for staff. The co-ordinator is now beginning to monitor teaching and learning in order to check that all elements of the ICT curriculum are taught and to ensure that staff make use of ICT across the curriculum as a whole. This well-conceived programme of curriculum development has considerable potential but has not yet been in place for long enough to raise standards further.

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

66. Currently, teachers' and pupils' use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory but this aspect of the work is also set to improve, as teachers become more familiar with the revised curriculum. Links with literacy are good. Pupils already use ICT to present written work, to communicate to others through simple presentations and to enter and edit text. Other applications of ICT include:
  - programming the floor 'robot' and making simple graphs and charts to reinforce directions, turns and data handling in mathematics;
  - using the internet as a source of information for projects in science and the humanities;
  - using creative tools to make pictures and patterns;
  - using information and simulation programs to plan the layout of an imaginary village; and
  - using devices such as listening centres and tape recorders.

### **HUMANITIES**

67. No lessons were seen in geography and only one in history. It is not possible, therefore, to make judgements about provision, standards or teaching and learning in these subjects. However, examination of the work produced by pupils, planning documents and discussion with staff provided additional information.

68. An analysis of teachers' planning and of pupils' work shows that, by the time that pupils reach Year 6, they have covered a satisfactory range of topics in geography and history. It also indicates that a range of high quality visits and visitors to the school adds to the quality of pupils' learning in the humanities. These special events are greatly enhancing the pupils' knowledge of history and geography and bringing the subjects to life. During the inspection, the visit by an expert on Egypt was an excellent example of how well the school enriches the humanities curriculum. The artefacts that he brought and the workshop activities that he presented promoted high levels of interest and enjoyment and inspired pupils with a strong desire to learn.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils thoroughly enjoy and have a good knowledge of Bible stories.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of the key features of different faiths, and the wide range of topics contributes strongly to their cultural education.
- There are good links with the pupils' work in literacy.
- The pupils' restricted vocabulary limits some of the written work they do.

### **Commentary**

69. Current standards in religious education are higher than they were at the time of the last inspection. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are higher than those set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils throughout the school achieve well because they cover a wide range of topics. Pupils of all ages enjoy listening to stories from the Bible. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher began by asking pupils if they could remember any stories from the previous term. The response was amazing; they could recount any number of stories and did so with considerable enthusiasm. When it came to the subject of the lesson, *'The Good Samaritan'*, they listened with great care, and when acting it out, they were able to put their own interpretation on the different characters. Stories play a significant part in the teaching of religious education all the way through the school.
70. Teaching and learning are good because topics are covered thoroughly. Pupils carry out in-depth studies of the major world faiths and, as a result, they understand the similarities and differences between these faiths. They are aware that each faith has its own festivals, holy writings and special places in which to worship. Pupils learn and write about the special places that each faith has for worship. They know that Christians worship in a church and they know about the different aspects and areas of the church. They know that the Jews worship in a synagogue and that, just as our churches are used for ceremonies as well as worship, similar events happen in other places of worship. Wherever possible, the work the pupils do is directly linked to their own experiences or brought to life by a visit of a Buddhist Monk, which not only gave them a clear understanding of aspects of the religion but also made a very clear link with their cultural learning.
71. During the teaching of religious education, teachers place strong emphasis on the development of speaking and listening and writing skills. In the lesson about the *'Good Samaritan'*, the role-play session provided an opportunity for pupils to improvise and use

their own language and ideas. Later in the lesson, the pupils had a sequence of pictures containing speech bubbles where they had to insert their own words and phrases. Examples of pupils' work show that they are regularly asked to write about their learning and to put down their own ideas. Year 6 pupils had written comments about other members of the class and had done so in a most mature and sensitive manner, showing what a strong impact the teaching in religious education had on their personal development. Although many opportunities occur for pupils to use their skills in writing, many of the pieces of writing are fairly brief because of the pupils' lack of basic vocabulary. Teachers understand this and that is why so much emphasis is placed on aspects of language development in the subject.

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

72. Inspectors observed five lessons, covering art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. These lessons, along with evidence from pupils' completed work, form the basis of the judgement about standards in art and design. However, there is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about provision, the quality of teaching and learning or pupils' response to the subject.
73. There is not enough evidence to make overall judgements about provision, standards or the quality of teaching and learning in design and technology, music or physical education.
74. Pupils' standards in **art and design** are average for their age. They produce a good variety of two- and three-dimensional work, including observational drawing, collage, weaving and clay work. They gain experience of a wide range of media, including oil paints, pastels, and charcoal and computer art. Pupils learn about and produce work in the differing styles of artists including Claude Monet, Vincent Van Gogh, Paul Klee, L S Lowry and Vassily Kandinsky.
75. Teachers regularly plan work in art and design that links with other subjects, particularly history. For example, Year 2 pupils enjoy producing paintings of the Fire of London and Year 4 pupils maintain good concentration when they carefully observe and sketch Roman artefacts. These arrangements boost pupils' interest and give added meaning and purpose to their work.
76. Initiatives, such as Art Week, successfully promote pupils' interest in the subject. This involved pupils working with an artist in residence to produce a three-dimensional seascape, using recycled materials. In addition, participation in a local art competition and the Year 2 art club boost pupils' involvement in art and design activities.
77. The subject co-ordinators for art and design, design and technology, music and physical education maintain resources for their subjects at a good level. They have recently worked with the headteacher to define their roles in monitoring their subjects and planning for improvement. However, it is too soon to judge the impact of their work.

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

Provision in personal, social, health education and citizenship is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Personal, social, health education and citizenship is well planned and opportunities are used to develop links with other subjects.

- Visits, visitors and special events add to the quality of this area of the curriculum.

## **Commentary**

78. The school promotes pupils' personal, social and health education very successfully. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards because they have regular, planned opportunities to develop greater self-awareness and confidence by discussing a range of general issues including those they face as part of everyday life.
79. Teachers plan a good range of activities for the timetabled personal, social, health education and citizenship lessons or 'circle time'. They make effective links with other subjects, such as physical education, science and religious education, to ensure that pupils develop a healthy lifestyle, and learn how to respect the feelings of others and the differences between people. Pupils' involvement in sport makes a good contribution to health education and to pupils' personal and social development. Pupils understand the benefits of exercise and healthy lifestyles. They learn about sportsmanship and the need to follow rules. The school's excellent programme of educational visits, visitors and special events adds significantly to the quality of this area of the curriculum.
80. Subject leadership is satisfactory. The recently appointed headteacher has placed this area of the curriculum on the school's priority list for development and, in the absence of the nominated co-ordinator, has ensured that provision has been extended and improved. However, the pace of improvement is restricted because the ongoing absence of the co-ordinator means that current initiatives are not being fully evaluated and 'fine tuned'.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3
<i>Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).</i>	