

INSPECTION REPORT

ST TERESA'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Darlington

LEA area: Darlington

Unique reference number: 114241

Headteacher: Mr E G Robinson

Lead inspector: Mr T Painter

Dates of inspection: 7th – 10th February 2005

Inspection number: 267952

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: 3 –11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 307

School address: Harris Street
Darlington
County Durham
Postcode: DL1 4NL

Telephone number: 01325 380754
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of Mr R Parkes
governors:

Date of previous 8th February 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an above average sized Catholic voluntary aided school with 307 pupils currently on roll. Around three-quarters of the pupils are from white backgrounds with small numbers from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds. Fourteen pupils have home languages other than English and five are at an early stage of learning English (speaking languages that include Punjabi, Cantonese and Flemish). Few pupils are from asylum-seeking families. The mobility of pupils varies from year to year but is not high in national terms, although a substantial number of pupils come from traveller backgrounds. There are currently 66 such pupils, representing over a fifth of the school. Many of these pupils are irregular attenders and may not come to school for long periods of time. Forty-three receive support through the traveller achievement grant funding. Most pupils live in the socially mixed area around the school, parts of which have many elements of deprivation. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, at 19.6 per cent, is around the national average but has been increasing over recent years. Children joining the school have below average overall attainment for their age. Currently, 43 pupils (14 per cent and below the national average) have identified special educational needs although this is lower than normally found in school. Two pupils have statements of special educational need, which is below the national average. The school gained Activemark and Healthy Schools awards in recent years as well as local awards for food education and inclusion.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21512	Tony Painter	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT) Personal, social and health education and citizenship Music Physical education
9224	Mike Vineall	Lay inspector	
24895	Kath Hurt	Team inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum Science Art and design Design and technology
15015	Mike Wehrmeyer	Team inspector	English English as an additional language Special educational needs Geography History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Recent action is having a positive impact on provision and standards in this **satisfactory** school, which provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good relationships strengthen the very positive ethos for learning.
- There is a very strong commitment to safety, inclusion and the personal development of all pupils, although pupils have too few opportunities to develop independence in their learning.
- Recent effective action has improved teaching and pupils' standards of attainment, although science standards remain well below average.
- Key staff and governors do not play a sufficient role in monitoring and checking the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- Children get a good start to their learning in the nursery and reception classes.
- Teachers do not use assessment information enough when planning pupils' tasks.
- Good action has been taken to improve attendance.
- Traveller pupils and those with English as an additional language are very well supported.

Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. Successful action is leading to current improvements in pupils' standards of attainment. In particular, new arrangements for the Foundation Stage are very effective. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education has been improved and standards are beginning to rise. Subject co-ordinators have clearer roles and outline action plans but few have had sufficient opportunities to contribute enough to improvements.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement is **satisfactory** overall. Good support ensures the good achievement of pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. Children's overall attainment is below average on entering the school and they learn well in the Foundation Stage. Their achievement is good, particularly in their personal and social development. By the time they start Year 1, most now reach the standards expected at this age. Recent action to improve teaching has had a positive impact and achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' standards by Year 2 are better than recent test results, which have been very low when compared with similar schools, and there are clear signs of higher standards in lessons. In mathematics and science, they are now below average and standards in English are average. Similarly, standards of attainment by the end of Year 6 are now average overall, and have improved on recent test

results. However, attainment in science remains well below average because too little attention has been paid over recent years to addressing low standards in this subject.

The school ensures pupils' **very good** spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Very strong social and moral development forms a strong foundation for pupils' personal development. Pupils' spiritual development is good through effective links with the church. They gain good appreciation of a range of cultures. Very good relationships help pupils to develop good attitudes and behaviour, although more could be done to extend pupils' independence in their lessons. Although many traveller children have poor attendance, others attend well and overall attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is **satisfactory**. Recent efforts have successfully established a sound curriculum, often making use of national guidance, with good opportunities for enrichment. Although observed lessons were good overall, the quality of teaching and learning over time has been **satisfactory**. Good teaching in the nursery and reception classes introduces children quickly and effectively to school routines and helps them learn well. In most lessons in Years 1 to 6, teachers engage pupils' attention with good relationships and resources and high expectations of behaviour. In weaker lessons, teachers' organisation is less secure and pupils lose concentration. Although teachers increasingly track pupils' attainment and set targets, they make inconsistent use of assessment data to plan tasks to challenge pupils at all ability levels. The care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are very good and the school maintains good links with parents and the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory** overall. The leadership of the headteacher is good and that of key staff satisfactory. Leadership has responded soundly to declining standards and recent developments have been positive. However, insufficient responsibility has been delegated to key staff to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of teaching. Management is satisfactory. The current management plan focuses on good developments to raise standards but too little use has been made of monitoring and review to take action to improve provision, such as in improving teaching. Governance is satisfactory. Supportive governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and ensure that statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have good views of the school and comment very favourably on the positive atmosphere. Pupils, too, are very positive about their relationships with teachers and other pupils.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards of attainment and achievement in science.
- Extend the management roles of senior staff, co-ordinators and governors, particularly in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning through the school.
- Make more use of assessment information to match tasks to pupils' abilities when planning lessons.

- Ensure pupils gain independence by taking greater responsibility for their own learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON MAIN THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' overall achievement is **satisfactory** and standards by the end of Year 6 are **average**. Recent curriculum and teaching improvements are helping to raise progress, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in Foundation Stage classes and get a very good start to their education.
- Improving strategies are helping to improve pupils' standards in Years 3 to 6.
- Good attention to the specific needs of identified groups of pupils allows them to achieve well.
- Standards in science are too low because there has been insufficient attention to developing investigation skills in the past.

Commentary

1. The school makes good efforts to ensure good opportunities for pupils in identified vulnerable groups. The level of attainment of pupils who have special educational needs is low. However, the pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils who have English as an additional language also have a range of attainment similar to the mainstream pupils. Those at an early stage of learning English who receive support from specialist teachers as well as class teachers also make good progress and achieve well.
2. The range of attainment of the pupils from traveller families is much the same as other pupils and overall they have the same rate of progress while attending school. Those pupils supported by the traveller education service and school staff make good progress and achieve well. However, the very weak attendance of many traveller pupils means that many are in the lowest performing groups of pupils. As such they have a substantial impact on the school's overall levels of attainment as shown in assessments and National Curriculum tests. The school's improved tracking systems are highlighting the improving progress and achievement of those pupils with regular attendance.

Foundation Stage

3. Children join the nursery class with levels of development below those expected at this age. A number of children have restricted speech and language skills. The good provision in the nursery and reception classes builds carefully on children's prior attainment and allows them to achieve well overall in all areas of learning. Good teaching means children make good progress overall and are on course to reach the goals for their age by the time they start in Year 1. The children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and reach standards above the expected levels.

Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.4 (15.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	12.2 (14.4)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	13.9 (15.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Since the last inspection, the promising start in the nursery and reception classes has not been consistently maintained in Years 1 and 2. This is reflected in the school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics, which have shown a downward trend. There have been variations relating to the different abilities of the groups of pupils but results have mostly been below average. The 2004 results were well below average in all three subjects with writing and mathematics results in the bottom five per cent when compared with similar schools.
- The standards of attainment observed in the inspection are better than the school's test results and confirm the initial effectiveness of measures currently being introduced to improve curriculum and teaching. Pupils reach average standards in English, although standards in mathematics and science are still below average. However, the action being taken is not yet fully consolidated and pupils' achievement in these classes is satisfactory. Current improvements in provision for information and communication technology (ICT) are helping pupils to achieve well in this subject and reach the expected standards for their age.

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	27.3 (28.4)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.2 (27.7)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.3 (28.6)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 36 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- The school's Year 6 National Curriculum test results have also varied substantially from year to year, primarily reflecting the abilities of the pupils involved. However, the trend of results over time has been falling, below the national trend. The 2004 tests showed overall attainment below the national average, despite average results in English and mathematics, because science results were particularly weak, well below those in similar schools.
- Lessons seen during the inspection suggest that improvements are being made and overall standards in Years 3 to 6 are rising. Pupils often make good progress in current lessons because teachers are making greater efforts to match work to pupils' needs and to set challenging targets. However, this process is not fully established and less challenging work in some lessons and in pupils' books suggests that overall achievement is satisfactory. Standards in Year 6 are currently average in English and mathematics despite a very high proportion of pupils with learning concerns. However, standards in science remain well below average because teachers have paid too little attention to developing pupils' skills in investigation and experimentation. As in the

Year 1 and 2 classes, the school's improved approach to ICT is helping pupils to achieve well and most now reach the expected levels of attainment.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school are **good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Allowing for the impact of the high proportion of travellers, attendance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy coming to school, behave well and show a keen interest in the activities offered.
- Very good relationships form a strong foundation for pupils' very good personal development.
- Very good support of pupils in potentially vulnerable groups builds positive attitudes.
- Very good teaching means that children in the nursery and reception classes achieve very well in their personal and social development.
- Pupils do not develop their skills as independent learners as well as they might because there are too few opportunities for them to make decisions about their own learning.
- Good work is done to maximise attendance levels.

Commentary

8. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic about the activities provided for them. They participate fully in the good range of activities available outside the school day. There is a strong sense of harmony because pupils develop very good relationships with others. They respond very well to the high expectations of their behaviour and the awareness of others made very clear by adults. In lessons, pupils work co-operatively with others in pairs and small groups, and arguments are rare. Their behaviour in the playground and in lessons is good, and any bullying or teasing are quickly nipped in the bud, sometimes with a few quiet words from a teacher. There have been no exclusions for many years. Pupils generally work hard, particularly when absorbed in challenging practical activities. They occasionally become restless when they are inactive for too long, for instance when teachers' explanations go on for too long.
9. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is very good overall. Pupils' spiritual development, firmly rooted in the strong links with the church and opportunities for reflection on their faith, is good. Pupils' moral development is very good. They have a very good awareness of right and wrong helped by the good example set by the adults working in the school and the well-established school rules. Social development is very good and is reflected in the very good relationships that form the foundation of all interactions in the school. Pupils develop very good awareness of others' needs and work together well when given opportunities. The provision for cultural development has improved and is now good. Pupils show a strong appreciation of other people's ways of life. Attractive and informative displays help them understand and celebrate lifestyles that might differ from their own. This makes a considerable contribution to the way traveller pupils are very successfully integrated into the school.

10. Much of the school's work to support pupils in the vulnerable categories, such as those with special educational needs, traveller children and pupils new to learning English, emphasises the development of their confidence, self-esteem and the building up of positive attitudes to learning. This work is highly successful and the pupils integrate very well into the life of the school. They are equally well behaved and relate well to their teachers and support assistants. They are developing an enthusiasm for their work and an increasing ability to concentrate. Parents are particularly pleased with this aspect of the school's work.
11. Children in the nursery and reception classes get off to a very good start and achieve very well in their personal and social development. With very good help from their teachers and the other adults working with them, children quickly learn to play happily and co-operatively with others. They concentrate well and rarely flit around the activities because they find each one interesting. Their behaviour is very good and so they make the most of new experiences and achieve very well.
12. There are useful and productive opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities in the school. Older pupils support younger children well at playtimes. Each class has representatives on the school council to discuss ways of improving playtime and other aspects of school life. However, they do not develop their skills as independent learners as well as they might, particularly when teachers direct activities too closely.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	10.6	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.

- The attendance level as calculated in the usual manner shows this school being very low in comparison with other schools. However, this is dramatically affected by the many traveller children in the school who are away from the area for significant parts of the year. If the figure is recalculated, excluding all traveller children, it becomes very much in line with the average for all schools. Traveller children make up 28 of the 30 worst attenders in school and are the worst attenders in every class, especially in Year 6. When in school, however, traveller children attend well.
- Successful strategies, making use of effective links with the education welfare officer, encourage good attendance. The school monitors absences closely and encourages better attendance from all pupils. As a result, the levels of unauthorised absence are low. Attendance levels for this current year, to date, are running some three per cent ahead of the same period last year. Punctuality is satisfactory and equally well tackled by the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **satisfactory** education supported by a very strong positive ethos. Pupils are cared for very well and relationships with parents and the local community are good. Recent efforts have been successful in improving the curriculum and teaching but these are not yet fully established. Although much observed teaching was good, particularly in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6, its overall impact is **satisfactory**.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning through the school is **satisfactory**. Much good teaching enables pupils to learn well in the Foundation Stage and in many lessons in Years 3 to 6. Teachers make **satisfactory** use of developing assessment systems.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good ethos and relationships support the learning of pupils of different backgrounds.
- Good teaching in the nursery and reception classes gives children a good start to their learning.
- Better planning and organisation are improving the quality of teaching.
- Teachers do not make consistent use of assessment information to plan tasks that challenge pupils to achieve well.
- Teachers do not promote sufficient independence in pupils' learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	7 (17.5%)	15 (37.5%)	18 (45%)	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.

15. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, as it was in the last inspection, and the relative strengths of the different key stages remain. The school's recent performances in National Curriculum tests in Years 2 and 6 suggest that the good start that children make in the nursery and reception classes has not been consistently built upon in Years 1 and 2. Somewhat better provision in Years 3 to 6 has made up for some of this weakness. However, there have been improvements and the current inspection showed no unsatisfactory teaching. Recent measures to improve curriculum, planning and teaching are having a positive impact throughout the school, although they are not yet fully established.
16. Good teaching in the nursery and reception classes ensures that children learn well in the Foundation Stage. Teachers and classroom assistants work very well together as a team. They know the children well and have good understanding of their personal needs. Children with special educational needs are identified early. Staff are clear about what children are to learn and plan the wide range of interesting activities carefully. Careful planning, using the daily planning sheets, and good support by all the adults mean children make good progress in working towards the targets set for them. A strong atmosphere of caring and positive responses contributes particularly effectively to children's personal, social and emotional development.
17. Throughout the school, good relationships and a very positive ethos contribute to a positive atmosphere for learning. As a result, little time is usually lost in keeping control of classes and pupils' overall behaviour and attitudes are good. Only in weaker lessons, where there is less effective control and organisation, do pupils become restless. Examples of this are when introductions become over-extended or when too much time is spent on organisation in the middle of lessons. In these lessons, the pace of learning drops and teachers have to work hard to get pupils to focus again on what they should be learning.
18. Teachers mostly manage their lessons well. They have well-established routines and this clear organisation helps pupils to know what they need to do. However, they do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to gain independence in their learning. This is most obvious in science where, despite some recent improvements, too little attention has been paid to developing pupils' investigative skills. Similar weaknesses exist in other subjects and teachers direct lessons too closely. This limits pupils' abilities to reach the higher levels of attainment where they must make choices, such as of materials and methods.
19. Recent attention to improving lesson planning is having a positive impact in many lessons. As a result, there are many good lessons where teachers use stimulating and imaginative resources and clear explanations to capture pupils' attention and help them to learn. Good use is made of new resources, such as the interactive whiteboards, to give lively presentations and stimulate pupils' enthusiasm. Good questioning in many lessons makes pupils think hard about their work and further develops their learning.

20. Teachers often identify lesson objectives in their planning that indicate clearly what pupils will learn. This helps them to evaluate the success of the lesson and can contribute to further planning. However, there is less consistent use of these identified aims to help pupils to recognise their own progress and thus improve their independence. Although increasing assessment is being made, this is not always used to the best effect. Many lessons include activities for groups of pupils with different abilities; however, the match of challenge to these groups is not as consistently good as it could be. For example, some tasks do not build on pupils' earlier learning at a sufficient pace. In particular, the higher attaining pupils are sometimes set tasks that do not stretch them enough. However, this weakness can also lead to tasks that are too difficult for lower attaining pupils to succeed in without support.
21. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good overall. Teachers ensure that the pupils experience success in front of their peers. Class teaching is good when teachers try to draw in the weaker pupils, by including them in questioning, pitched to challenge at the correct level. Their learning is also good when teachers provide tasks that develop the specific skills and attitudes written in their individual education plans. Teachers and classroom assistants communicate well, enabling them to give good support to pupils and keep an eye on their progress.
22. Pupils in other groups, such as those from traveller backgrounds, receive very good specialist teaching in integrated groups. This teaching is based on good knowledge of the pupils and thorough planning of tasks that are of interest to them and well matched to their stage of learning. Good opportunities are taken to provide realistic additional learning materials when it is known that pupils are going to be absent from school.

The curriculum

Curricular provision overall is **satisfactory** and enhanced by **good** opportunities for enrichment. The accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A sound curriculum is enriched well by a variety of learning opportunities outside school.
- Very good arrangements for equality of opportunity and inclusion enable all pupils to benefit from their learning experiences.
- The school teaches personal, social and health awareness well and children get a very good start to their learning.
- The curriculum for science and some of the non-core subjects has narrowed since the previous inspection.
- Teachers plan the sequence of learning steps for mixed-age classes well, although more use could be made of assessment information to structure tasks.

Commentary

23. The school has maintained the quality of the curriculum for English and mathematics since the previous inspection. The breadth of the overall curriculum is satisfactory, but the curriculum for science, and for some of the non-core subjects, has narrowed. The curriculum for ICT has improved. For most subjects, the teachers use the system of national guidelines for schemes of work, and adjust them well to take account of the needs of different ages of pupils in the mixed-age classes. The schemes guide teachers in their medium- and short-term planning to build up learning in a sequence of small steps. They include suitable reference to most of the skills associated with the

different subjects. Teachers are seeking better ways to put across teaching points, looking for greater relevance in pupils' learning and planning increasingly interesting links between subjects. However, these links are often ad hoc and there is no firm plan to ensure that they are made in a suitable sequence.

24. Teachers have acted on the findings of the previous inspection to provide each unit of work, and all lessons, with a learning objective. In consequence, pupils are beginning to understand the context of their learning and make steady progress. Most planning takes increasing account of the different attainment levels in a class. However, the single overall objective set for a topic or a lesson does not always fit the wide ability range found in classes. Some of the lower attaining groups, for example, are not sure of the relevance to them of some learning objectives.
25. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is stronger because it works more closely from teachers' assessment information and fits the learning needs better. Improvements in accommodation, resources and arrangements to begin school are all making a significant impact and providing a good foundation for the children's next stages of learning.
26. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of supplementary activities. These give pupils a wealth of relevant learning experiences, both in and out of the classroom. They strengthen the curriculum for physical education and music, and contribute well to pupils' progress. The field trips for history and geography contribute to pupils' understanding and motivate them in their class work. Regular visits from theatre groups, for instance, give pupils a deeper insight into writing and language as well as stimulating further interest in literacy. Good planning for pupils' personal and social development and raising their awareness of health issues is resulting in popular lessons that promote pupils' growth in maturity and positive relationships.
27. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good. The curriculum for pupils who have special educational needs is adapted by class work, specially matched to their needs, in most classes. Teachers have put much effort into making good quality education plans for individual pupils. The targets in these plans have become more precise since the previous inspection. These often guide the support assistants in the programmes of work or social development that enable the pupils to make good progress through their personal targets. They are becoming valuable working documents and are beginning to separate out the different lengths of time needed for the various targets.
28. The curriculum for other vulnerable groups of pupils is very well adapted by the specialist teachers who do the planning. Their plans identify programmes of study, work materials and teaching strategies particularly well suited to the learning needs of these pupils. Because of this, provision for equality and inclusion is very good, and it explains the strong ethos of goodwill and tolerance in the school.

Care, guidance and support

The school works **very well** to ensure the health, safety and welfare of every pupil. Support, advice and guidance of the pupils are **good**, as is the involvement of pupils in the day-to-day running of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Meticulous attention is given to all care issues to ensure pupils' welfare.

- Good relationships, together with good knowledge of all pupils, enable good guidance of pupils.
- Induction systems work well at every stage of a child's education.
- Much good work is specifically directed at traveller children to avoid, as much as possible, any disadvantage in their schooling.

Commentary

29. This is an inclusive and caring school that works especially well to ensure every pupil is safe and secure in the school. Typical of this very good attention is the fact that every member of staff receives St John's first aid training (every two years). Similarly, child protection (led by the headteacher) is taken seriously and strong systems are clearly established. Other health and safety matters are most professionally tackled, from harnessing outside expertise within the governors to a very active and vigilant caretaker.
30. Good relationships between all in the school create an inclusive, single community in which staff are close to pupils and know well their individual needs. This fuels the pupils' good personal development and is established from the start through good induction arrangements. There is good work to support children and their families as they join the Foundation Stage, through the different stages of the school (such as from Year 2 to Year 3) and then on to secondary schools. Such work reduces stress for pupils and parents at all stages and takes especial extra care of all pupils identified as worried about such moves.
31. The school has developed very good links with specialist support agencies. These work to the benefit of all the vulnerable pupils by giving them access to very good guidance on behaviour and learning. The school policy of early intervention works well. Children are monitored as early as the nursery class. The staff track these pupils' progress well. The specific and additional support given to traveller children is particularly good and goes far to make up for their absences and other educational disadvantage.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has built **good** links with parents, other educational establishments and the local community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents express good attitudes towards all aspects of the school.
- Parents enjoy a good relationship with the school which benefits teaching and learning in many ways and rewards the parents.
- Good links with the local community bring many benefits to the curriculum.
- Good links exist with many other parts of the education service, especially through initial teacher training.

Commentary

32. The school's relationship with parents is good and brings many benefits. Parents have positive views of the school and recognise the care and effort directed at their children. A very active and supportive 'Friends' organisation contributes well in both financial and social terms. Several parents regularly help in school, and the close

relationships between parents and staff clearly contribute to pupils' learning. Communication with parents is good, including annual reports which are truly evaluative and incorporate targets. Links have been extended by some imaginative and popular parent educational initiatives. Parents are consulted frequently and are confident that any concerns and queries are readily answered.

33. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs or those in other vulnerable groups value the commitment of the staff to care for their children. The school has sought to build up an increasingly close relationship with the parents, who are regularly invited to important review and communication meetings. Parents are now involved in the special needs procedures at every stage. Most parents find the school's information about the progress of their children helpful. A few parents express concern about the quality of initial identification but the inspection shows secure systems are in place. The traveller parents are very pleased with the academic arrangements, but also with the widespread valuing of the traveller culture in school.
34. Links to other schools include good links to the other local Catholic schools but also extend to links with other local schools that involve sport, ICT and other aspects of pupils' learning. The school makes a significant and successful contribution to school-centred initial teacher training, with close links with colleges. Other work experience is provided for local students that bring many benefits into the school and enhance the education offered.
35. Similarly, links into the local community go well beyond the strong and close relationship with the Parish. The curriculum benefits from involvement with the regeneration work going on locally and several local services and organisations send speakers into school. Many visits out by pupils involve local places and people and these extend their experiences and personal development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. Leadership is satisfactory, although the headteacher continues to maintain a very positive ethos in the school. Management is satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's good leadership maintains a school where relationships are very good, pupils behave well and there is a very good ethos for learning.
- The strong commitment to inclusion means that the effective provision for pupils needing extra support helps them achieve well.
- Insufficient delegation means that key staff and governors do not check the effectiveness of teaching and learning thoroughly enough.
- Good financial management supports developments.
- School improvement planning identifies the right priorities that have led to significant improvements in areas like the provision for children in the nursery and reception classes.

Commentary

36. The leadership and management of the school, judged to be very good in the last inspection, are now satisfactory. The headteacher continues to provide strong and effective leadership in establishing a calm, orderly and caring atmosphere where

pupils behave well and relationships are very good. As a result, there is a very good ethos for learning in the school. Some successful action has been taken since the last inspection in the identified key issue of widening the roles of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators. For example, the senior management team provides good support for the headteacher and stronger analysis of National Curriculum test data gives a considerably better view of how well pupils are doing. Greater monitoring of planning and pupils' work is helping to identify ways in which provision can be improved. However, there has been insufficient delegation of the responsibility for gaining an overview of strengths and weaknesses through observation and evaluation of teaching and learning.

37. The headteacher retains too much responsibility for checking the effectiveness of teaching in lessons himself. As a result, subject co-ordinators and the senior management team still have too few opportunities to observe lessons. This restricts their overview of standards and what needs to be done to improve pupils' attainments. Lesson observations do not give the school a clear enough or shared view of what works well and what aspects slow pupils' learning. This has contributed to falling standards in recent years as weaknesses have persisted too long and the very good practices evident in successful lessons are not quickly highlighted and adopted by all teachers.
38. However, leadership is particularly effective in the very clear and successful commitment to inclusion for all pupils that is evident in the school. Very good arrangements for supporting the pupils from traveller families and those who are new to the English language mean they are well integrated into school life and taking a full part in lessons. These pupils benefit significantly from the very good use of specialist teachers and outside agencies that helps them achieve well. Good leadership and management by the recently appointed co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs has led to good improvements in the way their needs are identified, targets set and good support arranged for them. Their achievements are good.
39. Governors are very committed and involved in the school. They have a good understanding of what the school does well and what needs to be improved. For example, they identified pupils' previous lack of interest in science and its impact on low standards. They take their responsibilities seriously, and are currently examining ways of extending their roles through training and allocation of governors to liaise with subject co-ordinators. Their monitoring of finances is good. They are concerned about the falling standards in recent years, but they do not do enough to question and check whether the school is doing all it can to bring about improvements.
40. The school improvement plan identifies the right priorities and the action needed to bring about improvements. However, clearer success criteria would further help the school to gauge the impact of improvements on standards and pupils' achievements. The effectiveness of planning can be seen in the particularly successful improvements in facilities and provision for children in the nursery and reception classes. A clear overview backed by good financial planning has ensured spacious and attractive accommodation with a very good stock of high quality resources. Generous staffing levels have been successfully targeted at improving children's speech and language skills. The impact of these developments can be seen in their good achievements in speaking, and the rapid gains this very good adult support helps them make in their personal and social development.

41. Financial management continues to be good. The school has reasonable levels of funds in reserve to meet its identified development priorities and spending commitments. Past accumulated surpluses have been successfully used to ensure good development, such as in the Foundation Stage. The finance officer and school administrative officer give good support to the school in ensuring that procedures are followed and best value is at the forefront when orders are made. They keep a watchful eye on spending and keep the headteacher and governors well informed.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	722,231	Balance from previous year	67,846
Total expenditure	747,716	Balance carried forward to next year	42,361
Expenditure per pupil	2,543		

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.

42. Children get off to a good start in the nursery and reception classes, as they did when the school was last inspected. Many of the good features in provision noted then are still evident, and children achieve well in both classes. Children come into the nursery in the term after they are three years old and transfer to the reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they are five years of age. Their attainments on entry are below average overall, particularly in their speech and language development.
43. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. The facilities for children in both classes have been transformed since the last inspection, with purpose built accommodation and very good resources and levels of staffing. This has come about because the school identified the need to improve children's speech and language as a firmer basis for learning in other subjects. This has been successful as recent checks on children's attainments show. The co-ordinator's role is currently being expanded in line with developments in the school. There are regular and detailed observations so that teachers know what children can and cannot do, but the systems for checking on the effectiveness of teaching and pupils' attainments are not as thorough as they might be in recognising and addressing weaknesses in otherwise good quality provision.
44. Good teaching means children make good progress overall and are on course to reach the goals for their age by the time they start in Year 1. Children exceed the goals in their personal, social and emotional development due to a very good emphasis on teaching in this area. Children with special educational needs are identified early. Careful planning, using the daily planning sheets, and good support by all the adults mean they make good progress in working towards the targets set for them. Teachers and classroom assistants work very effectively as a team. They are knowledgeable, very caring and their roles are well defined. They are clear about what children are to learn and plan the wide range of interesting activities carefully.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships give children confidence to achieve very well.
- More could be done to foster children's growing independence in the nursery.

Commentary

45. Children soon settle into the nursery and reception classes because adults are welcoming and encouraging. They take time to listen and show interest in what children have to say so that very good relationships develop. Short discussions on such topics as 'saying sorry', and role-play using a doll to explore how it feels to be left out of a game all help children to be aware of the needs and feelings of others. Their

sensitive response to the prayers that follow is moving. Children play happily together, sharing toys and games fairly. Because the well-planned range of activities and very good resources ensure that activities are interesting, children concentrate remarkably well. It is rare to see children unsure of what to do. Teachers make their expectations clear and there are timely, kind reminders so they understand the routines. This means that both classes are well organised, as they were in the last inspection. Children behave consistently well and grow in confidence. Very good teaching helps them achieve very well, and most exceed the goals for their age by the time they start in Year 1. However, more could be done to further develop children's independence in the nursery by providing opportunities for them to take responsibility for jobs like handing out the fruit and milk.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Stimulating activities and good interventions by adults mean that children do well in extending their speaking and listening skills.
- Children learning to speak English achieve very well due to very good support arrangements.
- A well-structured approach and good teaching help children make good progress in reading.

Commentary

46. Good teaching in this area means that children achieve well and most are on target to achieve the goals for their age by the end of their year in the reception class. The emphasis on developing children's speech and language is particularly effective. Because staffing levels are generous, children often have opportunities to speak with adults as they work in small groups on activities that successfully stimulate discussions. The adults are good at asking the right questions that prompt children to speak, but they sometimes accept children's brief answers and could do even more with additional prompts so that children extend their speaking still further. Children develop good listening skills because they are excited by their experiences and listen intently when others are speaking.
47. There are very good arrangements for supporting children who are learning to speak English. They benefit from regular sessions with a specialist teacher whose very good teaching stimulates discussion through practical activities like making toast. Her own modelling and effective questioning, together with plenty of opportunities for children to practise, means they make very good progress. Their growing skills mean they take part fully in all activities.
48. Children do well in developing their reading and writing skills. The well-structured approach to teaching reading and good support by parents at home ensure that most children are on course to reach the goals for their age. Lively reading of 'The Bear Hunt' and similar stories grips their interest very well. The practical activities that follow, like searching for clues around the school to find the teddy bear, mean that children remember stories well and extend their vocabulary. They show a keen interest in books and read expressively in shared sessions with the teacher and when reading the books in the reading scheme. They are sometimes less confident and find

it hard to pick out the same words in captions and labels around the room. Adults in the reception class do not always do enough to encourage children to read the many words and phrases on display rather than reading for them.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Imaginative teaching methods help children develop good counting skills.
- Effective planning for small groups makes good use of the regular checks on what children can and cannot do, but there could be extra challenge for the more able children.

Commentary

49. Children's achievements are good in this area of learning due to the effective teaching in both nursery and reception classes. The introductions to lessons in the reception class are particularly effective. Fun activities, like counting as they exercise, mean that children enjoy counting. They concentrate very well and become accurate in counting in different ways to 20. In both classes, the activities that follow are carefully planned for each group of children so they build on their existing skills. Adults are clear about what children are to learn, and carefully note what they can and cannot do as a basis for planning of later activities. They work hard in developing children's mathematical language through discussion of the different shapes they use in the construction toys, comparing numbers when playing a simple matching game and other fun activities. Sometimes, more able children could be challenged more, for example with harder tasks and more opportunities to record their mathematics work. Most children are on course to reach the goals set for their age by the time they move into Year 1.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make good use of high quality resources in well-planned activities.

Commentary

50. Good teaching means that children do well in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. They achieve well and reach the standards expected of their age when joining Year 1. In both the nursery and reception classes, teachers provide a good range of interesting experiences that enable children to explore, examine and discuss different topics, like the collection of magnets and the polar animals 'living in a cold place' among the blocks of ice in the water tray. They become confident in operating computer games because they have regular access to computers in the ongoing activities set out for them and sessions using the school's computer suite. Their awareness of the needs and lifestyles of people at different stages in their lives is considerably strengthened when a grandparent and mother and baby visit the reception class.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good facilities for outdoor play help children achieve well in their physical development.
- Very good teaching in the reception class develops skills well.
- Children's progress is slowed in the nursery because planning for outdoor play does not provide enough detail about how children are to move on in developing their skills.

Commentary

51. The facilities for outdoor play, found to be weak in the last inspection, have been transformed. The new accommodation means there are very good outdoor and indoor facilities, and very good quality equipment, successfully supporting children's physical development. Whatever the weather, children have ample opportunities to play. They develop good skills in moving in different ways, using space well so they do not bump into others. They ride and climb confidently and with good control. In both classes, children develop sound control when handling scissors, paintbrushes and other tools.
52. Children are on course to reach the expected goals and sometimes exceed them in the reception class. Here, the teamwork and demonstrations by adults, use of music, clear instructions and very well planned and sequenced activities are all features of the very good teaching found in a session in the school hall. Children showed good skills in listening and responding to instructions and their ability to control and vary their movements in response to the 'Bear Hunt' story.
53. Teaching in the nursery is satisfactory, but the planning for daily sessions in the outdoor area does not specify clearly enough how children will continue to extend their skills. This makes it hard for adults to intervene effectively, and children's progress is slower than it might be because they sometimes repeat activities rather than being encouraged to develop their skills further.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good planning provides rich opportunities that help children achieve well in their creative development.

Commentary

54. Effective planning in this area provides good opportunities that help children make good progress in reaching the goals set for their age. Children play co-operatively together in the class shop and the Three Bears' house, where good quality props stimulate them well in acting out their storylines. They negotiate roles well, although they are not always as imaginative in their play as they might be. Children have access to a good range of materials in their artwork. The adults work effectively with them in small groups, where they give good support in sharing ideas and helping children try out new techniques and different media. Children in the reception classes create attractive patterns and pictures, interpreting themes like a 'deep, cold river' sensitively in their collages.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in reading.
- The data from a good range of assessment procedures is used to identify trends effectively, but is not always resulting in work matching need in the classroom.
- Very good support given to children from traveller families, and the pupils who have English as an additional language, enables them to make good progress.
- Opportunities to use literacy within other subjects are not systematic enough to promote pupils' good progress.

Commentary

55. Standards have declined since the previous inspection, although assessments made as children enter the nursery indicate that attainment on entry to the school has also fallen over these years. Year 2 National Curriculum test results have varied from year to year but recently have been falling. The 2004 results in reading and writing were well below the national averages, with writing particularly weak when compared with similar schools. Year 6 National Curriculum tests have been up and down over recent years, mostly reflecting the relative attainments of the different groups of pupils. The results in 2004 were around the average but compared well with those of similar schools.
56. The proportion of pupils from traveller families has grown by a third since the previous inspection. The amount of schooling they inevitably miss means they make slower progress and this contributes to the overall picture of lower standards since the previous inspection. The school enlists the aid of specialist teachers for support lessons in small groups, and these make up some of the shortfall in progress. The specialist teachers work closely with the school staff and support groups of vulnerable children well. Pupils who have special educational needs, those learning English and traveller children often achieve well in lessons and sometimes make better progress than their peers because of the good support they get.
57. The school has been concerned about the weaknesses in pupils' results in the standard tests over recent years. The co-ordinator has taken on the overview of the subject that was missing at the time of the previous inspection and leadership and management are now satisfactory. Monitoring of planning and pupils' work is giving good information of how well pupils are doing, although the co-ordinator has limited opportunities to observe and evaluate teaching and its impact on raising standards. This limits opportunities to share good practice. Good action has taken action to halt the declining standards, including starting all children in the reception class at the same time, so none experiences a partial year. The signs are that this programme is beginning to be successful and the school's improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Throughout the school, resources have been improved considerably.

58. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 has been strengthened. Much work has been done to improve reading, through the literacy hour and in additional guided reading periods, and pupils achieve well in these. Reading standards seen in Year 2 have improved, and pupils are on track to reach average standards by the end of the year. Standards in writing are not as strong. Teachers are giving challenging work to the top groups to bring handwriting, punctuation and vocabulary up to higher Level 3. However, the numbers in the top groups are not sufficient to reach the national proportions. Pupils in the middle groups would also benefit from work that was more challenging.
59. Standards in Year 6 seen during the inspection confirm the school's assessments that pupils are on track to reach the average range by the end of the year. Reading is the strongest strand. The pupils in the top groups love reading with expression. They are eager to point to the exact text that supports their opinions about characters. Pupils in the middle groups are not yet secure in these skills. Pupils are improving steadily in writing. Spelling is satisfactory, but many pupils are still uncertain about more advanced punctuation. Pupils' handwriting is sound in their practice books, but for general purposes is often weaker, with limited attention paid to presentation.
60. Teaching in English is satisfactory over time, enabling pupils to make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily. However, good lessons were observed in both key stages. In these lessons, teachers used a more exciting approach, for instance using the interactive whiteboards to good effect to make explanations clearer. In a lively Year 3 lesson, pupils were proud of learning a tricky rap poem in a day, demonstrating good speaking and listening. Relationships are very good, and pupils therefore behave and listen well. Teachers now tell pupils the lesson objectives, so that they know the purpose of the learning. Assessment procedures are more precise and enable staff to identify trends of attainment, groups of pupils and to give them more challenging work. This process is contributing well to the development and improvement of the curriculum. However, teachers through the school do not systematically make full use of the data to plan specific tasks to challenge pupils sufficiently at different levels of attainment. Pupils do not know the detail of their levels of attainment, for instance what is needed to turn a Level 3 story into a Level 4. Some classes are trying out a useful target system. This is popular with pupils, because they have the responsibility of proving to the teachers that they have reached their own targets.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

61. Teachers use a sound range of opportunities to enable pupils to practise and use their language skills in other subjects. For instance Year 4 pupils use reading well to research information about the Tudors from books and computer programs. Pupils also develop their writing for a variety of purpose in history, for instance when they describe events or write interpretations, or as characters in the events. These opportunities are not planned in a systematic way in all subjects and this detracts from the effectiveness of the overall provision.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvements in assessment systems and target setting have helped to stop declining standards.
- Teachers do not use assessment information consistently to match tasks in lessons to pupils' prior attainment.
- There has not been enough monitoring of teaching and learning to identify ways to further raise standards.
- Good support for pupils who may have barriers to their learning helps them learn well.

Commentary

62. Standards are lower than those seen in the last inspection, although recent action is having a positive impact and improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Results of National Curriculum tests in Years 2 and 6 have varied from year to year, although the overall trend at both ages has been downwards. The results achieved by groups of pupils are often influenced by the varying number of pupils with special educational needs. In addition, many year groups have large numbers of pupils from traveller backgrounds. The school makes good use of specialist and other support to help these pupils and they often achieve well in lessons. However, many have unsatisfactory attendance over years and are amongst the lowest attaining pupils. Pupils with English as an additional language and pupils who have special educational needs make good progress. This is due to the additional support provided by teaching assistants in the classroom.
63. The inspection finds that pupils' overall achievement throughout the school is satisfactory, although it has been improving during the year as improvements in teaching and assessment become more established. The 2004 National Curriculum test results for pupils at the end of Year 2 were well below the national average and in the lowest five per cent of similar schools. Pupils' work this year and in lessons during this inspection show that this trend has been halted although standards are still below average. In particular, there are weaknesses in the proportions of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 attainment. Standards by the end of Year 6 are average, similar to the 2004 test results. Again, however, improvements suggest that standards are consolidating and strengthening within Years 3 to 6.
64. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with well-structured lessons that begin with clear explanations and instructions. Teachers make good use of their strong relationships with pupils to establish a good atmosphere for learning that gives pupils

confidence. Teachers increasingly make clear to the pupils what they will learn and question them well to help them sort out ideas and take their thinking forward. Good resources, including some effective use of the interactive whiteboards, contribute effectively to learning. Teachers make improving use of assessment information to plan work, group pupils and set targets. However, the use of detailed information is inconsistent and some teachers do not ensure that all tasks are sufficiently challenging. Satisfactory marking is good at celebrating pupils' successes, but does not always give pupils enough advice about how they can improve their work.

65. Leadership and management are satisfactory and are beginning to have a positive impact on standards. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject and has identified strengths and weaknesses in provision through examination of planning and pupils' work. Greater analysis of test and other data, with some lesson observations, is helping to identify development needs. However, there has not been enough attention paid to linking strengths and weaknesses in teaching to raising standards and contributing to teachers' professional development.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. Mathematics is used soundly in teaching and learning in other subjects. There were satisfactory examples of pupils using mathematical skills in many subjects of the curriculum, including ICT. However, these opportunities are not sufficiently clearly planned to ensure that they support pupils' learning in mathematics lessons.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are well below average and pupils' achievements are not good enough because insufficient attention has been paid to developing pupils' investigative skills.
- Good teaching resulting from recent developments in the subject is bringing about improvement and standards are rising.
- Too few pupils reach the higher levels in science because teachers take too little account of the needs of different groups of pupils when planning their lessons.
- The co-ordinator's influence is restricted because he has too few opportunities to observe lessons and thoroughly check the effectiveness of teaching and pupils' learning.

Commentary

67. Standards in science have fallen considerably since the time of the last inspection when they were above average. The standards found during the inspection, and those in the most recent tests, are below average in Year 2 and well below average in Year 6. However, in each year group there are significant numbers of pupils from traveller families whose learning is disrupted for a considerable part of each year. Whilst the school provides very good support for them, they often do not reach the levels expected for their age. For all pupils, there has been too little emphasis on developing their investigative skills and too much on factual learning. As a result, pupils find it hard to see the relevance of their knowledge and apply it in new situations, like the science tests. Pupils' achievements over time are unsatisfactory.
68. The school has recognised these weaknesses and has recently set about improvements. On balance, teaching is satisfactory and improving well. A specialist teacher taught science effectively during the last inspection. Since then, teachers have taught their own lessons. Examination of pupils' workbooks shows that some teaching has been unsatisfactory. Pupils have often spent too long tediously copying out information, which contributed more to their handwriting than their scientific skills. The pace of learning and development of scientific skills have been too slow.
69. The school identified that one factor holding pupils back was their lack of interest in science lessons. This is being successfully addressed, and much of the teaching observed during the inspection week was good, particularly in Years 3 to 6. This is due to the greater emphasis teachers are now placing on teaching science through a practical and investigative approach that challenges pupils to experiment, observe and think hard in making and recording their own conclusions. Because they are excited by the interesting challenges their teachers set and their effective use of questions, pupils work very hard and often achieve well in these lessons. Teachers share clear lesson objectives with pupils so they know what they are to learn. They use a range of good resources well so that pupils learn how to handle force meters and other equipment efficiently. This contrasts sharply with the few lessons where pupils become restless and inattentive when uninspiring explanations and instructions by the teacher go on for too long.
70. The school is currently developing an improved system for checking what pupils can and cannot do in their science work. It is still in its infancy, and not yet giving teachers the kind of information they need to help them plan for the different abilities in their classes in each aspect of science. A new target sheet for individual pupils, recently introduced by the co-ordinator in some classes, has good potential in clearly establishing what needs to be done. It is also valuable in encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. However, teachers often plan similar activities for all pupils. Good deployment of classroom assistants means that pupils with special educational needs receive good support as they work, and they achieve well. Pupils who are capable of more do not always have the extra challenge they need to help them move on further in their learning. Teachers sometimes direct activities too closely so that pupils do not become as independent as they might in organising their own investigations and interpreting the evidence. More could be done to simplify the way pupils with limited writing skills record their observations.
71. The leadership and management of science, which were good in the last inspection, are now satisfactory. The co-ordinator provides a very good example for others to follow in his teaching. The introduction of a weekly science challenge set by teachers with prizes for the best response is one example of the way he is successfully raising the profile of science in Years 3 to 6. Developments have been identified and

improvements are underway. The impact of these is particularly evident in the improving investigative skills seen in lessons. However, the pace of improvement since the last inspection has been too slow. The science co-ordinator has too few opportunities to oversee the subject, particularly in thoroughly and sharply checking the effectiveness of teaching. This means that the weaknesses have gone on for too long, and the features of the best teaching are not identified and adopted by all.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils use their developing skills in a wide range of activities.
- Teachers' improved skills and good use of the ICT suite encourage pupils' interest in the subject, although they do not ensure that computers are used enough in other subjects.
- Assessment information is not consistently used to inform planning.
- The co-ordinator has too few opportunities to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning.

Commentary

72. Pupils reach the expected standards by the end of Years 2 and 6, as described in the last report. However, the school has effectively remedied the variations in quality of teaching that were identified and overall improvement is satisfactory. Pupils' past work shows that they can enter and edit text, changing the size, shape and colour. They can incorporate drawings and pictures in the finished work. They make pictures using different drawing programs, showing satisfactory understanding of the different tools. They capture digital images using cameras and microscopes and print out the results.
73. Pupils' satisfactory achievement results from overall satisfactory teaching and learning. However, they make good progress in many lessons in the ICT suite, where teaching is good. Teachers make good use of their improving ICT knowledge to ensure a good range of work is provided for pupils in all aspects of the curriculum. In many lessons, teachers' very good relationships with pupils play an important role in promoting learning. Years 5 and 6 pupils, for example, pay extremely good attention as they learn to cut, move and amend clipart. Activities are carefully planned and most lessons have a good balance of revision and new learning. The school's developing assessment system is not yet used systematically in all classes to plan work that encourages the best possible progress for all pupils.
74. The recently appointed co-ordinator's leadership and management are satisfactory. She has established a new curriculum framework and supported staff in the use of the improved computer resources. Staff confidence and expertise have developed as a result of training and support, and most make good use of the ICT suite. Teachers show confidence in their use of the interactive whiteboard to present information and capture pupils' attention. This enthusiasm is picked up by pupils and contributes to their own good responses to lessons. Although there are outline plans for further monitoring, there have been insufficient opportunities for the co-ordinator to observe lessons to identify strengths in teaching and learning that can be shared.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

75. Teachers' overall use of ICT to contribute to learning in other subjects is satisfactory. Much work in the computer suite is carefully planned to cover aspects of learning in different subjects. For example, pupils' literacy skills are developed effectively when they combine text and pictures to present ideas in the form of newspaper articles. Year 6 pupils' multimedia presentations contribute to their work in history as they combine text, images and effects to show their knowledge of Ancient Greece. They use their mathematics skills when working with spreadsheets or manipulating databases. However, teachers do not make full use of the computers that are in each of the classrooms to give pupils further opportunities to practise skills and support learning in a wider range of subjects.

HUMANITIES

76. Provision for **religious education** was inspected through a separate inspection, published elsewhere.
77. Work was sampled in **history** and **geography**. Not enough lessons were observed to form an overall judgement about teaching and provision in these subjects. A study of pupils' work indicates that the curriculum is satisfactory. The skills related to the subjects are developed year by year in a smooth sequence of steps, because the curriculum is planned well to take into account the mixed-age classes. However, some aspects of pupils' learning, such as mapping skills in geography and awareness of chronology in history, are not prominent enough. The subjects have improved since the previous inspection because the school libraries have been upgraded considerably. Pupils enjoy using the reference books and what they read contributes to their knowledge base. More than one teacher was surprised and pleased to find that pupils had studied the books before the lesson and were 'one step ahead'. Some teachers make exciting use of the interactive whiteboards to fascinate pupils, but this is not consistent.
78. Work in Years 1 and 2 indicates a wider coverage than usual. The pupils' writing about the far-flung travels of Barnaby Bear is particularly well displayed. Teachers assess all pupils' progress at the end of topics, and the records handed on to the next teacher enable them to pitch their lessons at a suitable level. Although literacy contributes well to these subjects, teachers do not use the writing in history books as an opportunity for developing pupils' handwriting. Leadership and management are satisfactory, and the co-ordinator monitors the teachers' planning and pupils' work regularly. The co-ordinator is not yet responsible for observing the quality of teaching in her subjects to ascertain if standards are high enough. However, the staff are preparing to undertake an intensive review of the curriculum and to look more closely at standards and alternative patterns of organising and linking the subjects.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

79. No lessons were seen in **art and design** and **design and technology** during the inspection so no overall judgements can be made on provision in either subject. The work on display is of a generally satisfactory standard in each subject, and is in line with the school's planning guidance. The quality of some of the **art** produced in Years 5 and 6 is of a particularly high standard and pupils' achievements are good. Using photographs of places like Capri and Holy Island as stimuli, they create sensitive and well-executed interpretations of landscapes. In **design and technology**, pupils

produce slippers, books and cards with pop-up features and musical instruments, taking care in finishing their product attractively. However, in both subjects the designing, planning and evaluating process is not given sufficient emphasis.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' well-organised lessons contribute to pupils' learning.
- There has not been enough monitoring of teaching and learning to identify ways to further raise standards.

Commentary

80. Pupils attain average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 and their overall achievement is satisfactory, similar to that described in the last report. Their progress is satisfactory through the school because they are given a range of experiences that cover all aspects of the curriculum. The co-ordinator has made a good start in analysing strengths and weaknesses through looking at planning and pupils' work and provides satisfactory leadership and management. New curriculum materials, for example, have been supported by informal guidance to teachers, and observation suggests that most teachers are more confident in their own abilities to lead lessons. However, there has been no monitoring of lessons to identify the most successful aspects of teaching and learning to be shared with all staff.
81. Teaching in lessons seen during the inspection was satisfactory, with strengths in teachers' well-established routines and organisation. These ensure that lessons run smoothly and enable pupils to learn in a positive atmosphere. There are opportunities for pupils to practise singing and use simple percussion instruments. Pupils' singing skills are further developed in singing assemblies where Years 1 and 2 pupils, for example, sing tunefully and with enthusiasm. These sessions make a particular contribution to pupils' music skills when they tackle more challenging pieces such as rounds.
82. Provision is further enhanced through a good range of opportunities to learn and perform outside lessons, including choir and instrument tuition. Opportunities to play brass and stringed instruments extend pupils' learning and contribute to social development. Visits and visitors also make a positive impact to pupils' cultural development.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide a good range of activities for all, with improved attention to developing pupils' sports skills.
- There is no consistent assessment system to guide teachers' planning.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to evaluate and discuss their own work.

Commentary

83. Pupils in Year 6 reach average standards, as found in the last inspection, but the school has improved on the reported unsatisfactory provision for younger pupils. This is now satisfactory, as is pupils' attainment in Year 2. Although there is no co-ordinator at present, the satisfactory leadership and management of the subject have been taken on by the headteacher. The sound scheme of work ensures the full range of physical education activities is covered and pupils of all backgrounds and abilities are successfully included. This provision is complemented by good extra-curricular activities, including sports teams and events. Secure arrangements ensure that most pupils meet the expected standards in swimming. Some good use is made of professional coaches to extend provision, raise the profile of sport and encourage physical fitness.
84. Teaching is satisfactory and most lessons make good use of well-established routines and high behaviour expectations. In many lessons, pupils' skills are carefully and incrementally developed through tasks with increasing levels of challenge. However, teachers do not always match initial tasks completely accurately to pupils' existing skill levels because there is no consistent assessment system. Teachers often make good use of pupils' demonstrations to the class to indicate how standards can be raised. However, teachers do not do enough to get pupils to evaluate and identify how actions, sequences or performances could be improved.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

85. Few lessons could be directly observed in this area of the school's work, although there were many strong elements of the school's approach in other lessons. For example, very good relationships enable teachers to ensure that pupils feel valued, secure and free from harassment. The school has established a very a strong sense of community which ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities and status. This results in pupils showing good respect for adults and each other. The school has established a good range of measures to promote health and has a satisfactory programme for sex education and drugs awareness.
86. There are increasing citizenship opportunities where pupils can express their ideas and gain responsibilities, although this is not yet sufficiently consistently done. In many lessons, teachers make good use of discussion in pairs and groups to help pupils to gain confidence in expressing their ideas. Additionally, all classes have regular opportunities for discussion, sometimes through 'circle time'. The school council gives pupils opportunities to represent their classes and they show evident pride as they explain how they are trying to improve the school. Teachers now make greater use of assessment information to set targets, particularly for older pupils. However, they do not always ensure that pupils understand what they need to do to improve. This restricts pupils' independence and recognition of their own learning.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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