

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST WULSTAN'S AND ST EDMUND'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL AND NURSERY**

Fleetwood

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119624

Headteacher: Mrs S T Jones

Lead inspector: Mrs D Bell

Dates of inspection: 16th - 18th May 2005

Inspection number: 271732

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:	338
School address:	Poulton Road Fleetwood Lancashire
Postcode:	FY7 7JY
Telephone number:	(01253) 874 785
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Philomena Barr
Date of previous inspection:	First inspection as a newly amalgamated school

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This voluntary aided Catholic primary school was formed in September 2004 by bringing together two schools, St Wulstan's and St Edmund's, each a mile apart. The school now operates as a split site school with pupils aged 4 to 11 on one site, and pupils aged 3 to 11 on the other. The socio-economic circumstances are somewhat different at the two sites and parents have the choice as to which school their children attend. Most select the nearest school. Forty children (19 boys and 21 girls) attend the nursery part-time, and there are 299 pupils in Reception to Year 6 (149 boys and 150 girls). There are three mixed-age classes on one site, and eight mixed-age classes on the other, where the Nursery is also based. Reception children are taught on their own. In Years 1 and 2 there are significantly more boys than girls, and in Year 5 there are significantly more girls than boys. Overall, the proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs. These figures are masked by the significant number of parents on low incomes and the school's decision to put only the most needy pupils on the special educational needs register, catering for the others through its planning. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below average. The school's analysis just prior to the amalgamation shows that the overall attainment of the pupils was below that expected for the pupils' ages. At the smaller site, where the school had been in special measures, it was well below.

The majority of pupils are of white British origin and those who are not are from other white backgrounds, or of mixed racial origin. English is an additional language for only a very small number of pupils, and all are fluent English speakers. The school is involved in a number of initiatives aimed at raising pupils' achievement. For example, through its work with 'Excellence in Cities', it appointed a learning mentor who works part-time with pupils and their families in order to raise pupils' achievement. It also reaches out to its two parishes, which are in different areas of the town, and to the community to enrich pupils' learning and personal development. In 2004, it achieved the Healthy Schools Award and the Race Equality Charter Award. The headteacher of the new school had been the headteacher at St Wulstan's and had acted as associate headteacher at St Edmund's in the period prior to the amalgamation.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16413	Mrs D Bell	Lead inspector	English Modern foreign languages Music
9798	Mrs V Ashworth	Lay inspector	
30935	Mrs K McArthur	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology English as an additional language
27677	Mrs D Davenport	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Geography History
32138	Mr T Plant	Team Inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective school. Excellent leadership by the headteacher has led to very effective teamwork across both sites that is very strongly focused on improving the provision for all pupils in this very recently amalgamated school. Pupils achieve well because they are taught well and their personal development is very effectively fostered. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's excellent leadership, supported by good governance, has very quickly established a united school with a strong commitment to raising pupils' achievement further.
- A high proportion of teaching is very good or excellent, especially in Years 5 and 6, and overall, children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start in their learning.
- Assessment, monitoring and evaluation procedures are very good overall even though they are not yet sufficiently formalised in all subjects.
- Standards are above the national expectation in information and communication technology (ICT) in Year 6 and ICT is used very effectively as a natural tool for learning in all subjects.
- Very good curricular provision very effectively meets the needs and interests of all pupils except for the very small number of Reception children on the smaller site.
- Pupils are very well cared for and the provision for their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The school's very good partnership with parents and its very strong links with the community and other schools enhances learning for all pupils.

Since this is a newly amalgamated school, there is no previous report and no National Curriculum test results against which to judge standards, achievement or improvement over time. However, the management has taken on board all of the issues from the previous inspections of both schools, one of which had, until earlier this year, been in special measures. Following the amalgamation, changes in staffing and the distribution of staff from the original two schools across the two sites have successfully eliminated the previous under-achievement of the pupils in one of the original schools. Pupils from the two sites are brought together at different times to share learning and social experiences and to check equality of provision. This has successfully ensured that they feel that they belong to one school. Pupils and staff have settled in extremely well to all of the new systems and procedures and the school is very strongly focused on further improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is good. Attainment on entry into the Nursery is well below that normally seen for the children's ages. However, they get off to a good start and all are on course to meet the goals expected nationally for the end of the Reception Year (the early learning goals) in personal, social and emotional development. Children make consistently good progress in all the other areas of learning and their attainment has improved to a level below, rather than well below, the national expectation. However, the small number of Reception children at the smaller site do not have full access to all of the facilities associated with the Foundation Stage. This hinders their progress, especially in relation to physical development through outdoor learning. In the rest of the school, all pupils achieve well regardless of how well they were doing before the amalgamation. The school's focus on speaking and listening is greatly improving achievement in English, and achievement in that subject and in mathematics is now very good. Attainment levels were below the national expectations at the start of the year and are now in line with them in Year 2 and Year 6 in all subjects inspected. All groups of pupils, from the least to the most able, achieve equally well because the school works very hard and successfully meets their different learning needs. It is on course to meet the challenging targets it set for 2005. It sets equally challenging targets for individual pupils and different year groups, based on its thorough analysis of each pupil's progress.

Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to school and to learning. Punctuality is satisfactory but attendance is unsatisfactory. Despite the school's best efforts, a small minority of parents do not ensure that their children attend regularly and this affects the children's progress. A Family Learning Mentor has been appointed to help the school in its efforts to improve attendance.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is very good. The quality of teaching is good and there is a high proportion of very good and excellent teaching that engenders excitement in learning and has contributed in very great measure to the pupils' good achievement since last September, especially in Years 5 and 6. English and mathematics are taught particularly well. Literacy and ICT skills are very effectively promoted, and numeracy skills satisfactorily promoted, across the curriculum. This, and the very high expectations teachers have of pupils' behaviour and work rate, very successfully helps pupils to build on what they already know while challenging all of them to do as well as they possibly can. All groups of pupils strive to do their best, motivated by some very lively and engaging teaching that very effectively meets their needs, aptitudes and interests. The school's very good assessment systems enable teachers to track pupils' progress very carefully and they take immediate action to address any under-achievement or gaps in learning. Teachers' marking is equally rigorous, in most cases clearly identifying for the pupils how they might improve their work in order to achieve their targets. All of this information is used effectively to plan a very good curriculum that encourages an innovative approach to linking subjects and joining up learning for the pupils. Pupils are provided with many very worthwhile learning opportunities in and outside of the normal school day. They are very well cared for and the school's partnership with parents, other schools and the community is very good. All of these factors contribute in great measure to the pupils' personal and academic development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall and the headteacher's leadership is excellent. Strongly supported by good governance and a very effective senior management team, the headteacher has very quickly established the feeling of one, forward-looking school highly committed to further improvement. Governors ensure that statutory requirements are met and work effectively with the headteacher to check the quality of educational provision across the two sites.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils have very positive views of the school. They value highly what it does for them and pupils are looking forward to extending their involvement in decision making through the recently established school council which operates across both sites.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

Although overall very effective, the most important things the school should now do to improve are:

- Find ways to give the very small number of Reception children on the smaller site the same opportunities as those on the larger site.
- Complete the process of establishing rigorous and manageable assessment procedures in all subjects.
- Improve attendance and the rates of progress made by the small number of pupils whose attendance is unsatisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

This is the first inspection of this newly amalgamated school and therefore there are no tables of results or comparisons from previous years.

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good. All groups of pupils achieve equally well and standards in English, mathematics, science are at the national expectation in Year 2 and Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is equally good across both sites for all groups of pupils except those who do not attend regularly.
- The school's focus on speaking and listening is greatly improving achievement in English.
- Challenging, realistic targets arise out of rigorous assessment procedures and clearly identify the small steps in learning that each pupil needs to take to improve their achievement.
- Standards are above the national expectation in Year 6 and the very good use of ICT as a natural tool for learning greatly enhances pupils' overall achievement.

Commentary

1. Attainment on entry to Nursery and Reception is well below that expected for the children's ages but children get off to a good start and by the time they reach the end of the Reception Year their attainment in personal, social and emotional development has improved significantly and is in line with the national expectation. Good improvement is consistent in all the other areas of learning and attainment has improved to a level below the national expectation rather than well below. Their good progress since last September is because they are taught well and for the most part, their needs are fully met. The exception is the very small number of Reception children on the smaller site, who are there by parental choice. Their physical development in particular is limited because they do not have regular access to an outdoor area.
2. Attainment levels were below the national expectation at the start of the year and are now in line in all subjects inspected. Following the amalgamation of the two schools in September, pupils' achievement has been good, with some very good achievement in English and mathematics, especially in Years 5 and 6. The school's focus on improving speaking and listening skills has considerably improved their achievement in English. Good systems ensure that pupils come together at different times, ensuring that they too feel that they belong to one school. Pupils and staff have settled in extremely well to all of the new systems and procedures. This has enabled all pupils, regardless of how well they were doing before the amalgamation, to make good or very good progress in all subjects. The good achievement is evident across both sites because staff from the original two schools are distributed across the two sites, and all staff plan together very effectively as a team to ensure equality of provision for all pupils. The only exception is the small group of pupils whose parents do not ensure they attend regularly. The achievement of this group of pupils is satisfactory overall because the school works very hard to minimise the disruption that their poor attendance causes.
3. The very strong focus on ensuring that pupils' work matches their learning needs was observed in the vast majority of lessons. This has brought a rigour to target setting at whole-school, class and individual levels, which is very solidly based on the very good assessment of pupils' learning and a thorough analysis of the previous test results from both schools. The good preparation for all of this took place in the year prior to the formal amalgamation, when the headteacher was head of one school and the associate head of the other, successfully helping to bring it out of special measures. The school's records show that some of the pupils

at this school had a lot to catch up with. It is a measure of the headteacher's excellent leadership and management and the high levels of commitment of all the staff that the pupils' achievement has accelerated in the way it has this year. All groups of pupils achieve equally well and no difference was noted in the attainment of boys and girls during the inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans and they too achieve well. Teaching assistants provide very good support for these pupils, including those with behavioural difficulties and physical disabilities. Learning activities are well planned to meet the pupils' specific needs, with particular emphasis placed on developing their literacy and numeracy skills.

4. Pupils in Year 6 read satisfactorily and they use and consolidate their reading skills effectively in other subjects. Writing, though at the national expectation, is the weakest aspect of English and the recent drive to promote it more effectively across the curriculum is paying off in better quality work. The school has successfully developed the pupils' speaking and listening skills and this aspect of English is above the national expectation. Pupils speak clearly and confidently, using an appropriately wide range of vocabulary and with a good understanding of how to adapt these skills to suit the audience they are addressing. In mathematics and science, the strong emphasis on developing pupils' practical and investigative skills is helping them to develop deeper knowledge and understanding of mathematical and scientific concepts. Pupils use and consolidate their mathematical skills satisfactorily in other subjects but unlike literacy skills, this has not yet become a major focus of the school's work.
5. A major strength is the pupils' very good use of their ICT skills in all subjects. The school is successfully meeting its stated objective to embed ICT in the curriculum as a natural tool for teaching and learning. The integrated approach it has adopted has resulted in standards in ICT matching the national expectation in Year 2 and exceeding it in Year 6. Standards match the national expectation and achievement is good in geography, history and art and design, the other three subjects that were inspected in full in this inspection. Overall, pupils are well prepared for each of the next stages of their education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, as is their personal, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development. Attendance is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes are very positive and they are well motivated by good teaching.
- The school has a positive and friendly ethos that actively promotes pupils' self-esteem.
- Pupils of all ages get along very well with each other and adults in school.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

6. The large majority of pupils are keen to come to school and arrive on time. However, despite the school's best efforts, a small number of families do not recognise the importance of regular attendance. This affects their children's learning and impacts badly on the school's attendance figures and the pupils' overall achievement. The school is working hard on strategies to improve this situation and has the good support of the Educational Welfare Officer and the recently appointed Family Learning Mentor. In addition, some families continue to take holidays in term time despite reminders from the school about the effect this has on their children's overall achievement.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
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School data	4.3
National data	5.1

School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

7. Pupils are attentive and listen well to adults and each other. Teachers have high expectations of them in terms of their work and behaviour, and adopt a consistent approach to rewarding good work and behaviour and dealing promptly with anything that is unacceptable. Pupils respect the boundaries that are set for them and have been involved in setting rules about behaviour. They are well mannered and polite, and move around the school calmly and sensibly. Pupils behave very well even when they have to stay indoors at wet playtimes, readily organising themselves and their activities. There was no evidence of bullying and the school has clear policies to deal with any forms of harassment. Breaks and lunchtimes are relaxed and friendly, with few problems. Older pupils are trained as playground 'buddies' and are good at helping younger ones to enjoy their free time. Pupils readily accept responsibility in other ways too, and some of them organise and advertise their own lunchtime clubs and fundraising events. For example, in an assembly pupils advertised the sale of their own newspaper, any profits to be divided equally between the school's playground fund and a charity event. The school takes care to ensure that no pupil is excluded from any of these clubs, for example, because they are not part of a particular friendship group. This is something that the pupils fully understand and respect. A school council was elected recently, with a strong emphasis on ensuring that both sites are fairly represented. The council has held one meeting to date, electing its own officers and setting its initial priorities, namely, to provide new playground equipment and open a 'tuck-shop'. Pupils very much appreciate that they are listened to in other ways as well. For example, Year 6 pupils spoke proudly of having asked the headteacher for more books for the library and the headteacher's quick response in ordering them.
8. Pupils form very good relationships with each other and with the adults in the school. They confidently respond to visitors and are proud to talk about their school and their achievements. They know that their teachers care for them, treat them fairly and want each and every one to do their best. In response, pupils co-operate very well, working independently and in groups as the need arises, and affording each other mutual respect and support. The responses to the pupils' questionnaires showed that they are pleased with what the school does for them and the vast majority said that what they liked best were their teachers. The school's very caring ethos ensures that pupils with special educational needs feel safe, confident and valued, and fully included in all that the school has to offer.
9. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The school gives spiritual development high priority and this is reflected in its mission statement. Opportunities for prayer and reflection on their place in the world and their relationships with others are built into lessons and pupils show great respect for each other as they meditate quietly or contribute to class discussions. Lessons in personal, social and health education are closely linked to the pupils' work in religious education and they encourage reflective thought and an increased awareness of the feelings of others. Assemblies have a special atmosphere and make a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. The school and the church are mutually supportive and this is reflected in their close relationship and the strong links with the parish. The strong school ethos of respect and responsibility underpins the provision that helps pupils distinguish right from wrong and successfully enables them to make right choices. In a literacy lesson, for example, younger pupils, having heard one of the stories about the 'Rainbow Fish', discussed whether he had made the right decision in helping others and commented that the Rainbow Fish having to make choices was 'just like we have to do sometimes', showing considerable depth of thought. The school's very good approach to managing behaviour and supporting pupils means that there have been no exclusions since the new school was formed.
10. The school successfully ensures that pupils learn about other cultures and traditions. Its commitment to racial equality has been recognised by the local authority because of its effective contribution to an initiative to prepare pupils for a life in a culturally diverse British

society. There are few children within the local community who come from minority ethnic groups but the school makes the most of any personal contacts. For example, when parents from other countries come to study at a nearby college, they are invited into school to share their traditions. Pupils and teachers both acknowledge that when a representative from the Muslim faith spent time with every class, their knowledge and understanding of that faith were greatly enhanced. This aspect of the curriculum is also promoted effectively through subjects such as art and design, music, geography and history.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. There is a high proportion of very good and excellent teaching, based on a very well planned curriculum. The school provides very good levels of care, support and guidance for the pupils and has very good links with parents, the community and other schools and colleges.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and a high proportion of teaching is very good or excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very strong teamwork amongst the staff on the two sites results in high quality planning that meets the needs of all pupils.
- Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' work rate and behaviour. This results in high levels of productivity in most lessons.
- Teachers very skilfully adapt the way they teach to maximise learning for the pupils.
- Consistently good teaching in the Foundation Stage gives children a good start in their education.
- Assessment and record keeping are very thorough, with a very good focus on individual improvement.
- Most marking helps pupils to improve their work and they appreciate this greatly.
- Some highly inspirational teaching in Years 5 and 6 takes pupils' learning to new heights, personally and academically.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3 (9%)	9 (26%)	19 (56%)	3 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

- Further evidence of the headteacher's excellent leadership and management is seen in the very effective planning that takes place across the two sites. The astute deployment of staff, based on the very effective monitoring of teaching and learning, has successfully created strong teamwork amongst the staff. All teachers support each other very effectively, thereby ensuring that all pupils have the same very good learning opportunities based on their individual learning needs. Teachers' planning and its impact on pupils' learning are rigorously evaluated and support is put in place where teaching is found to be less than good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection and parents and pupils praise highly the quality of teaching in the school.
- Staff in the Foundation Stage on both sites have a good understanding of how children of this age learn. They plan a good range of interesting, motivating, practical activities that engage the children well and develop in them a love of learning by stimulating their curiosity and helping them to find things out for themselves. The teacher on the smaller site works very

hard to ensure that the Reception children have good access to all areas of learning and is particularly skilful in the way she includes them in whole-class sessions. The work these children do in group activity time is well planned. However, learning opportunities are sometimes lost when adults other than the teacher work with them, for example, as they explored the 'cave' set up in the role play area.

13. Teaching is good overall and examples of excellent teaching were observed in English, mathematics and personal, social, health and citizenship lessons, all with pupils in Years 5 and 6. There is a high proportion of very good teaching in this age group that considerably accelerates pupils' achievement. Some very good teaching was also observed with pupils in Year 2 and Year 4. English and mathematics teaching is very effective overall and teachers plan many very good opportunities for pupils to extend and consolidate their literacy skills in other subjects. Mathematical skills are satisfactorily promoted in other subjects. This aspect of the school's work has not yet had the same priority as the promotion of literacy or indeed ICT skills. In ICT, the quality of teaching observed during the inspection was consistently good and teachers plan very effectively to use ICT in teaching and learning in all subjects. Much of their planning, assessment and record keeping is word processed and stored electronically for ease of access and adaptability and this works very well.
14. Where teaching is exceptional, there is a magical quality in pupils' learning that very successfully promotes their academic and personal development. Such a magical moment was observed in a Year 5/6 literacy lesson where pupils' understanding of the language of poetry was very greatly enhanced through the very effective combination of music, pictures and the very imaginative use of a range of artefacts.

Example of outstanding practice

Pupils returned to class after break to find their tables had a range of pictures and a set of covered-up artefacts, which they were instructed not to uncover until they were told. They went to sit on the carpet. Pupils' attention was very quickly grabbed by the above and by the teacher's reading of a poem, the theme of which they had to guess (water). They were given a montage showing the different uses of water across the world and in pairs they drew up a list of adjectives to describe what they saw. They then listened to music accompanied by a range of pictures, displayed on the interactive whiteboard, while the teacher read aloud their adjectives, a deeply spiritual and deeply moving experience for them. They then walked round their tables looking at the pictures on them with the music still playing, and chose the one that meant most to them. Returning to the carpet, they had to think which adjectives might refer to their pictures, and consider a special place and what it meant to them. They were then directed to their tables and invited to uncover the artefacts, which were collections of a range of reminders about familiar uses of water, for example, at the beach, washing and bathing, raining, drinking, for flowers and plants. After a short discussion, pupils set to work quickly, some engaging in further discussion as, encouraged by the teacher, they compared the artefacts with some of the images they had seen of shortages of water around the world, others working very quietly on their own creating their poetry. A group of less able pupils created a group poem with the teacher. In the whole-class evaluation session, pupils explained clearly and confidently why they had taken a particular approach and suggested ways in which they and others might improve their work. Time limits were set for each activity, pupils were visibly moved by the experience, and the quality of their poetry was very good.

15. Teachers put a great deal of thought into which methods might best help pupils achieve to the best of their capability. Whole-class, group and individual work are all used to very good effect alongside a very strong emphasis on learning through practical activities and role play. These techniques add extra stimulus and spur pupils on to greater effort. Very little time is lost in the best lessons and most activities challenge pupils to think for themselves and take some responsibility for their own learning. Where teaching is only satisfactory, it is sometimes because the teacher intervenes too quickly, giving the pupils the answer instead of directing them to where to find it, as happened in a science lesson; or some pupils are not totally clear about their tasks, as happened in a mathematics lesson. The very effective deployment of staff and the joint planning minimises the impact that any weaknesses in teaching might have. In almost all sessions, the teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is very good and pupils

respond very quickly to even the smallest reminder if it appears they are going off task. This contributes in great measure to their learning and overall achievement.

16. Assessment procedures are thorough. Teachers analyse and record pupils' progress very well and they make very good use of the information gained from this in their planning. In most lessons, work is accurately targeted at three groups of pupils, lower, average and higher attainers. However, this overall planning is often broken down further as teachers recognise and respond to the needs of individual pupils in lessons, or as a result of what they have found when marking pupils' work. Most work is very effectively marked with comments that support what pupils have done well but also encourage them to do better by showing them how to improve. Pupils are expected to respond; they do and they appreciate this approach. For example, pupils in Year 6 explained clearly how their work is marked to their targets, and additional help is given when gaps in learning are found. They understand very clearly what they have to do to improve, and acknowledge that this makes them think harder and use their 'target time' well. They explained too how they are encouraged to go back and check what they have done at every stage to try to ensure that they always do their best. This approach very effectively supports learning for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, who receive additional support from well briefed and effectively deployed teaching assistants. Teachers make very good use of the individual education plans for these pupils, ensuring that their work helps them to learn as well as they can. A good amount of regular, well planned homework further consolidates learning for all pupils.

The curriculum

A very good, very well planned curriculum, enriched and enhanced by a very good range of activities outside of the normal school day, very effectively meets the needs, interests and aptitudes of all groups of pupils. Resources are good and the accommodation is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very wide range of well planned, interesting and practical learning activities very effectively meets pupils' individual learning needs.
- Imaginative links across the subjects make learning meaningful and enjoyable.
- A very good range of visits, visitors and clubs adds richness to pupils' learning.
- All resources are used very effectively to enhance learning.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and it very effectively ensures all pupils have equal access to all learning opportunities.
- There is no outdoor learning area for Reception-aged pupils at the smaller site, and space is very limited at the larger site.

Commentary

17. Very good teamwork by the staff from both sites, inspired by the excellent leadership of the headteacher, has resulted in a very good curriculum. Imaginative links between subjects make learning seamless and continuous, and equip all pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to achieve well. Themes are sometimes shared across year groups, for example, each class listened to *'The Flight of the Bumble Bee'* by Rimsky-Korsakov and then created an exciting variety of artwork. Pupils say they find their lessons very interesting and enjoyable, and this pleasure in learning contributes strongly to their good achievement. A wide range of visits includes a residential trip that gives pupils good opportunities to develop greater independence and maturity. Visitors to the school and specialist peripatetic staff successfully enrich pupils' experiences and skills in music and sport. After lessons, there is a good range of clubs, and the school participates in all the local leagues, galas, competitions and festivals. All subjects have an appropriate allocation of time each week. The requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study are fully met and the curriculum is extended to include French, which is taught by a visiting specialist during the lunch hour.

18. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils have well written individual education plans that are securely based on very detailed assessments of their learning and which have clear, measurable targets. Well briefed teaching assistants ensure that they are fully included in all activities and have the same very good opportunities to learn as all other pupils. Pupils who are particularly gifted or talented are involved in a variety of projects that develop their individual skills. The support assistants make a very strong contribution, and provide well-informed support for all pupils and particularly for those with special educational needs. Governors and staff place a very strong emphasis on ensuring that all pupils have the same opportunities to participate in all aspects of learning and personal development in and out of the normal school day. Personal and academic development, including sex and relationships and drugs education, is promoted very effectively and pupils are very well prepared for life beyond school. The school has a register of pupils it has found to be gifted and talented and a range of appropriate extension activities ensures that they reach the higher standards of which they are capable.
19. Learning resources are good overall, as is the match of teaching and non-teaching staff to the school's needs. Learning resources have been carefully audited to ensure parity of provision on both sites and are used well in lessons. A particular feature is the confident way all staff have introduced the interactive whiteboards as a very useful tool in the classroom to make learning more interesting. The two sites are clean and well maintained. Some of the classrooms at the larger site are rather cramped, and there is no spare space for groups or extra activities. There is plenty of space at the smaller site, but the size of the hall limits physical activities and the smaller site does not have an outdoor learning area for Reception children, thereby inhibiting their full curriculum entitlement. Which site the children attend is a matter of parental choice. This was laid down by the governors and the diocese at the time of the amalgamation. However, it does mean that the children miss out on some of the learning opportunities available to the Reception children on the other site. Accommodation and resources for pupils with physical disabilities are very good, ensuring that they too have full access to all that the school has to offer.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are very well cared for, guided and supported personally and academically throughout the school. The school actively and effectively involves pupils in all aspects of its work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This is a very caring school.
- There are very good systems to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- Pupils are very well supported personally and academically.
- The school listens carefully to pupils' views and includes them effectively in all of its work.

Commentary

20. Pupils' welfare has a very high priority in the school and the provision for child protection is very good. The pupils feel safe and secure in their new school. The parents particularly like the family atmosphere and the way that the school welcomes them, is always ready to listen to them and responds quickly when they have any concerns. Routines for dealing with all health and safety matters have already become well established and are very effective. The 'Healthy Schools' initiative is well underway and has proved to be influential on the pupils' lives. The pupils would now like to have a tuck shop for the sale of fruit in addition to the school's existing provision.
21. The staff know the pupils well. They give generously of their time to listen to pupils and they monitor pupils' personal development well. The school is very aware of the pupils' individual needs and provides very good support and guidance for them personally and academically. The newly appointed Family Learning Mentor is contributing well to the all-round support of

those most in need to remove the barriers to their learning. Very good use is made of assessment information to help pupils move forward. Because of the very good support and guidance pupils with special educational needs receive, they grow in confidence and self-esteem and become fully involved in all that the school has to offer. This benefits their learning, as does the school's very good links with external support agencies.

22. Induction procedures for pupils entering the school at whatever stage in their education are good, and pupils settle well. The development of a school council since the amalgamation has met with great approval from the pupils on both sites and provides another opportunity for them to work together as a unified school. This is the latest in a number of successful ways in which the school seeks pupils' views, shows that it values them, and actively tries to involve them in improving the school's provision for them.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have a very high regard for the school because they know they are a valued part of it.
- The school has developed a very good partnership with parents and provides them with very good information about its life and work.
- The school's very good links with the parish and the wider community contribute in great measure to the pupils' personal and academic development.
- The very good links with the nearby high school and other schools and colleges prepare pupils well for life after primary school.

Commentary

23. The parents who responded to the questionnaire, those who attended the meeting and those who were seen during the inspection all have very positive views of the school. They like how the staff, including the headteacher, make time for them and they are appreciative of how well their children are taught and the progress they make. They know that their views matter to the school and that the staff work hard to make sure that their children give of their best in all that they do. They particularly appreciate the way the headteacher has made herself available to parents on both sites and how effective she has been in creating one, unified school.
24. Parents receive very good quality information about the school and its activities. Curriculum evenings are held to keep parents informed of how their children are taught, and written information is sent out each term so that parents know what their children are likely to be learning. Parents' evenings are very well attended and parents are involved well in their children's learning at school and at home. Regular newsletters keep parents up to date with what is happening in the school and wherever possible parents also receive electronic communications via 'Parentmail', and the school's regularly updated website. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are very much involved in the reviews of their children's progress. They are very supportive of the school and cannot speak highly enough of the support their children receive.
25. Parents' views have been sought formally on the questions of uniform and the new school name. Parents are very appreciative of this and the school found it to be very helpful in paving the way for greater parental involvement at both sites. Other, less formal feedback from parents is continuous and it is taken very seriously. Because of the very close links with parents, concerns and complaints are all dealt with quickly and efficiently. Many parents volunteer their help in school and with activities and visits. They are also very supportive with fundraising for the benefit of the school and many participate in the variety of educational courses offered to parents.

26. There are very good links with the adjacent Catholic High School and the transition arrangements to that school work very well. There are established links with another local high school, with local colleges of further education and with other primary schools. The school receives students on teacher training and work placements from schools and colleges.
27. Links with the local community are very good. The school is involved in a variety of local events and there are many visitors to the school. There are business links with three local firms which have supported the school with equipment and with food for celebrations. The school contributed to the town's Tsunami appeal for fishing boats, one of which has now been named after it. There are close links with both churches, which are situated adjacent to each site, and both priests serve on the governing body. Parishioners are invited to join in meditation, and families attend class masses and Holy Days in church. All of this contributes to the ethos of the school and to the pupils' overall personal and academic development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. Within this, the headteacher's leadership is excellent; the leadership of key staff is very good; governance is good and management is very effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent leadership by the headteacher, including the very astute management of the deployment of staff, has resulted in very effective teamwork being very quickly established across both sites.
- The rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning keep all staff very firmly focused on improving pupils' achievement and raising standards.
- A very strong senior management team provides very strong support for the headteacher in realising the aims of the school.
- Governors share, support and monitor the school's work effectively, ensuring best value and providing good levels of challenge to the headteacher and senior managers.
- Self-evaluation procedures are thorough; the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are very perceptive and the information is used very effectively to improve the overall quality of education for the pupils.

Commentary

28. The headteacher's excellent leadership is epitomised in her clarity of vision and the way in which she has taken all staff and governors with her, united the two schools into one in a very short space of time, and focused all minds on improving standards and pupils' overall achievement. Widely influential beyond the school, she has worked as an associate headteacher at several other schools, latterly at one of the now amalgamated schools, successfully helping to bring it out of special measures. Prior to the formal amalgamation, she used the time very effectively to prepare both schools for it, bringing together staff and pupils and making very clear her own and the governors' expectations.
29. The governors and the senior management team give very good support to the headteacher. They share her vision and have helped to establish continuity in teaching and learning across both sites. Subject leadership and management are overall very good. The consistency in the co-ordinators' approach to evaluating what needs to be done to improve their subjects is typical of the very strong teamwork amongst the staff. The high levels of support they provide for each other were very evident in a joint discussion during the inspection in which they each contributed very effectively to the evidence for all subjects. Their very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in each subject contributes in great measure to ensuring continuity in learning for pupils in all age groups at whichever site they are being taught. The astute deployment of staff has benefited all teachers, enabling the school to provide additional support and guidance to tackle any weaknesses and at the same time, spreading good

practice throughout the school. The very effective use of ICT in all of the school's work ensures that staff on both sites have ready access to each other via email at all times. This also gives them access to each other's planning, which is stored electronically for ease of evaluation and adaptation, to ensure that they are always on the right lines with what they are doing.

30. Governors have worked very hard and have ensured that all statutory requirements are met in this newly amalgamated school. They are highly involved in the school and very committed to ensuring it does well for the pupils. There is a good mix of governors from the original two schools and some new governors, all of whom have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Staff and governors are rightly concerned about the equality of provision for Reception children at the smaller site. They are trying to find ways to resolve this without going back on the governors' and the diocese's decision to allow parental choice by keeping all age groups on both sites to ensure provision for both parishes. Governors understand their role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and they carry it out well.
31. Management systems are very good. The school is constantly evaluating how well it is doing and is very quick to tackle any weaknesses found. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are very perceptive. The headteacher and senior staff doing the monitoring provide teachers with written feedback that praises what they have done well and identifies areas in which they need to improve, and what is expected of them to ensure that improvement. The issues are followed up and they, along with weaknesses in pupils' learning and priorities identified in the school improvement plan, inform the teachers' performance management targets. The school improvement plan provides a very secure basis for future development, with actions clearly prioritised and progress towards the stated objectives very rigorously monitored. Very good induction procedures, highly praised by the teachers concerned, help newly qualified teachers settle quickly into school life and become good teachers.
32. The leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are very good. The funding available to the school is considerably enhanced from the school's own budget to provide as much learning support as possible for the pupils. The headteacher, special educational needs co-ordinator and the governor with responsibility for special educational needs meet regularly to monitor and improve provision. Their decision to put only the pupils most in need on the register for special educational needs makes the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties lower than is actually the case in school. However, it allows the school to target its support where it is most needed, as well as providing additional support in class to help a much wider group of pupils achieve as well as they can.
33. Budget monitoring is very secure and governors are keenly aware of future budget issues, the issues the school will have to face as a result of them, and the likelihood that they will have to make some hard decisions when the time comes. All options facing the school are discussed and debated fully to ensure the school gains best value from its spending. There are no end-of-year financial statements yet for the school. However, financial statements so far, alongside the very good overall quality of provision and the pupils' good achievement in a very short time, all indicate that this school is currently providing very good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children in the Foundation Stage are taught on a part-time basis in the Nursery and in a Reception class on the larger site. A very small number of children are taught in a mixed-age class with pupils in Years 1 and 2 on the smaller site. Most children start school with levels of attainment well below those expected for their age particularly in personal, social and emotional development, and communication, language and literacy. Teaching is consistently good and as a result the children achieve well in all six areas of learning. However, few children are on course to reach the goals expected by the end of the Reception Year except in personal, social and emotional development. Children with special educational needs are very well supported in all activities so they too achieve well.

Good induction procedures and information to parents mean that the children settle quickly into school routines. Very good leadership and management by the Foundation Stage co-ordinator ensure that staff work very closely as a team, forming very good relationships with the children and providing a safe, secure and caring learning environment. Staff have a good understanding of how young children learn; curricular planning is very good and a wide range of practical activities effectively links all areas of learning. However, the very small number of Reception children on the smaller site do not have access to all of this curriculum and this has a negative impact on their overall achievement. The teacher concerned works very hard to minimise this and overall, work is very well matched to all children's needs. Very good assessment procedures ensure that their progress is clearly tracked and carefully recorded and parents are kept well informed about how they are doing. Accommodation and resources are very good on the larger site and are used well to support learning. Nursery and Reception children mix happily together in the outdoor Nursery area, but again the very small number of Reception children on the smaller site miss out on such activities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and children achieve well, developing confidence and independence.
- Children have very good attitudes to their learning and they work and play very happily together.
- Very good relationships ensure that all children feel safe, secure and valued.

Commentary

34. Children are happy to come to school and the friendly, welcoming atmosphere created by all staff ensures that they settle quickly into school routines. Their behaviour is very good and Nursery and Reception children work and play very well together. They form very good relationships with staff and with each other and they behave very well. However, opportunities for the very small number of children on the smaller site to interact with children of their own age are very limited and this has a negative impact on their personal development. In all areas of learning, the children successfully improve their personal skills as they learn to take turns, handle equipment with care and help tidy up after activities. They take on small responsibilities within the classroom, organise themselves well as they change for physical activities and work well independently of adults during 'choice' activities. The children show very good attitudes in lessons by listening attentively and concentrating well on tasks. This, together with adults' good use of praise to boost children's confidence and self-esteem, has a positive impact on their learning. Visitors to the school further enrich the children's learning

and personal experiences by talking about their everyday work and how they help others. The majority are on course to reach the expected goals by the end of their Reception Year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well.
- Speaking and listening skills are effectively promoted in all areas of learning.
- Some activities need more structured adult intervention to develop the children's language skills further.

Commentary

35. When children start school, their vocabulary is very limited and many lack confidence when speaking to adults or in groups. They quickly grow in confidence as they eagerly participate in the role play situations and talk about their work and personal experiences. Good emphasis is placed on developing the children's speaking and listening skills through a wide range of well planned activities across all areas of learning. However, opportunities are sometimes missed because not all adults interact well enough with the children during structured play activities to extend their imaginative and spoken language skills. The teachers' expressive reading and good use of pictures and text are developing a real love of stories in Nursery and Reception and children show a secure understanding of the main points of what is read to them. Labels are used well to familiarise children with print and each room has a well equipped writing area where all children are encouraged to make marks and write. Reception children have a satisfactory knowledge of some letter sounds and key words, mainly as a result of the recent emphasis on developing phonic skills. More able children try to incorporate their knowledge and understanding into their writing activities as they record their personal 'news' and topic work. However, for the majority of children, writing and handwriting skills are still at an early stage of development. Teaching is good and well briefed teaching assistants give very good support to different groups of children, especially those with special educational needs. As a result, all children make good progress and achieve well. However, the majority of children are unlikely to reach the early learning goals.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and as a result, children achieve well.
- Work is well matched to the children's needs.
- Children enjoy learning through the practical activities provided for them and resources are good.

Commentary

36. Good teaching and a wide range of practical activities, such as counting and sorting objects, sand and water play and shape work contribute effectively to the children's mathematical development. Most Reception children can order, count and record numbers reliably to 5, with the more able pupils working to 10 and beyond. They use this sound understanding of number to solve simple money problems during practical shopping activities. Number rhymes and counting during registration and at snack time effectively reinforce learning, as do the mathematical games the children play on the computer. Mathematical language is effectively developed as children in the Nursery count and weigh out ingredients when making dinosaur

biscuits, while Reception children compare objects of different sizes and make symmetrical patterns from common two-dimensional shapes. Work in the children's books shows that activities are very well matched to the children's individual needs. However, few children are on course to reach the goals expected at the end of their Reception Year.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and as a result, children achieve well.
- A varied range of practical activities effectively stimulates the children's curiosity.
- Resources are used well to support learning.
- Opportunities are missed to develop children's writing skills.

Commentary

37. A good range of well planned practical activities effectively widens the children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Children learn about their immediate environment as they go on sensory walks and look at local building developments nearby. Through their simple experiments, Reception children successfully learn about the conditions needed to make plants grow and some accurately name the main parts of a flower. In both the Nursery and Reception class the good use of books and resources effectively develops the children's understanding of living and extinct animals. Nursery children thoroughly enjoy learning about times past as they recreate their own 'dinosaur world', while Reception children learn about jungle animals through interesting creative activities. However, opportunities are missed within these activities to develop the children's writing skills. Most children enjoy working on the computer and show appropriate mouse control when making a picture of a crocodile. However, few children are on course to reach the nationally expected goals by the end of their Reception Year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although the quality of teaching is good overall, the children's achievement is only satisfactory because Reception children have only limited access to the outdoor learning area.
- A good range of well planned activities effectively promotes this area of learning effectively in the Nursery.

Commentary

38. Children enjoy the many opportunities provided for them to develop fine manipulative skills by using pencils, paintbrushes, scissors, glue and small construction kits. However, for the majority of children these skills are still underdeveloped for their age. The outdoor area to the Nursery is very well resourced. It is used effectively on a daily basis to promote continuous learning and to allow freedom of movement. The good access to large climbing and balancing equipment and wheeled toys helps Nursery children to develop satisfactory control and co-ordination. However, the Reception children at the larger site have only limited access to this area while those at the smaller site have none. This limits their overall achievement. They show an appropriate awareness of space during music and movement activities, but few are on course to reach the early learning goals in this area of learning.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, children enjoy creative activities and achieve well.
- The good range of practical activities is effectively linked to other areas of learning.
- Some activities need more structured adult intervention.

Commentary

39. All children enjoy the good opportunities to draw, paint and make pictures and models from a variety of media. Work is often linked well to other areas of learning. For example, Nursery children make fossils with modelling dough and paint a large collaborative picture of a dinosaur, while Reception children make observational drawings and collage masks of jungle animals. Children enjoy the dressing up and role play activities connected with their topics. However, the lack of structured adult intervention in these activities limits their usefulness in developing the children's imaginative and spoken language. Nursery children are beginning to explore the sounds made by different musical instruments and all children join enthusiastically in singing rhymes. However, few children are on course to reach the goals expected nationally for the end of the Reception Year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English was inspected in full. French was sampled by a short visit to one session and a discussion, in French, with some Year 6 pupils.

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are achieving well because they are highly motivated by the overall very good and occasionally excellent teaching they receive.
- Most teachers plan a whole range of very exciting and highly motivating learning opportunities, often very effectively linked to other subjects.
- Marking and overall assessment procedures are very thorough and constructive and result in pupils' learning almost always being at the right level of challenge for them.
- Every opportunity is taken to promote literacy skills in other subjects and to use ICT to draft, edit and present work well.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

Commentary

40. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve equally well. Standards are at the national expectation in Year 2 and Year 6 in reading, writing, speaking and listening, although writing remains the weakest element of English. The very good focus on learning to speak slowly and clearly using appropriate vocabulary pervades all of the school's work. As a result, pupils begin to articulate their thoughts and listen carefully to others by Year 2, and by Year 6, they do so well. When talking to them, the pupils confidently expressed their ideas and opinions and showed a sense of humour and good ability to converse with adults and relate to what others were saying.
41. Pupils throughout the school enjoy reading and by Year 6 they know an appropriate range of authors and talk knowledgeably about what they like and do not like. Teachers skilfully question pupils and build on their responses, successfully encouraging them to think behind

the written word. Pupils in Year 2 become excited by what they read and the majority read with good levels of expression, depicting different characters in the story. Pupils read fluently and expressively in Year 6 but their reading experiences vary. Some state clearly that they do not like reading. However, their reading journals, which act as a good aide-mémoire for them, focus well on, for example, story mapping, sequence and structure and encourage pupils to give reasons for their likes and dislikes. This also helps their writing. They read a reasonable range of books but there is not much evidence of their reading outside of school. This is something the school continues to encourage strongly, for example, in its response to the pupils' requests for more books in the library. The electronic borrowing system in the well-stocked library enables the school to track pupils' borrowing habits. The library is also used effectively as a resource for learning and pupils have a good understanding of how to use it.

42. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of how to set about reading unfamiliar words. This is because they are introduced very effectively to letter sounds and their combinations through very interactive, whole-class sessions that are then followed through in their writing activities. This was exemplified in a very good session where pupils in Years 1 and 2 were wholly engaged in a practical exercise that very successfully taught them to recognise how vowel sounds might change depending on the position of the consonants. Forming a human 'bridge' very effectively consolidated this learning and pupils explained what they were doing in terms such as 'digraphs' and 'split digraphs' which they clearly understood very well. The very carefully selected words ensured that all pupils participated fully, whatever their age or level of capability. This good work continues throughout the school and even where spelling remains weak, as in the work of lower-attaining pupils in Year 6, it is usually recognisable from the letter sounds used.
43. Handwriting is neat, legible and joined by Year 2 and pupils throughout the school generally present their work well. The work given to individual pupils is very clearly matched to their individual learning needs. Virtually all pupils in Year 2 write in complete sentences, with higher-attaining pupils using the full range of punctuation and demonstrating good levels of spelling. Average and lower attainers do similar work but with a clear focus on their learning targets, for example, improving spelling or using capital letters and full stops properly. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 use an appropriate range of grammatical conventions accurately in their work. Their writing is beginning to grab the reader's attention, but not consistently so, although they become more adventurous in their use of descriptive language. The reader is often halted by their use of short, clipped sentences, though very good progress in writing is evident since the start of the year. However, lower-attaining pupils still struggle to use punctuation consistently in their work. The judicious use of writing frames has helped lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs to improve the structure of their writing increasingly well since last September. The wide range of writing styles and conventions to which pupils are exposed is successfully helping them to overcome some of the weaknesses still evident in their work.
44. Assessment procedures are very good. The outcomes of all tests and assessments are rigorously analysed and used to inform planning, targets for individual pupils and where appropriate, teachers' own performance management targets. This very good practice extends to teachers' marking, which is very effective. It focuses on the pupils' targets, attempting to get them to check and re-check their work, and providing additional examples to consolidate their learning. This very successfully ensures that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work and reach their targets. A group of Year 6 pupils explained this very clearly when they talked about how they assess their own progress using their target books to indicate how well they think they have done. All pupils know what they need to do to improve their work and reach their targets. Even where comments are few, it is clear that pupils' work is fully discussed with them. A good range of homework successfully consolidates and extends pupils' learning and pupils take pride in doing it well.
45. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are rigorous and thorough. Gaps in learning are identified and inform the action plan for the subject. The co-ordinator has led a great deal of joint planning prior to and since the formal amalgamation and resources were audited to ensure parity across both

sites. A whole range of strategies was put into place to share good practice, including moving staff between the two sites, effective team-building through meetings to agree levels and assessment procedures, and providing opportunities for pupils from the two sites to mix with their own age groups, and these have all had a high impact on pupils' progress. The analysis of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and inspection of teachers' planning and very well kept records provide very good evidence of the school's very good attention to equality of opportunity for all pupils. Through the careful choice of texts and very well-led discussions, English makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

46. Every opportunity is taken to consolidate and extend pupils' literacy skills in and through other subjects. For example, in one lesson, pupils were very effectively encouraged to use their artistic skills to predict what was likely to happen next in the story they were reading. Pupils are very successfully encouraged to read widely in different subjects and to summarise their findings in their own words. They are clearly highly motivated by these activities, readily giving many examples of what they have done in almost all subjects. Speaking and listening skills are very effectively developed in all subjects through discussion and questioning, areas in which teachers very skilfully involve all pupils, whatever their level of capability. Pupils turn naturally to ICT as a way of extending or consolidating their English work, using computers and the Internet to find information about authors and different topics, and to draft and edit their work and present it in different ways.

Modern foreign languages - French

47. In the sampled session, pupils made good progress in their understanding of oral French. The specialist teacher uses French very well, forcing pupils to think and answer in that language. A range of imaginative ways of learning, using and consolidating new vocabulary contributed in great measure to the pupils' learning. Pupils have a basic understanding of how to converse socially in French, readily responding to the inspectors' questions about how they were and about different places, foods and their likes and dislikes. Their learning is about to be extended into written use of the language as they eagerly await responses to their requests for French pen friends. The teacher's good management of the class and the fast pace of the session minimised the tendency shown by some pupils to giggle in embarrassment as they tried to pronounce new words.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good overall and pupils are achieving well.
- The pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour ensure that they benefit from all their lessons.
- The very good mathematics curriculum, which includes the very well planned use of ICT, enables pupils to learn through a very wide range of practical and meaningful activities.
- Teachers make very good use of assessment information to plan work and set targets for their pupils. They mark pupils' work well, but do not remind them consistently about their targets.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Opportunities for pupils to use and extend their mathematical skills in other subjects are satisfactory.

Commentary

48. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are working at the nationally expected standards for their age. This represents good achievement since the school was amalgamated at the start of this school year. Very good teaching ensures pupils enjoy a variety of interesting and practical

activities in mathematics lessons. Consequently, they behave very well and are eager to learn. They listen, concentrate and persevere very well, co-operate and support each other, willingly sharing equipment and materials. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all activities, and good support enables them to achieve well.

49. The overall quality of teaching is very good, with inspiring teaching by the subject co-ordinator. Mostly very knowledgeable teaching places a strong emphasis on learning through meaningful and practical activities. This motivates pupils' enthusiasm and interest, ensuring that they are fully involved in their work, develop good problem-solving skills and consolidate their mathematical knowledge and understanding well. They are expected to use the correct mathematical vocabulary, and by Year 6 talk confidently about calculating, finding formulas and comparing obtuse and acute angles. Other strong features of the very good planning is the way in which work is very well matched to the pupils' different levels of capability. This is because it is based on the teachers' very good use of assessment information and their rigorous monitoring of the progress of individual pupils. In addition, teachers set personal targets for each pupil and they mark their work well. However, they do not always refer to or remind pupils to refer to their targets to help them improve further. Most lessons move along at a good pace and result in high productivity on the part of the pupils. In the occasional lesson where the pace is slower, pupils spend too long on some activities and this adversely affects their rate of learning. Very high quality teaching was observed in an excellent lesson with pupils in Years 5 and 6. Here, very challenging activities, very effectively adapted to the needs of different groups of pupils required pupils to link their literacy and mathematical skills to solve a range of problems set in mathematical 'poetry'. The lively, engaging teaching seen across Years 5 and 6 ensures that the level of challenge is constantly raised and keeps pupils alert and very eager to learn.
50. The subject co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management. She uses her own very extensive knowledge of mathematics to provide strong support for all colleagues, and has established very effective teamwork across both sites. Her inspiring teaching is a very good role model for others and her monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are rigorous and thorough. A very clear vision to raise standards and improve provision is shown in the forward-looking mathematics action plan. There is a strong emphasis on continuous professional development for all staff in order to improve their skills and knowledge further. All resources are used very effectively to help pupils learn. Very well deployed classroom assistants provide high levels of well-informed support and make a strong contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those with special educational needs. The staff have worked hard to master the use of the interactive whiteboards, which have quickly become a valuable teaching and learning tool. Pupils use ICT very confidently in mathematics because of the good example set by the staff.

Mathematics across the curriculum

51. Links with other subjects are satisfactory overall and developing them further is rightly an area for development in the action plan. Pupils draw up time lines in history. In geography, they produce Venn diagrams and graphs when comparing the effectiveness of local traffic-calming measures. Charts and graphs are also used to record results in science. In an innovative way of using their reading skills, Year 6 pupils used poems featuring number problems as a warm-up calculation activity.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' investigative skills and this helps their learning.
- The quality of teaching is good and assessment information is used very effectively in planning.
- Information and communication technology is used well to support work in science.
- Leadership and management of the subject are effective.
- The two-year curriculum cycle takes good account of mixed-age classes.

Commentary

52. Pupils throughout the school are achieving well in science and standards match the national expectation in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils respond very well to the high expectations teachers have of their work rate and behaviour and thoroughly enjoy the good range of investigative activities planned for them. In most lessons, lower-attaining pupils are given specific aids, such as writing frames, to help them record their work, while higher-attaining pupils are expected to do more work independently or are set further tasks that are more challenging. The school plans very effectively to meet the needs of all pupils in the mixed-age classes on both sites. Topics are studied on a two-year cycle so that there is no unnecessary repetition but equally important, so that nothing essential is left out. Teachers in parallel classes plan work very well together, ensuring that all pupils have the same learning experiences and the same chance to achieve their best. A strong feature of teaching is the very good use of ICT to support learning. For example, teachers use the interactive whiteboards very effectively to explain and demonstrate scientific concepts, and a digital camera to record work in progress so that it can be more effectively evaluated. Much of the teachers' planning is word processed and stored electronically for ease of access and adaptability. Lessons are planned in detail and teachers then annotate these to meet the needs of their own class. Some commercial materials, including worksheets and recording sheets, are used selectively to support work in science.
53. The strong emphasis on promoting scientific enquiry skills through practical work and investigations is improving achievement across the school. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were very much involved in a longer unit of work to plant seeds and observe how they grow and develop. Most pupils correctly identified the different parts of a plant and labelled their drawings accurately. Older pupils in Years 5 and 6 considerably extended their knowledge and understanding of conductors and insulators as they investigated how to set up and control electrical circuits to make sure they worked properly. Very good use is made of the material available on an interactive compact disc to develop this understanding and to ensure that pupils are aware of the potential dangers and hazards associated with this type of work.
54. Subject leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator's personal knowledge and expertise are put to effective use to provide support and guidance for the rest of the staff. Recent priorities have been to improve standards in literacy and numeracy, and teachers promote these skills well in science. The co-ordinator has not yet had an opportunity to monitor teaching and learning first hand in the classroom. However, he has undertaken an analysis of teachers' planning and scrutinised pupils' work and used the information effectively to construct a well thought out action plan aimed at improving standards and raising achievement. Assessment has been a primary focus for the whole school and very good progress has been made in science. Teachers use ongoing assessment very effectively in class, checking pupils' understanding with good oral questions and marking their written work regularly. Their comments on pupils' work recognise how well pupils have done and suggest ways things could be improved or extended. The outcomes of marking and the information gained from the thorough analysis of prior tests and assessments are used very effectively in planning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well and standards are above the national expectation in Year 6.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- The quality of teaching is good and assessment information is used very effectively in planning.
- ICT is used as a natural tool for learning by teachers and pupils.

Commentary

55. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in this subject. They use ICT confidently and competently and turn to it as a natural tool for learning in almost all subjects. Pupils in Year 2 save, retrieve and print their work unaided, their keyboard skills are developing well and they use the mouse competently to drag and drop text and icons on the screen. They understand how a search engine works and with adult help, use one confidently. Independently, they word process their writing using a word bank for reference and label diagrams correctly, accessing and using a spelling program and changing the level of challenge as they proceed. Pupils also record their own voices, read and listen to stories, and access and use a spelling program independently, changing the levels of difficulty as required. The very well planned curriculum ensures that these skills are built on systematically in Years 3 to 6. By Year 6, pupils use computers confidently, their skills are well developed and they turn to ICT readily as an aid to their learning. They have a good understanding of how to plan and produce a multi-media presentation, program a turtle robot using a set of commands, use a spreadsheet to manage a budget and design a poster using text and graphics.
56. Teaching and learning are good overall, with some very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Pupils respond very well to the high expectations teachers have of their work rate and behaviour because they are highly motivated by the enjoyable experiences planned for them. Teachers use ICT confidently as a tool for teaching and learning and pupils are enthusiastic participants. In most lessons, all pupils begin work on a core task and individual needs are effectively met by varying the amount of help and support individual pupils are given. Higher-attaining pupils are further challenged by additional independent tasks that require them to build on the skills they already have.
57. Teaching assistants have benefited from specific training that has increased their confidence and enabled them to contribute effectively to pupils' progress. One teaching assistant focuses specifically on ICT and also organises the ICT club for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Priority is given to those who do not have a computer at home, successfully ensuring that all pupils have the same opportunities to succeed in class or to use ICT to assist their homework. The skills to be taught in each block of work are clearly identified along with the expected outcome and the planned program of work operates on a two-year cycle, thus taking good account of mixed-age classes. Teachers in parallel classes plan together, helping to ensure that all pupils on both sites have the same learning experiences and the same opportunity to succeed. The quality and use of ongoing assessment are very good. Teachers use their good questioning skills effectively to check pupils' levels of understanding and pick up further teaching points. A new assessment system is being introduced throughout the school and this includes a portfolio of work that has been levelled to national expectations to provide even greater guidance for teachers.
58. The leadership and management of ICT are very good. The two co-ordinators closely monitor teachers' planning to ensure that all strands are adequately covered. They have thoroughly audited provision and resources. The well-considered, analytical approach to improving facilities and access to ICT has resulted in considerable investment in hardware and software. Each site has an ICT suite and both are very well managed, very well maintained and very well used. Sessions are timetabled for each class and computers are made ready for immediate use, thus avoiding any time slippage at the start of lessons. There are informative

displays on the walls, for instance, the rules for on-line safety, and many examples of pupils' work. The well-constructed action plan sets a clear direction for ICT developments and the needs of the new school are very well met.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

59. The school is very successfully meeting its target to embed ICT in the curriculum. Key skills are developed and practised very effectively through this integrated approach and it is having a positive impact on teaching and learning in all subjects. Pupils are given many worthwhile opportunities to use and apply their ICT skills and to extend their capabilities through practical applications and 'real life' experiences. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 used a recently installed program to find out about life in Paris, while pupils in Years 5 and 6 studied persuasive language in extracts from the BBC children's website. Pupils in this age group also used ICT effectively to test their knowledge and understanding in mathematics, for example, when they are working with fractions, decimals and percentages.

HUMANITIES

History was inspected in full and geography was sampled in this inspection. Two history lessons and one geography lesson were observed and further evidence obtained from analysing teachers' planning and records and pupils' work and talking to teachers and pupils.

Geography

60. Standards in geography match those expected nationally for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 and achievement is good. All aspects of the subject are fully covered. Pupils in Year 2 have a secure understanding of the physical features and work and leisure activities in the local environment and enjoy the interesting investigative activities when studying weather conditions. Pupils in Year 6 have a secure understanding of the water cycle and their good knowledge of river systems helps them understand environmental changes. In the one lesson observed, teaching was very good. Pupils were highly motivated by the very well planned practical activities and very good range of secondary sources to develop their reasoning skills as they prepared arguments for and against road traffic-calming measures outside school. This also developed their awareness of citizenship and fostered collaborative learning very effectively as they discussed ideas together, shared their knowledge and understanding of the issues and took responsibility for organising their findings. The very good use of time resulted in very good pace and productivity in learning. Throughout the school pupils use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well when researching and recording information. Leadership and management are good and the co-ordinator has a clear overview of provision in the subject. Although there are currently no formal assessment systems in place, teachers do regularly check pupils' progress and learning against the expectations of the National Curriculum. Setting up such systems is a priority in the subject action plan.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and therefore pupils have very good attitudes to their work and they achieve well.
- Resources are good and the local environment is used effectively to enrich and enhance pupils' learning.
- Literacy, numeracy and ICT are promoted well through history.
- Assessment procedures, though satisfactory, are not yet fully formalised across the school.
- Teachers' written marking does not always inform pupils of how to improve their work.
- The subject makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

61. Standards match the national expectation in Year 2 and Year 6 and the quality of teaching and learning was good in the two lessons observed during the inspection. In Year 6 the pupils' obvious enthusiasm for the subject, together with a scrutiny of teachers' planning and work in pupils' books, indicates that teaching is good throughout the school.
62. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan an appropriate range of topics that develops in pupils a secure understanding of the differences between life in the past and in the present. Timelines are used effectively to develop pupils' understanding of the passage of time as, for example, pupils in Year 2 record their own life history and accurately sequence events during the Great Fire of London. By Year 6, pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of different periods of history. They speak enthusiastically and knowledgeably about their work. The good opportunities for practical research and investigative work lead to their obvious enjoyment of the subject. Throughout the school pupils record their findings in a variety of interesting ways, using their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well to support their learning. Although the quality of presentation is inconsistent across the school, pupils in Year 6 take an obvious pride in their work and presentation is good. Pupils' work is regularly marked but written comments do not always show pupils how to improve their work. Resources are good and they are used well to support learning, for example, when identifying the differences and similarities between old and new toys in Years 1 and 2. The use of the local environment and visits to the Fleetwood Museum effectively enrich the curriculum, link well to work in geography and make learning more relevant to pupils' own experiences. Overall, the subject makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
63. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, gives good support to colleagues and has worked hard on improving resources to support learning. She has a good understanding of the school's priorities and her good action planning rightly identifies the need to further develop assessment procedures and increase the number of visits and visitors to the school to further enrich the curriculum.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design was inspected in full. Music and design and technology were sampled in this inspection. No lessons were observed in these two subjects and therefore no judgements are made about provision. Two physical education lessons were observed, both with pupils in Years 1 and 2, and a lesson with pupils in Years 5 and 6 was sampled. Therefore no overall judgements are made about teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6.

Design and technology

64. An analysis of the work in pupils' design and technology books and of curriculum plans shows that pupils experience full coverage of all aspects of this subject. Younger pupils have built vehicles, and used the correct terms for the moving parts. However, few evaluations of the finished product were seen in the older pupils' books. There is an appropriate scheme of work

that supports teachers' planning and pupils design and make three different products each year.

Music

65. A good range of well planned activities based on a commercial scheme ensure that the music curriculum is fully covered. Music has an appropriate allocation of time and pupils' learning is enhanced by the contribution of a music specialist who was appointed by the school to enhance pupils' performance skills. She has worked mostly on singing and is proud of the choir, which sings in 3 and 4 parts. Pupils' responses to music are recorded effectively through drawings, graphic scores and writing. Their musical learning is further enhanced by peripatetic instrumental tuition and pupils confidently perform in assemblies.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good. This, and the pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour help them achieve well.
- Pupils meet a very exciting range of art and design opportunities.

Commentary

66. Pupils show very good attitudes to art and design, behave very well in lessons, and approach creative activities with great enthusiasm. Standards are as expected nationally for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well and express their ideas freely, selecting, using and mixing the full range of media and materials. Innovative activities stimulate pupils' imagination very effectively as they undertake works of art based on that of great artists, such as Monet, or use their imagination freely in response to music such as 'The Flight of the Bumblebee' by Rimsky-Korsakov. Art themes are often carried throughout the school presenting pupils with examples of how they might improve their work, and giving teachers and the co-ordinator the opportunity to evaluate progression in artistic learning. For example, pupils of all ages produced paintings, models and collages based on the style of Monet. They then studied and compared the varied ways in which each class responded. Younger pupils draw natural objects gathered from the nearby beach and select appropriate paint colours, but their brush strokes are sometimes clumsy and heavy and opportunities are missed to develop these skills more effectively. Older pupils mix colours well to produce subtle shades, and use all media confidently, including clay and fabric and real flowers to create imaginative displays in response to 'The Sunflowers' by Vincent Van Gogh.
67. Good, knowledgeable teaching and an exciting range of very well planned activities that challenge and stimulate provide pupils with good opportunities to investigate all materials and media. Clear explanations ensure that in most lessons, pupils learn the skills they need to express their creative ideas. Resources are used very well, including the interactive whiteboards and the Internet for research. Good displays celebrate pupils' work, reward their efforts and add colour and vibrancy to both buildings. Participation in local and national art projects enriches pupils' experiences. Work to mark 'The Year of the Sea' contributed very effectively to their knowledge of their local heritage. Younger pupils designed delicate textile banners for the quiet area, and older pupils helped decide where to site them, a good opportunity for the pupils to contribute to the life of the school through their artistic ideas.
68. Good leadership and management have contributed well to the development of the subject by enriching and broadening pupils' creative experiences. Pupils' work is regularly marked and comments help them understand how to improve it. However, formal assessment systems are not yet fully in place, though setting them up is a priority in the subject action plan. Art and design makes a very good contribution to other subjects and to pupils' personal, spiritual,

moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are very comfortable expressing their thoughts and feelings through art as they respond to music and provide illustrations for, or study works of art in literacy, history, geography and religious education.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and pupils achieve well in that age group.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to participate in a wide range of sporting activities outside of the normal school day.

Commentary

69. Standards are as expected for pupils' ages in Year 2 but no judgements are made about standards in Year 6 because the subject was only sampled in that age group. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 responded well to instructions and successfully improved their throwing and catching skills during one of the lessons. In both lessons, they moved sensibly around the available space, taking care not to bump into each other as they hopped, skipped and jumped. In the sampled Year 6 lesson, pupils used a digital camera to record and evaluate their hockey skills. They worked hard to improve their skills, following the good demonstrations by the teacher, and the teacher's good use of them to demonstrate the correct way to push and stop a hockey ball as they dribbled around cones. All pupils observed were keen to participate in all activities and to watch and learn from each other. Almost all pupils are able to swim the required 25 metres before they leave the school.
70. Improvements and additions to the outdoor space have enhanced the facilities for sports and play but indoor space is limited. The school is currently evaluating the role of physical education in the curriculum and aims to increase the time available for the subject. The planned teaching programme follows a widely used local authority scheme of work that covers all of the strands of the National Curriculum and ensures that pupils' learning is continuous and progressive throughout the school. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and very good opportunities for pupils to participate in a wide range of sporting activities. The school competes in all of the local sporting events and is well supported by parents who are proud of pupils' achievements in sport. The school is a partner in the Fleetwood Community Sporting Partnership and through this pupils have benefited from expert coaching in sports such as tennis, Kwik-Cricket, tag rugby and soccer.
71. No judgements are made about leadership and management because the co-ordinator is new to the role and has not yet had the opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning throughout the school. Assessment procedures, based on the scheme of work, are satisfactory and the action plan for the subject has established appropriate priorities for further development of it.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHCE)

Provision in PSHCE is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every opportunity is taken to promote this aspect of learning throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching is very good and occasionally excellent.

- The strong emphasis given to this aspect of learning prepares pupils very effectively for life beyond school.

Commentary

72. Designated lessons, assemblies and class worship are used very effectively to give pupils time to reflect on a wide range of issues that are personal to them and which very successfully develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Opportunities are readily seized in other lessons to reinforce this aspect of their learning. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed considerable depth of thought as, in one class, they considered issues such as the impact on people's lives of whether they had access or not to sufficient, clean water; and in all three classes in this age group, they explored the emotive use of language in poetry and its impact on the reader and audience.
73. The programme for PSHCE is well led and managed and very well planned to develop depth of thought and help pupils to make informed choices. The teachers' careful questioning allows pupils to express their thoughts freely as, for example, they explore issues such as vandalism, litter and crime and the effect they have on society. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed high levels of maturity for their age, contributing very effectively to these discussions. In all lessons, pupils listened attentively to each other, sensitive to each individual's right to express their opinions. Gender differences, stereotypes and care and respect for themselves and each other are all discussed sensibly at a level suitable to the pupils' ages. In an excellent lesson with pupils in Years 5 and 6, drama and role play were used exceptionally well to build pupils' confidence, promoting persuasive talk as pupils identified ways of taking responsibility and becoming responsible citizens. Citizenship is also being developed effectively through the recently formed school council, which is set to manage its own budget. Pupils are proud of having been elected as class representatives and take their responsibilities very seriously. Other pupils enjoy organising and running their own lunchtime clubs, and were fully involved in designing the small courtyard area to create a quiet haven for pupils at lunchtimes. The school has developed very good systems to track and assess pupils' academic and personal progress and teachers ensure their pupils know how they can improve their work, giving them a sense of responsibility for their own learning.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8
Value for money provided by the school	2

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7); not applicable (8).