

INSPECTION REPORT

St George and St Teresa Catholic Primary School

Solihull

LEA area: Solihull

Unique reference number: 104101

Headteacher: Mr D J Foxon

Lead inspector: Mr John Brennan

Dates of inspection: July 5th – 7th 2004

Inspection number: 257651

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:	213
School address:	Mill Lane Bentley Heath Solihull West Midlands
Postcode:	B93 8PA
Telephone number:	01564 774906
Fax number:	01564 772894
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Monsignor Canon J D McHugh
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St George and St Teresa is an oversubscribed Catholic primary school serving the parish of St George and St Teresa of the Child Jesus, which includes the church of Blessed Robert Grissold, on the outskirts of Solihull. The school draws pupils from a wide area, including Bentley Heath, Balsall Common and Solihull itself. It is a one-form entry school of average size. Most of the pupils come from a white British background, with a small number of pupils from other ethnic groups, the largest of which is Irish. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is about average. Pupils needs cover the full spectrum of learning, emotional and physical needs, with the majority of needs related to learning. There are currently four pupils who have a statement for their needs. In general, children start school with skills and knowledge that are above those typically found. There are few pupils who are eligible for free school meals. The school has been awarded a silver 'Artsmark' for its commitment to the arts and an Achievement Award in 2000 for results in National Curriculum Tests. The school has Investors in People Status and is involved in the Healthy Schools Initiative.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21094	John Brennan	Lead inspector	English Art and design
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector	
4287	Brian Allaway	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Music Physical education Science
29686	Stefan Lord	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology English as an additional Language Geography History Information and communication technology Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Inspire Educational Ltd
The Coach House
132 Whitaker Road
Derby
DE23 6AP

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective school. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and has successfully developed a staff team committed to rigorous self-evaluation and the pursuit of excellence. Standards are high and pupils' achievements are very good. Very close attention is paid to developing pupils' personal qualities. The school gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The vision, energy and teamwork of the headteacher and his staff ensure that the school is very successful and ambitious for the future.
- Imaginative teaching and a stimulating curriculum and environment give children in the Foundation Stage a very good start to school.
- The very good quality of teaching throughout the school ensures that pupils achieve very well, especially in literacy, numeracy and science.
- A meticulously planned curriculum and a rich and varied programme of experiences contribute strongly to pupils' academic and personal development.
- The very good quality of behaviour and relationships are marked by the mutual respect individuals have for each other.
- The school puts pupils' welfare at its heart and takes excellent care of them.
- The partnership with parents is excellent.
- Very good governance provides strong support for the school.

Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Standards in English, mathematics and science continue to be well above average and in information and communication technology (ICT) they have risen. Developments in curriculum planning ensure that pupils' experiences are stimulating and wide-ranging. Imaginative and extensive additions have been made to the school buildings. Provision in the Foundation Stage has been extended and its quality greatly enhanced. Despite many changes to teaching personnel, teaching remains very good. Very thorough systems and practices are now used to evaluate the effectiveness of the work of the school. The care the school takes of pupils and the way in which it works with parents is even stronger than it was at the time of the last inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	A	A*	A
mathematics	A	B	A	B
science	A	A	A*	A

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

A - in the top 5% of schools nationally*

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

The pupils are achieving very well. The children in the Foundation Stage make a very good start and the majority exceed the goals that children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year.

The national test results for 2003 show that by the end of Year 2 the pupils achieved standards that were well above average for reading, writing and mathematics compared to all and to similar schools. In the case of reading and mathematics they were in the top five per cent of schools. Inspection findings confirm this positive picture with standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematics and science all well above average. Pupils exceed national expectations in geography and meet them in ICT.

The national test results for 2003 show that by the end of Year 6 standards were well above average in English, mathematics and science and when compared to similar schools were well above average for English and science. These results correspond with inspection findings. In English standards are particularly high in reading and in speaking and listening. Standards in writing are not quite as high, but are still well above average. Standards have risen in ICT and exceed national expectations. Standards also exceed national expectations in geography. Not enough evidence was gathered to be able to judge the quality of provision in other subjects, but the quality of work seen was generally at least above average.

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The pupils behave very well and have very positive attitudes to their work. Attendance and punctuality are excellent.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a very good quality of education because the curriculum is carefully structured and enhanced by an excellent range of trips and clubs. **The teaching is very good.** In the Foundation Stage it is based on a deep knowledge of how young children learn best, creating stimulating classrooms and devising challenging practical activities. Very good assessment, which begins in the Foundation Stage, enables teachers to match work well to pupils' differing capabilities and ensures that learning progresses smoothly as pupils move through the school. Teachers' high expectations of pupils, shrewd questions and very clear exposition make increasing demands on pupils. The teaching of literacy and numeracy are particularly strong because the skills and knowledge of these are applied across the curriculum. Teaching in science is also very strong because of an emphasis on investigation.

The school makes excellent provision for the health, safety and welfare of pupils and provides very good support for pupils who have special educational needs or who are talented. The school works hand in hand with parents, whose support makes a telling contribution to achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Taken overall the quality of leadership and management is very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. He has a very clear vision for the school and this is underpinned by detailed planning and close attention to training staff. Staff share in the headteacher's vision and respond very well to his expectation that each will develop into an effective leader in his/her own right. Governors are very effective in their support of the school and join well with the school in shaping its future.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils hold the school in high regard and express very considerable satisfaction with its work.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

There are no significant weaknesses in the school's provision. The priorities of the school's own development plan are entirely appropriate and provide a secure framework for delivering continuing improvement.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are high and are being maintained. Pupils of all capabilities are achieving very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage make a very good start to school.
- Standards are very high in English, mathematics and science.
- By the end of Year 6 pupils' achievement in ICT and in geography exceeds the level expected nationally.

Commentary

1. The children entering school start nursery from a variety of pre-school providers. The children's attainment covers the full range, but taken overall is a little above average. Effective induction arrangements and the sharp focus on developing confidence and independence results in a smooth start to school. From the beginning children are expected to take responsibility, and they respond with zest to the rich variety of learning opportunities provided. They achieve very well in their personal and social development and in the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Achievement is good in physical development and in the creative areas of learning it is excellent. All in all, the vast majority of pupils achieve the goals expected of children by the end of reception and approximately half exceed them.
2. The school has maintained the very high standards it achieves in English, mathematics and science. At the end of Year 2, and especially the end of Year 6, results in the past three years, have been consistently high. Results in the 2003 national tests for seven-year-olds were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In reading and mathematics they were in the top five per cent of schools, with nearly two-thirds of pupils attaining a level beyond the national average. A similar picture is apparent in the 2003 national tests for eleven-year-olds. In English, mathematics and science, results were well above average and in English and science were in the top five per cent of schools. Just over half of the pupils gained the higher level in English and mathematics and three quarters in science. At the end of both Year 2 and 6 results also compared very favourably with similar schools, being well above average.
3. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are well above average and that pupils are achieving very well in English, mathematics and science. In English achievement is somewhat stronger in reading and in speaking and listening than in writing. In writing, fewer pupils in the current Year 6 attain beyond expected levels. In each subject tasks are carefully structured and pupils complete a very good volume of work. The clear and appropriate targets for pupils with special educational needs enable them to make very good progress. The early identification of pupils with a particular gift or talent and the effective support provided makes a significant contribution to the achievement of these pupils. There are no marked differences between the achievement of boys and girls.
4. The rapid acquisition of the key skills of literacy and numeracy stands pupils in very good stead. Pupils are eager to record their thoughts on paper in such subjects as science and the humanities. Similarly, the systematic teaching and reinforcement of basic number skills and their application

in a good range of problem solving and investigative work are having a very positive impact on pupils' ability to think logically.

- The school's well considered and thoughtfully constructed curriculum provides a helpful scaffold for learning. Pupils are achieving well in geography and, in Years 3 to 6, in ICT, so that by the time they leave the school standards exceed national expectations. This represents an improvement since the last inspection in ICT. It was not possible to analyse the depth and quality of pupils' work in other subjects, but pupils' work seen in all other subjects was generally above the standards expected of their age.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.3 (18.2)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	17.2 (16.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	19.1 (18.0)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.4 (30.0)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.3 (28.1)	26.8 (26.7)
science	31.6 (30.2)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils' attitudes to school are very good and they behave very well. The provision for the pupils' personal development, including their spiritual moral, social and cultural development is also very good. Attendance and punctuality are excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships in the school are very supportive.
- Pupils consistently demonstrate positive and mature attitudes to their work and to each other.
- The Catholic ethos of the school aids the pupils' personal development.
- Attendance levels are very high.

Commentary

- The pupils have very good attitudes to learning and take part in the many and varied activities available both within the school day and in extra-curricular activities. In lessons they concentrate and participate very well. The school has very high expectations of the pupils' conduct and they respond very well to their teachers' expectations and are proud of their school. Throughout the school pupils work hard and sustain a good work ethic whether they are working independently

or in groups. Relationships within the school are particularly good and all staff provide excellent role models for the pupils. The harmonious and supportive atmosphere makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning and their wellbeing.

7. Behaviour is very good. On the few occasions when pupils lose attention in lessons it is because they have been expected to listen for too long. The pupils socialise together very well and older pupils ensure that younger pupils are cared for. In discussion with pupils it was readily apparent that bullying and harassment are very unusual and that any incidents of inappropriate behaviour were handled well by the school. Year 6 pupils undertake their responsibilities very well, such as helping to supervise the younger pupils during wet playtimes. Older pupils feel that their views are considered seriously and that they are able to influence school policy. Circle time is used well to enable pupils to share worries or concerns.
8. The provision for the pupils' spiritual development is very good. Teachers value the pupils' ideas and encourage them to explore their own feelings and beliefs. A recent residential retreat enabled Year 6 pupils to reflect on the importance of standing by their beliefs. Literacy and art lessons and assemblies also provide good opportunities to raise the children's spiritual awareness by reflecting on some of life's deeper questions.
9. The school makes very good provision to develop pupils' broad cultural awareness and understanding. Pupils perform dances, listen to music, stories and poems from other cultures and begin to appreciate significant patterns and art from other cultures. For example, pupils of all ages learn to perform Caribbean and Asian dances. The school has established a link with a school in Taiwan with pupils in Year 3 exchanging letters with pen pals. The school ethos engenders respect for all and pupils demonstrate a willingness and ability to respond positively to the different needs of all people. As a result of the school's provision, pupils are well prepared for living in a culturally diverse society.
10. The provision for the pupils' moral development is also very good. All children are taught about the difference between right and wrong. Pupils are very aware of their responsibility to support people who are less fortunate than themselves, confirmed by their commitment to charitable fundraising. The caring Catholic ethos of the school provides a strong foundation for the pupils' personal growth.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003 (95.8 %)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.2	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

11. Attendance is well above the national average and there have been no unauthorised absences. Procedures are very good and statutory requirements are fully met. Punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. Throughout the school pupils benefit from very good teaching set within a stimulating curriculum, which is greatly enriched by an extremely full range of trips and clubs. The school takes excellent care of pupils and establishes a first rate partnership with parents.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is very good. Assessment is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high expectations of pupil behaviour and work and establish very positive relationships with them.
- Shrewd questioning and very clear exposition and demonstration help pupils fully understand what is expected of them.
- Tasks set are often imaginative and give pupils ample opportunities to make decisions about how to complete them.
- Teachers establish very effective partnerships with teaching assistants.
- Analytical marking helps pupils see what they need to do to improve.

Commentary

12. Given the extensive and fairly recent changes to the staff team, leadership has done well to maintain the very good standard of teaching noted in the last inspection. Indeed, in the Foundation Stage this has improved and, along with the rest of the school, is very good overall. Much of this is due to the success leadership has in inducting new staff and to the considered use of training. New staff join a school that has a clear set of common principles, detailed in a teaching and learning policy, which defines guiding and binding principles.
13. Not least among these principles is the high expectation teachers have of pupils' behaviour and work rate. The very good quality of relationships gives pupils confidence to join in lessons. They know that their opinions and thoughts count and so they readily answer questions, listen to each other and offer their opinions. Little time is wasted and classrooms are calm and pleasant places for staff and pupils to work in. Expectations are made apparent through sharply focussed short term planning, an improvement in teaching since the last inspection. As a result, pupils invariably know what is expected of them and how much time they have to complete work and, because of this, they are very productive. Teachers are beginning to experiment with the use of key learning points, shared with the pupils at the start of lessons as a way of encouraging them to self-evaluate their efforts at the end of lessons. This is most successfully done in Years 3 and 4 where the teachers make this part of all lessons and have given some thought to building pupils' confidence in 'marking' their own efforts. When this works it helps pupils become self-critical learners.
14. Teachers use questions very well to ensure that participation in lessons is high and that pupils' understanding is thoroughly tested. Questions probe the depth of understanding and lead pupils forward by requiring them to explain what they think and why they think it. This also gives teachers a chance to assess the confidence of pupils and to alter the thrust of the lessons accordingly. Questions are often interspersed with very clear demonstrations by teachers of what pupils are expected to do. These often revolve around a framework that guides thinking. These give pupils just the right amount of guidance and ensure that they have many choices and decisions to make about how best to go about expanding this framework with their own ideas and thoughts. In science, for example, pupils are given a suggested series of stepping stones that take them through the phases of an experiment, but pupils decide what they will do, how they will do it, what they will use and how they will let others know what they have learnt. In the

Foundation Stage teachers ensure activities give children ample opportunities to make choices for themselves and encourage experimentation and autonomy. All in all, therefore, lessons have a very clear sense of purpose and pupils are able to work with a good degree of independence and confidence.

15. When teaching is at its best it sets imaginative and thought provoking tasks for pupils. Teachers in the Foundation Stage accomplish this by linking engaging activities to common themes that encompass learning indoors and out. Through Years 1 to 6 teachers look for links between subjects. These often act as vehicles for pupils to apply key skills. Teachers put much thought into finding an appropriate stimulus for work. In English high quality literature is central. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 6 pupils considered the feelings of two stepsisters from the 'Suitcase Kid.' This included one pupil acting as the sister for fellow pupils to question, before they wrote advice to her in the style of an agony aunt. This successfully linked speaking listening, reading and writing into one common purpose and prepared pupils very well for their writing. In other subjects, particularly history and geography, educational visits and visitors provide the impetus for learning and help pupils draw upon skills gained in literacy and other subjects. The attention given to learning not only provides a context for pupils' efforts but also ensures that pupils enjoy school and develop very positive attitudes to education.

16. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs are given suitable help, often through the effective work of the special needs co-ordinator and teaching assistants, to meet the targets on their individual education plans. This support is often in class, in small groups or one to one, working on tasks that are appropriately planned for them. There is well planned and effective withdrawal of groups and individual pupils to enable them to work on basic skills in numeracy, for example. These sessions work well because of the very close partnerships teachers establish with teaching assistants. Pupils with a particular gift or talent are supported mostly by the class teacher through providing work matched to their ability. There is some withdrawal of groups of more able pupils to work with the special needs teacher. A group of pupils in Year 4, for example, have been identified as high attaining writers and they have studied the work of famous authors to develop their own writing skills. This provision results in pupils with special educational needs, and those who are gifted and talented, achieving very well.

17. The quality of marking is very good and is one facet of the school's very good procedures for assessment. Marking is perceptive and analytical and lets pupils know what they have done well and, crucially, what they need to do next. Pupils take notice of this advice and some older pupils engage in conversation through the marking with comments such as; 'I will try to do this next time.' More formal assessment procedures, which begin with extremely thorough assessments in the Foundation Stage, enable teachers to pitch work at the right level and ensure that, as pupils move from class to class, learning progresses smoothly. The extension of assessment to the setting of individual targets is yet to fully settle down and is more successful in mathematics than in English.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	17 (53 %)	11 (38 %)	2 (6 %)	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.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is very good. Enrichment to the curriculum is excellent. Resources and accommodation are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very carefully considered use of trips and visitors and the creative links made between subjects helps to make learning more meaningful.
- The emphasis the school places on the arts adds to the curriculum and to pupils' personal development.
- Pupils enjoy an excellent range of extra curricular activities.
- Very good provision is made for pupils with particular needs.
- Imaginative alterations to the building have improved the quality of pupils' learning and play experiences.
- Pupils' efforts are given value by the very good use staff make of display.

Commentary

18. The school has been very successful in making the curriculum challenging and enjoyable. Curriculum planning begins with a very good knowledge of what the pupils are to learn and develops this to consider how best this might be done. To this end, the school provides pupils with a stimulating set of experiences through a very broad and well planned series of educational visits and visitors. These are planned with very clear learning intentions in mind and act as vehicles for pupils to be taught key elements of the curriculum. Much thought is given to exploiting links between subjects, which give pupils a real purpose and context for their work. In Year 5 for instance, work in geography looked at the environmental and social issues associated with the extension of Birmingham airport and acted as a catalyst for pupils' debating and writing skills. The school is alert to chances to add to the curriculum and embraces these with relish. The language and scientific specialisms of two local comprehensive schools have been used to add to pupils' experiences in these areas.
19. It is in the arts that the school puts its distinctive mark on the curriculum. This is recognised in the silver 'Artsmark' awarded to the school. Over the course of the year pupils of all ages are given numerous experiences in art, literature, music and drama. The school seeks out events and competitions for pupils to develop and exhibit their performing skills. An impressive number of pupils have taken part in concerts, recitals and exhibitions or visited places of artistic and cultural significance. The cultural fortnight held each year marks the highpoint. Whether it is learning from the work of a book illustrator, working with a local potter, taking part in a poetry recital, or eating food from around the world, there is something in it for everyone. Such a board range of enriching experiences serves pupils' cultural development extremely well and ensures that creativity is fostered at every turn. In addition to this, pupils have access to an excellent range of extra-curricular clubs covering sport, art and various other activities, such as learning sign language. Many of these are open to younger pupils. Both parents and pupils are very appreciative of the opportunities the school provides to broaden experience.
20. The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to learning opportunities. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and the gifted and talented is very good. Well planned activities, very good teaching and good tracking procedures ensure that these pupils make very good progress. Targets for pupils who have special educational needs are appropriately linked to individual education plans. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of extra- curricular activities, providing very good opportunities for more able pupils to enhance their learning. These include the full use of enrichment days provided by the local education authority.

21. The school has made far reaching improvement to accommodation, a major weakness of the last inspection. Although some areas of the school have not changed, the addition of several classrooms, a nursery, an ICT suite and a library, as well as extensive alterations and additions to outside play areas, have improved pupils' learning and play experiences. Careful research by the headteacher and governors has resulted in changes that go beyond the functional, to being eye catching and attractive from a child's point of view. New areas have been well resourced and governors, the headteacher and co-ordinators see to it that full use is made of them.
22. As the environment of the school has improved, so has display. Teachers and other staff put much time into displaying pupils' work. Pieces of art are hung in frames and exhibited alongside the work of famous artists and pupils' writing is 'published' in books and added to the library. This shows pupils how much their work is valued and boosts their self-esteem and determination to give of their best.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is excellent. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement is excellent. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Great emphasis is placed on the personal care of each pupil.
- Induction arrangements are first rate.
- Pupils' needs, both academic and personal, are put first.
- Pupils are valued and very well involved in school life.

Commentary

23. The school has built on the very good standards of care, guidance and support noted in the last inspection, so that many aspects of this are now excellent.
24. All members of staff know the children very well enabling them to provide a very high level of care that is appreciated by both the pupils and their parents. Pupils say they all feel very confident about talking to teachers or other adults if they have any worries. The needs of the children are put first and staff go out of their way to look after pupils. For example, to mark the beginning of the school day a classroom assistant provides a "meet and greet" service. This ensures there is a friendly face to welcome the pupils and acts as an opportunity for parents to raise minor issues enabling pupils to settle very well. It also means that school starts very promptly. The sensitive and thorough approach to child protection procedures and awareness, very detailed evaluation of health and safety risks, first aid procedures and supervision of pupils at break and lunchtimes, enables pupils to feel safe and work in confidence. This is backed up by unobtrusive security arrangements. Very good care is taken to ensure all children are collected by a responsible adult at the end of the school day.
25. Excellent induction arrangements and continuing care and support ensure the youngest pupils quickly settle into school and make very good progress in their personal development. The key feature of this is the visits staff make to the wide number of pre-school services attended by pupils. This gives them all the information they need to support and guide children as they start school. A very informative pack "Preparing for School" gives further support. Academic support and advice for pupils is of a very high standard. This is especially evident in the arrangements made to give support to pupils as they move to the next stage of education. Pupils in Year 6 are confident about their impending move. Three pupils from Year 6 who had moved to the school from other schools all spoke of the "excellent induction" which helped them settle

and make new friends very quickly. The high quality of comments in annual reports to parents on attitudes, behaviour and involvement in school life indicates very detailed knowledge of pupils' academic and personal development.

26. Pupils feel that members of staff value their views and this gives them confidence to discuss issues and raise questions. On occasion the school sets out to survey their views on various school matters. Pupils give examples of this in relation to improved playground facilities and reduced accidents, and they say they are consulted about school rules. The school has good plans to extend this by setting up a school council. Pupils are being prepared well for this initiative.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has an excellent partnership with parents, which has a positive impact on pupils' achievements. Links with the local community and local schools are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school gives parents every encouragement to be involved in their children's learning.
- Reports and newsletters provide parents with all the information they need.
- The local community is used very well to support pupils' learning.
- Parents' views are valued and they are most supportive of the school.

Commentary

27. The excellent support parents give to school and the way this is encouraged and used by the school is a strong factor in pupils' very good attitudes to school and very good achievements. This has improved since the last inspection. The school provides many helpful opportunities to encourage parents to be part of their children's learning, such as the recently held session on ICT "Putting Parents in the Picture". The evaluations of such events show that they are extremely well attended and parents find them useful and helpful. The social event for new parents at the start of each academic year helps harness the support and involvement of parents most effectively.
28. Parents receive very detailed information to help their children further in their learning. Annual reports are highly evaluative and report comprehensively on progress and achievements and add very helpful and honest individual targets. Parents say they value the quality of individual information given in consultation sessions. Regular newsletters give very good information about school life; in particular, class letters detail the curriculum to be covered each term. The school is very open to parents; teachers are available at the end of the day and issues are dealt with promptly and to high levels of satisfaction from the parents.
29. The school makes very good use of the local community for a wide range of visits and local visitors to school. The use of visits around the locality is a particularly strong and effective feature. Pupils take part in a wide range of local church events. The partnership with the local schools, including the local secondary schools, ensures pupils are very well prepared for and confident about their move to the next stage of their education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is aided very well by the deputy headteacher, the good leadership of key staff and the very good quality of governance. The school has been tenacious in overcoming the barrier to learning presented by cramped and inadequate accommodation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is very ambitious for the school and has harnessed the energy of all staff in the continual drive for excellence.
- Very close attention is paid to the needs of staff and the development of their expertise.
- Detailed development planning is underpinned by extensive monitoring of performance.
- Governors are well aware of the strengths and development points of the school and make a full contribution to school improvement.

Commentary

30. Since the last inspection there have been considerable staff changes and several major building programmes. Through this period the headteacher has continued to successfully promote the Catholic ethos of the school and to take forward deeply held educational beliefs and an unswerving commitment to excellence for all. Together with the governing body, he has pursued every opportunity to improve the learning environment for pupils and to build the new teaching and non-teaching staff force into a very effective team. Whatever their role, teachers and teaching assistants bring a distinctive range of skills and talents to their work and an eagerness to learn as much as possible about teaching and leadership.
31. One of the key factors behind the success of the school is the very close attention the headteacher pays to developing staff expertise and to live up to its Investors in People status. The training needs of staff are identified through a rigorous and extensive programme of observations and a thorough induction programme for new staff. An outward looking attitude, and a willingness to search for best practice, has taken both teaching and none teaching staff into other schools in the quest for improvement. The headteacher has mobilised the assistance of many outside consultants, especially from the local education authority, to join with staff in training. These have been used to very good effect in leading training on key school priorities, such as problem solving in mathematics, so that teachers are given every help in developing the art of teaching. As important, is the work consultants do alongside subject leaders, many of whom are new to post and inexperienced in management. Carrying out dual observations, sharing the delivery of training, joining in with work scrutiny and helping devise development plans typify this approach. It is testimony to the success of this strategy that several co-ordinators, who are still in the early stages of their career, are already effective subject managers. In consultation with staff the school has devised practical ways in which to implement the latest 'workplace reforms' and so that teachers' administrative duties are minimised. The highly efficient office team play a full role in this. Adults clearly value the process of performance management because it provides them with opportunities to talk about their jobs and how well they are doing. Performance management targets are uniform and unite the staff in searching for common areas of improvement and enable the headteacher to tailor training accordingly. A very good balance is struck between meeting the needs of staff and serving school improvement targets and is one reason why teaching assistants make such an important contribution to the school. The upshot of all of this is that staff feel valued and esteemed and are willing to learn from the practice and ideas of others.
32. The headteacher underpins the ethos of honest and open debate by devising a systematic cycle of self-evaluation tasks. This was a weakness in the last inspection and is now woven into the actions of all with responsibility. The deputy headteacher plays an important role here, so that the curriculum as a whole is carefully monitored to ensure that the extensive links between subjects are working to best effect. All subject co-ordinators are given sufficient time to carry out their quality assurance work and an enhanced monitoring time is given to a limited number of key priorities. Governors join in very well with this and the impact of actions is thoroughly evaluated. For example, improvements to the library, an issue of the last inspection, have been followed through by both the literacy co-ordinator and the literacy governor, who is able to list the success criteria achieved. Such well focused monitoring is only possible because of the detailed and jointly written School Improvement Plan. This sets down a timetable for future actions, unites the staff and governors in the pursuit of key improvements,

sets an agenda for ongoing tasks, clearly defines roles and responsibilities and the measures of success. As a result the cycle of actions necessary for sustaining improvement is firmly in place.

33. Despite several changes to personnel the governors have a very good oversight of the work of the school and play a full part in shaping its future and in determining how successful it has been. New governors benefit from a thorough induction package. Very detailed reports by the headteacher keep governors well informed about the work of the school and wider developments in education. This knowledge of school and education is added to by the wide ranging experiences governors bring to the body as a whole and by the close links many have with the local community. Governors have made very good use of the funds available to the school and have been especially successful in taking forward major building programmes, so that they achieve best value for money. They take some of the burden for managing these off the headteacher's shoulders. Initiatives are closely tracked and governors ensure pre-determined improvement criteria are evaluated.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	579,452
Total expenditure	583,853
Expenditure per pupil	2,728

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	11,923
Balance carried forward to the next	7,522

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

34. The overall provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is very good. The school has a Reception class of 25 children and a Nursery that currently caters for 21 children on a morning only basis. The good relationships that exist with parents and the excellent induction arrangements mean that the children settle to school life quickly and easily and receive a very good start to their education.
35. The Nursery with its imaginatively designed accommodation has been developed since the last inspection. The quality of teaching in the Reception class and the Nursery is very good. Foundation Stage staff plan very well together and have constructed a lively and stimulating curriculum which ensures that the children achieve very well as they move through the Nursery and the Reception Class. There is a very good balance between adult led and child initiated activities across all areas of the curriculum. All staff undertake assessments of the children's progress regularly and thoroughly. The relationship between teachers and teaching assistants is very good and together they create effective and harmonious teams. Children who have special educational needs are supported very well, they receive appropriate individual attention and so achievement is very good.
36. The attainment of the children on entry to the school varies from year to year. Children in the current Reception class began nursery demonstrating the full range of ability but overall their attainment was just above average. Taken overall achievement is very good. By the time they start in Year 1 almost all will have met the goals set for them in all areas of the curriculum and a growing proportion exceed them. In the current reception class this amounts to about a half. Leadership and management of the Nursery and the Reception class are very good, with the unit operating with a clear sense of purpose and direction.
37. The secure outdoor area has been improved significantly since the last inspection. The governors have purchased extra land to enable the children to have access to a secure and stimulating external play and work area. The quality of this provision and the very good use made of it by staff has a significant impact on the children's learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults take every opportunity to promote the children's personal, social and emotional wellbeing.
- The children quickly develop independence and self-confidence.
- The children are interested in their work and enjoy learning.

Commentary

38. The children are happy and secure and are keen to come to school. The lively and colourful learning environment, the stimulating curriculum and the very good teaching ensures that the children make good progress. The teachers and teaching assistants know the children very well and take every opportunity to emphasise the importance of good manners and appropriate

behaviour. The positive Catholic ethos of the school creates a caring and calm learning environment. The children's self-esteem is good because adults use praise and encouragement to promote their confidence. Adults engage in good quality conversation with the children and enhance their learning by joining in with their play activities. This promotes the children's interest and enables them to concentrate for reasonable periods of time. Almost all of the children follow instructions well and know what is expected of them. In response to the teacher's high expectations, they settle well to planned activities and persevere with tasks. The children share and work together very well. They enjoy making choices and are eager to learn new skills. Relationships are very good. Almost all of the children have met the early learning goals for personal development by the time they enter Year 1, and just over half will have exceeded them.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children have good speaking and listening skills.
- The children's early reading and writing is developed well through a range of exciting starting points.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use stories, conversations rhymes and songs very well to develop the children's language and literacy skills.

Commentary

39. The children achieve very well because this area of learning is taught effectively and teachers and teaching assistants provide exciting and imaginative starting points for the children. For example, in developing ideas and experiences associated with the seaside the children in the Nursery were able to experience the differences between walking barefoot on sand, on pebbles and in water. The ensuing conversations enabled the children to talk with enthusiasm about how this felt and use new vocabulary. Adults question the children carefully to gauge what they had learned from these experiences. Regular opportunities to sing songs and rhymes and to discuss what they have been doing help the children to improve their spoken language. The children's reading and writing skills are developed through numerous informal opportunities and also through group activities when adults work with the children in more focused situations where they are taught to use known sounds and key words in their writing. For instance, some reception children were constructing and writing their own sentences when they were sharing their ideas about the journey of 'Grandpa's Balloon'. Imaginative and well resourced role-play areas such as 'The Yellow Submarine' and the 'Sea Cave' provided the children with opportunities to share ideas and experiences. Reception children use listening centres confidently in order to improve their listening skills. Almost all of the children will meet the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1 and approximately half will have exceeded them.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well planned activities enable the children to learn about numbers, shapes and patterns.

- Games and role-play are used well to develop the children's mathematical understanding.
- The children's hard work and co-operation aid achievement.

Commentary

40. Imaginative contexts and well planned teaching ensure that the children achieve very well. Appropriate use is made of number rhymes and everyday situations to develop the children's mathematical understanding. All Foundation Stage staff take every opportunity to encourage the children to count and to use appropriate language such as 'more than' and 'less than'. For example, in a group activity led by the teacher, Reception children were able to calculate how many more children would be needed to fill the bus and showed a good understanding of number bonds to ten. Some of the higher attaining children were confident in using numbers to twenty and exceeded the learning goals by demonstrating why $6+4$ is the same as $4+6$. In the 'Seaside Hotel' Nursery children wrote numbers as they 'checked' new people into the hotel. In this situation the adult's sensitive intervention enabled good quality conversation to be sustained and mathematical concepts to be developed. Using a range of different pasta shapes the children constructed repeating patterns as they made pasta necklaces. Sand and water play and the use of a range of constructional equipment provide opportunities for the children to extend their mathematical understanding such as 'full and empty' and 'tall and short'. Teachers have high expectations of the children and as a consequence children work together well, persevere with tasks and enjoy their learning. Almost all the children will meet the goals set for them and about half will exceed them.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lively and imaginative teaching inspires the children.
- Imaginative contexts and good resources evoke curiosity and interest.
- The use of computers, programmable toys and digital photography help the children's early understanding of technology.
- Visits and visitors are used well to enhance the children's learning.

Commentary

41. Throughout the Foundation Stage staff provide a wide range of experiences that enable the children to achieve very well in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Activities are planned carefully and link well to the language and mathematical areas of learning. For example, when discussing holidays the Nursery children used a large floor map and picture books to identify countries they had visited. In the Reception class the children developed further the use of maps by using labels to identify some of the countries which had been discussed earlier. Many of the children's activities are recorded using a digital camera and the children are proud of the way in which illustrations of their activities are made into books. The children know how to use programmable toys and simple ICT programmes. The well resourced role-play areas enable the children to use telescopes and binoculars to describe what they can see. Adults continually focus the children's interest and extend their knowledge well with a succession of well directed and encouraging questions. The immediate environment is rich in resources relating to the natural world and together with visits to places further a field they make a significant contribution to developing the children's knowledge and understanding in this area. Numerous

visitors to the school help the children to understand something of the community in which they live. Most of the children will have met the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1 and approximately half will have exceeded them.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children are well co-ordinated and experience a range of physical activities.
- The outside play area is thoughtfully designed but offers a limited range of equipment for physical development.
- Physical education lessons in the hall are of a good quality.

Commentary

42. Achievement is good in most areas and the children are in line to attain the early learning goals in physical development by the time they enter Year 1. The outdoor area provides some opportunities for climbing and balancing but resources to promote this aspect of the children's physical development are limited. Nonetheless, staff and children make good use of the space available and they also use the hall for a wide range of physical activities. For instance, in a dance lesson Reception children used the story of Grandpa's Balloon to explore different ways they could move like a balloon in the wind. This lesson was particularly effective because the teacher was alert to the levels of concentration displayed by the children and kept their attention by setting new challenges. Music and percussion instruments are used well to provide an atmosphere and a context in which the children could move imaginatively and with confidence. Nursery children moved energetically as they 'rowed out to sea' in their imaginary boat. The children work well in pairs and groups demonstrating an awareness of space, themselves and others. The use of construction toys, malleable materials, and simple tools all help the children develop control over smaller movements. The Nursery and Reception children make good progress and show developing dexterity as they use scissors, pencils and paint in a wide range of daily activities.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of the role-play areas is excellent.
- As well as learning new skills the children also make choices about how to go about their work.
- The curriculum offers numerous opportunities for developing the imagination.

Commentary

43. The very well equipped role-play areas provide a very good stimulus for the children's imagination. At the time of the inspection the Nursery housed a range of role-play areas with a seaside theme. Some children wore flippers and dressed as mermaids and pirates as they shared experiences in the 'yellow submarine under the sea'. Costumes, artefacts and numerous

paintings completed by the children are used well to create a lively and interesting environment. These resources have a positive impact on the children's speaking and listening skills. There is a good balance of child-initiated painting, printing and drawing activities as well as teacher directed skills based work. There is evident progression in the children's painting and drawing as they move from the Nursery to Reception. The children have a good range of media to choose from. Some Nursery children used rollers and paint on large pieces of fabric to create backdrops for their seaside role-play activities. The children have numerous opportunities to develop their creative skills by making and designing, by singing songs and by using percussion instruments to accompany taped music. Adults give status to the role-play by sensitive intervention. For example, when an adult asked if she could come into the seaside hotel a child asked; "How long do you want to stay?" Almost all of the children will have met the early learning goals by the time they enter Year1 and many children will have exceeded them.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relaxed relationships and perceptive questioning give pupils every opportunity to explain their thinking.
- Pupils receive a rich and varied reading diet.
- Pupils are given interesting contexts for writing and are shown very clearly how to structure their ideas.
- The very effective use of teaching assistants makes a telling difference to the achievement of pupils with particular needs.
- Marking gives pupils a very clear idea about how to improve their work.

Commentary

44. The recent concentration on developing speaking and listening skills is paying dividends. Very effective leadership has devised a thorough programme of actions and sees to it that staff are helped to implement them. To this end questioning is very effective. Lessons are littered with questions that require pupils to give their opinion, to respond to the ideas of others, to justify their views and to take part in role-play and drama. Comfortable relationships pervade classrooms, so that pupils feel that their views are of worth. The level of participation in discussion is high. Standards in speaking and listening are consequently very high and achievement is very good. Many pupils are able to hold extended debates and listen with interest to the views of others. Older pupils join debates with counter views of their own.
45. Books are at the centre of learning in English. Standards are very high in reading and pupils' achievements are very good; because of this they have an extensive vocabulary to aid speaking and listening and writing. Since the last inspection the school has developed a very well stocked library. The co-ordinator has given much thought to the best use of this and has thoroughly evaluated it. The computerised system and extensive selection of books are used very well for personal research, for pupils to borrow books and for library skills to be systematically taught. Opportunities to take part in reading events are encouraged, with pupils participating in the National Summer Reading Challenge. As a result a culture of valuing books and reading as an activity permeates the school. Pupils enjoy reading and can talk very well about a range of authors. In addition, pupils have daily opportunities to read in class. Teachers and assistants use these very well, with pupils reading a variety of books and in some cases magazines. Pupils pick up key phonic skills very quickly, and this allows teachers to concentrate on meaning and understanding. In Year 4 for example, the teacher skilfully handled a discussion to help pupils search for the author's views on whether or not it was right to keep animals in zoos. Pupils acted as 'detectives' but were also introduced to the features of presenting a counter argument because the teacher had it in mind to teach this form of writing later in the week.
46. The link teachers make between reading and writing is a key factor in the high standards pupils reach in writing and their very good achievement. The work of other authors presents both a model for pupils to learn from and a stimulus for pupils to write. In Year 2 *Fantastic Mr Fox* was used to very good effect for pupils to write to the police, complaining about the behaviour of some of the characters. This lesson typifies the school's approach of giving pupils a purpose

for writing and a framework within which to structure their writing. Teachers' demonstrations of writing are very well taught, with pupils shown a series of steps that form a secure framework for shaping their ideas. These 'frames' are often displayed so that pupils have them at the forefront of their minds when writing. In this way teachers give pupils freedom of expression within an agreed form. This results in writing which is imaginative and vibrant but which is also well considered and coherent. In an effort to pack as much into these demonstrations as possible teachers can, on the odd occasion, carry these sessions on for too long. This was the case in a lesson in Year 1 and, because of this, pupils became disinterested and did not give of their best. Good habits of marking and editing their own work are taught to even the youngest pupils so that pupils look critically at their own and other pupils' work and refine ideas further. Pupils show very positive attitudes to writing and are helped in this by the value display puts on their writing. Some of the best work is framed and exhibited prominently in school, while much of what a class writes is published in books and added to the class or school library. Pupils are able to use these in during silent reading sessions. Pupils, therefore, feel that their work is of worth.

47. Whether pupils need extra help, or have a talent for literature, the school is successful in meeting their needs. Very good tracking of progress and attainment and the flexible use of teaching assistants and a learning support teacher give pupils the extra help they need. Teaching assistants are skilled at working alongside teachers, so that pupils who have special educational needs are able to join with the rest of the class. Additional time is found for pupils who need pushing on. A small group of pupils in Year 4, for example, considered stories from different cultures to study customs and beliefs. This included analysing such diverse work as the parables and writing by Salman Rushdie. This challenging work goes a long way to helping pupils maximise their potential.
48. Pupils are given every indication about how to improve by perceptive and evaluative comments teachers make on their work. In the best instances, as is the case in Year 3, these set clear targets for improvement, which are then followed through in future marking. This keeps learning moving forward and is more successful than the relatively new system of setting targets for writing based on key assessments. Pupils are less sure about these and teachers are not, as yet, referring to them often enough in lessons for pupils to have them in mind when working. One of the reasons for this is that too many targets are generated and it is very difficult for teachers to ensure each is acted upon.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. This is one the strengths of provision. Times for deliberate debate and discussion are planned across several subjects and have a distinct speaking and listening focus. Several subjects, but especially history and geography, are used to very good effect to teach writing. This is helped by the very good use the school makes of educational visits to teach and practise writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The co-ordinator ensures that performance is rigorously monitored.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge, so that demonstrations and the direct teaching of problem solving are very successful.

- Very good relationships and thought provoking questioning leads to high levels of pupil involvement in lessons.
- The quality of marking helps pupils understand what they need to do to improve.
- Numeracy skills are applied well in other subjects.

Commentary

50. A well thought out monitoring programme helps the co-ordinator build up a detailed picture of provision and ensures that he is effective in moving the subject forward. Despite several staff changes, the quality of teaching remains consistently very good and in some cases excellent. As a result standards continue to be well above average at the end of Year 2 and 6 and achievement is very good.
51. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They are expected to work hard and to listen attentively. Pupils' enjoyment of mathematics reflects the very good climate for learning that exists in all classrooms. This gives teachers the confidence to set challenging problems in which pupils have control over learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 showed intense interest in a complex investigation, leading them to demanding division calculations. The use of incisive questions, often interspersed with teacher demonstration and the teaching of problem solving, ensures that that pupils are kept on their toes and are eager to join in. Skilful questioning techniques, therefore, help teachers to judge the extent of pupils' learning and to deepen pupils' understanding
52. The emphasis put on analysis of teaching has led to key improvements in the teaching of problem solving and means that higher attaining pupils are now more effectively taught than they were at the time of the last inspection. Throughout the school teachers ensure that pupils have ample opportunities to solve problems and make decisions, so that by the time they leave the school pupils are able to solve complex multi-phase problems. They are helped in this by the very effective use of large displays, which help pupils structure their thinking without restricting the choices they have to make. The co-ordinator leads the way. In one excellent lesson in Year 5, with a focus on the relationship between fractions, decimal fractions and percentages, learning was made interesting and relevant to everyday life and included excellent use of overhead transparencies and a video as teaching aids and as learning tools. This highlights a further strength in teaching - the high quality of teachers' demonstration. This prepares pupils very well for the work they do in groups and leads to very productive classrooms in which pupils are able to work independently.
53. Teachers' very good knowledge of individual needs is shown in the well-pitched demands made of pupils. Together with the very good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants, assessment makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The pupils are well aware of how to improve their work because teachers take care to give them clear guidance, verbally, in written comments and through the use of target setting. All these factors result in all pupils, including those few who find learning difficult and those who are particularly able in mathematics, achieving very well.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Good use is made of mathematics in other subjects. For example, the close links made between mathematics and ICT help develop pupils' numeracy and computer skills. Similarly, pupils' skills in measuring are applied well in design and technology, for example in measuring the length of dowelling to make axles for controllable vehicles.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good assessment and effective help by teaching assistants help meet the needs of pupils with differing abilities.
- Investigations are developed systematically throughout the school.
- Teachers ensure pupils have a context for studying science.

Commentary

55. The newly appointed science co-ordinator has an appropriate action plan to help sustain the high standards achieved throughout the school and to build on changes that effective monitoring identifies. Not least amongst these is the development of detailed assessment procedures. This helps teachers take prior learning into account when they are planning. Appropriate challenges are provided for the higher attaining pupils, a weakness noted in some classes in the last inspection, and pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teachers and teaching assistants.
56. The very good quality of teaching and learning is marked by two consistent factors:
- There have been significant improvements in science investigations since the last inspection. Pupils have regular opportunities to be involved in practical science activities. The school has adopted a systematic approach to the teaching of investigative science and, as a consequence, pupils have a good understanding of the important processes involved in planning an experiment. This is a major reason why achievement is very good and standards at the end of Year 2 and 6 are well above average. For example, Year 3 pupils devised an experiment to test the porosity of different types of soil. In their discussions they considered the importance of being accurate when measuring the amount of water used if the test was to be fair. This typifies the approach of the school. Large displays provide pupils with a thinking framework with which to plan experiments. Teachers are careful that these do not restrict independence and so pupils choose apparatus, methodology and recording methods, and so have numerous decisions to make within this framework.
 - The best teaching links practical approaches to real life contexts. In a very good lesson in Year 2 pupils examined a range of household products and sorted them according to health and safety criteria. Their findings were recorded in the form of an advertising brochure. This work enabled the pupils to combine their scientific knowledge and their ability to produce an information leaflet. On other occasions pupils were able to use their mathematical skills well when recording the results of their investigations in the form of graphs and tables. Pupils enjoy the imaginative contexts in which science is taught, and as a consequence they have very good attitudes to their work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have access to good facilities.
- Teachers show good understanding of how to teach ICT.
- Assessment does not give a clear picture of the standards achieved by individual pupils and groups of pupils.

- ICT skills are applied well in other subjects.

Commentary

57. The building of a new computer suite and the significant investment in hardware and software has resulted in pupils having far greater opportunities to learn new skills. Standards have risen since the last inspection and pupils achieve well, especially in Years 3 to 6. In Year 6 standards are above average, for example in using computers to make a series of instructions for controlling events. Younger pupils, for example in Years 2 and 3, are demonstrating standards that are at least in line with expectations. For example, Year 3 pupils are adept at combining text with graphics.
58. Pupils also achieve well because good quality teaching is based upon teachers' secure, and in some cases in Years 3 to 6, very good subject knowledge. Teachers' clear instructions enable pupils to acquire new skills quickly and the teachers reinforce pupils' understanding of new techniques with skilful questioning. Teachers strike a good balance between intervening and giving pupils time to think for themselves. This works well because pupils behave well and rise to the challenge ICT presents to thinking. Year 5 pupils, for example, sustained high levels of concentration when using a graphics software program to generate a plan of their classroom and were justifiably proud of their achievements. Pupils' very good behaviour, including their willingness to co-operate with other pupils, is a significant contributor to the good learning that takes place.
59. The co-ordinator has a clear picture of the subject across the school. His enthusiasm provides a very good example for his colleagues and he leads the subject well. Checks on individual pupil's progress are made and recorded at the end of each unit of learning but this system does not allow teachers to have a clear judgment on the standards pupils are achieving, nor does it inform pupils about what they need to do to improve. The subject co-ordinator is very aware of the future developments needed to continue to develop the subject and further improve standards throughout the school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

60. Teachers make good use of ICT to support pupils' learning in other subjects, especially in English, history and geography. The use of the Internet and CD ROMs is common throughout the school.

HUMANITIES

61. Only one lesson was seen in **history**. An examination of pupils' work suggests that standards are above average in Year 2 and in Year 6. Very good use is made of artefacts, visits and visitors to encourage the development of historical skills; for example, the pupils in Years 6 developed the key skills of enquiry and empathy when they visited Harvington Hall for a 'Tudor' day. There are good links to pupils' literacy skills. This was seen in the very good lesson in Year 2 which effectively developed pupils' speaking and listening skills and note making skills through very well planned activities with a focus on comparing and contrasting the life of Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Accurate monitoring has led to improvements in the provision.
- Teachers plan interesting starting points for study.
- The very effective use of pupils' literacy and ICT is a prominent feature.
- Pupils of differing abilities are given the help they need.

Commentary

62. The two co-ordinators have a clear picture of provision and lead the subject well. Effective monitoring has led to an overhaul of the schemes of work and has made learning enjoyable and relevant to all year groups. They are very aware of the future developments needed to continue to develop the subject further.
63. The influence of the co-ordinators can be seen in the imaginative starting points teachers find to stimulate study. Although standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 remain above average, the same as they were at the last inspection, a richer curriculum has improved the quality of learning. Pupils achieve well because they enjoy geography and because the consistently good teaching makes them think. For example, learning about China for the pupils in Year 6, was made much more real because it started with a visitor to the classroom with first hand knowledge of living in the country. During a very good Year 6 lesson, the pupils were challenged to think through the issues associated with the Chinese 'Three Gorges Dam' project, which led to a high quality of discussion and debate and pupils achieving very well. This effectively developed pupils' understanding of how human activities affect the environment and how the views held by people about environmental change may differ. Well planned and wide ranging educational visits also act as a catalyst for learning. For example, pupils in Year 3 are able to describe and contrast the human and physical features of the locality because of a well focused walk taking full advantage of the local environment.
64. A marked feature of the improved curriculum is the way in which teachers maximize opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and ICT skills. In another good lesson the pupils in Year 3 used their note making skills to annotate computer images of the local environment to communicate their findings and develop suitable geographical vocabulary.
65. The co-ordinators have developed assessment procedures that allow checks to be made on pupils' progress. This is used well to inform future planning. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well because of this, and because of the effective help of teaching assistants. In addition, challenge in the form of individual research is provided for the more able.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

66. It was not possible to see any lessons in **art and design**. However, work on display and in the detailed portfolio of work kept by the school shows that pupils experience a very broad curriculum. Standards of work seen exceed those expected nationally. Provision is added to by the use of trips and visitors to stimulate work. Work arising out of this, for example, landscape paintings that pupils in Year 6, started on a residential visit to Wales and pots thrown by Year 2 pupils as result of the work of a visiting potter, are of a particularly high standard. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and has been successful in helping staff who are less confident. Art and design has a high profile in the school, as can be seen by the high quality of display, and makes a very strong contribution to pupils' personal and cultural development. One pupil in Year 6, for example, commented that he likes modern art because; 'It's like a puzzle and makes you think more.'

67. Only one lesson was observed in **design and technology** and so it was not possible to make a judgement about the quality of the overall provision in the subject. Pupils have many rich opportunities for learning and an examination of pupils' work suggests that standards are above expectation in Year 2 and in Year 6. All classes experience a broad range of interesting projects that develop their skills sequentially and allow them to explore a range of different materials and fastenings. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 4, pupils investigated and evaluated the qualities of different methods of joining fabric in preparation for making 'money containers.' There is good emphasis on the design process as an integral part of each project so that pupils learn to be realistic when choosing materials and judging whether their ideas will work. This was seen in the good quality of the controllable vehicles produced by the pupils in Year 6. There are good links with other subjects. The pupils in Year 4, for example, used their knowledge and understanding of electrical circuits to design different types of switches to make light bulbs work in their very well produced torches. Pupils make good use of their literacy skills in labelling and annotating designs and in writing evaluations. They also use their numeracy skills to accurately calculate and measure the lengths of materials.
68. In **music** it was only possible to see two lessons, both in Year 3 to 6, and so no overall judgement on provision can be made. In both lessons pupils were attentive throughout the lesson and achieved well because the teaching was planned carefully and pupils were given appropriate guidance as they worked in groups on composing and performing their work. Pupils in Year 3, for example, constructed pictorial scores to record their musical compositions, while in Year 4 pupils replicated the 'call' and 'response' in Morse code by using their voices and pitched instruments. In both lessons standards exceeded national expectations. A helpful scheme of work underpins the teachers' planning. The recently appointed co-ordinator provides good technical guidance for her colleagues. While no singing lessons were observed, the pupils' singing in assemblies was very good. Pupils enjoy singing; it is tuneful and spirited. Pupils with instrumental expertise enhance the act of worship with their playing. Many pupils benefit from peripatetic music tuition and from the numerous opportunities to perform in public.
69. Not enough teaching was seen to make an overall judgement about provision in **physical education**. In the one lesson seen pupils achieved well because the teaching was planned carefully to build on the pupils' developing skills and because pupils were given a good degree of independence as they evaluated a range of athletics activities which they had devised for Sports Day. The pupils devised rules, practised the activities and agreed a system of recording scores. They co-operated well in small team situations and were keen to improve their performances. The teachers' skills in demonstration were used to good effect in raising the pupils' expectations of what they were capable of achieving. Standards in this lesson exceeded national expectations. A thorough scheme of work exists for physical education, including opportunities for pupils to go swimming and for older pupils to take part in adventurous outdoor activities, such as climbing. A very wide range of sporting clubs and the opportunity to compete against other schools enhance the curriculum.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

70. The school has recently produced a full and detailed scheme of work which identifies appropriate contexts for the teaching of **personal, social and health education**. The scheme of work is comprehensive but has not been operational long enough for an appraisal of its effectiveness to be appropriate. Sex education is taught effectively as an integral part of the religious education curriculum. Significant attention has been given to drugs education since the last inspection and a policy has been written. Emphasis is given to promoting a healthy lifestyle

and the school has achieved a Healthy School Award. Circle time is currently used well to enable pupils to discuss topical issues and to share ideas and concerns.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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