

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Osbaldeston, Blackburn

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119647

Headteacher: Mrs Dorothy Mortiboy

Lead inspector: Mr Jean-Pierre Kirkland

Dates of inspection: 1st – 2nd December 2003

Inspection number: 257853

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school: | Infant and Junior |
| School category: | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 to 11 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 66 |
| School address: | Longsight Road Osbaldeston Blackburn Lancashire |
| Postcode: | BB2 7HX |
| Telephone number: | 01254 812543 |
| Fax number: | 01254 814070 |
| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Canon C A Dorran |
| Date of previous inspection: | May 1998 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Catholic Primary is a very small school with 66 pupils on roll, divided into three classes. Pupils come from a semi-rural area where socio-economic conditions are above average. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is average. There are no pupils on roll for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, at around 12 per cent, is below average. No pupil has a statement of special educational need. A large proportion of pupils enter or leave at times other than the normal starting and finishing dates and this has a significant effect on national test results some years, due to the small numbers in each year group. The school is involved in a number of local and national initiatives, such as Healthy Schools and Leadership Development Strategy in Primary Schools. The school has recently been granted the 'Learning Through Landscapes Award' and 'Awards for All'.

Information about the inspection team

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 4483 | Jean-Pierre Kirkland | <i>Lead inspector</i> | Special educational needs Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Geography |
| 9928 | Alan Dobson | <i>Lay inspector</i> | |
| 30691 | Kathleen Yates | <i>Team inspector</i> | Foundation Stage English Art and design Physical education |
| 32155 | Christine Taylor | <i>Team inspector</i> | Science Citizenship Design and technology History |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with some very good features, balanced by some areas in need of improvement. **Overall achievement by pupils is good** and the school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- All pupils achieve well in most subjects, and standards are above average in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).
- A good curriculum enhances pupils' learning.
- Standards are not high enough in art and design by Year 6, and physical education provision does not meet statutory requirements.
- There is a very positive atmosphere for learning throughout the school due to good teaching and very good levels of care and welfare.
- Leadership and management are effective in sustaining standards and improving achievement.
- The school development plan, the role of subject leaders and the use of assessment are not fully developed.

There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards are better in mathematics and ICT. The leadership and management by the headteacher are now more effective and subject leaders are beginning to develop their roles. Accommodation overall has improved, with the completion of one new classroom this year and the addition of two others less recently. There have been improvements in the care and welfare of pupils. Key issues from the previous inspection have been tackled, although some have not been fully addressed, such as the ongoing development of subject leaders and the school development plan. The school is well placed to make further improvements.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Standards are largely average across the school. However, great care has to be taken when interpreting any statistical results, due to the very small number of pupils entered for national tests each year. This, coupled with the significant number of pupils who join the school at times other than the normal starting point, causes statistics to be unreliable. For example, English and science test results, when comparing the same pupils in the similar schools column, show **pupils achieving satisfactorily**, and not below the national picture as the table suggests. In mathematics, **achievement is good**, rather than satisfactory.

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

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

Children enter the school with average standards and many leave with average test results. Some do better, having made good progress; others make smaller steps, but are well supported through good special educational needs provision; their progress is also good. Progress is never less than satisfactory. This applies throughout the school and includes the gifted and talented pupils.

Standards are above average by Year 6 in ICT. Standards are not high enough in art and design, and they are currently below average by Year 6. In all other subjects, standards are average. **Pupils make very good progress in personal and social development throughout the school.** They develop positive moral values and mix very well, supporting each other to a very good level through the 'Buddies' scheme and other initiatives, such as paired reading. Spiritual and cultural development is also good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to work, enjoy their lessons and behave very well. There have been no exclusions in recent years. Attendance is well above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education overall is good, with some very good features. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Teachers prepare thoroughly for their lessons and insist on high standards of behaviour. This leads to good quality learning in all classrooms. There is a good curriculum which broadens pupils' outlooks very well in preparation for the next stage of education after Year 6. The curriculum is enriched with clubs, visits and visitors to the school. Care and welfare of pupils are very good and a strength of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership of the school is good. The head and staff have a clear vision for the future development of the school and for improving educational provision. However, the school development plan, while containing relevant and important detail, lacks clarity, and priorities are difficult to ascertain. **The school is well managed overall**, although some curriculum leaders are new to their posts and have not yet developed their roles fully enough. **Governance is good.** Governors are committed and support the school well. They are developing their role as 'critical friend'. There are some breaches of statute in the prospectus and annual report, as well as in the provision for physical education. The governors are fully aware of all this and are working hard to rectify the situation.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils have very positive views of the school. Parents are happy with all aspects of school life, although a small minority expressed a desire to have more information on how well pupils progress. Parents are particularly happy with the small size of the school, which they say gives it a very good community spirit. Pupils agree strongly with this view. Pupils like their lessons, their teachers and the learning atmosphere, which they say interests and enthuses them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school needs to do now are:

- Ensure that there is an improvement in the standards reached in pupils' art and design work in Years 3 to 6.
- Make sure that the school development plan has clearer priorities and specific actions assigned to each area designated for improvement.
- Continue to improve the assessment techniques used to measure pupils' progress, especially when setting targets and modifying the teaching.
- Ensure that subject leaders have a more clearly defined role, focusing more explicitly on how standards are to be improved.

and, in order to meet statutory requirements in full:

- Seek more ways of ensuring pupils receive their full entitlement in physical education, especially in gymnastics.
- Revise both the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are generally average throughout the school. Standards rise above average in mathematics and ICT. Achievement is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Above average standards in mathematics and ICT.
- Below average standards in Year 6 art and design.
- Good pupil achievement throughout the school.
- Significant improvements in progress due to better planning and provision for Reception children.

Commentary

1. **Current standards are broadly average.** This is a small school with few pupils entered for national tests annually. As a result, the statistics are not included for pupils in Year 6 as the numbers were below 10 in 2003. In Year 2, results in the national reading tests in 2003 were above average, although not as good as for the previous year. This is due to small numbers reflecting the relatively larger proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. Standards of writing and mathematics in the last national tests were largely average and have improved over the previous year. Standards in science assessed by teachers show broadly average patterns over the last two years. Currently, standards in mathematics are above average for the Year 2 pupils and have improved since the previous inspection; in other aspects of English and in science, standards are average and similar to last year.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 16.6 (17.9) | 15.7 (15.8) |
| writing | 14.5 (13.3) | 14.6 (14.4) |
| mathematics | 16.5 (15.9) | 16.3 (16.5) |

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

2. **Achievement is good.** Most pupils begin the National Curriculum with average standards. The broad nature of the curriculum, with links across subjects, plus the good quality of enrichment through visits, visitors and clubs, enables pupils to make good progress in widening their knowledge and understanding. This good achievement continues in Years 3 to 6. Inspectors found that progress was better in mathematics and ICT, with above average standards in these subjects by Year 6. These are improvements since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and teachers plan suitable small steps to learning through the good quality individual education plans. This enables a good rate of progress to be sustained throughout the school, especially in literacy and numeracy. The school has identified a number of gifted and talented pupils, who are working with others who are a year older. They make good progress through more challenging work set for them.

3. **Children in the Reception class now make good progress.** Planning has improved and teaching covers all the main areas of learning, with a good focus on developing personal and social skills, literacy and numeracy. Most children are likely to reach the levels expected of them when they start the National Curriculum in Year 1.

4. **Standards in art and design are not high enough.** Although standards in art and design have improved by Year 2, older pupils have not reached national averages by Year 6. This was a weakness identified at the previous inspection. Pupils do not have sufficiently well developed skills of creativity and their knowledge of the contribution made to art by great artists is unsatisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. During their time at the school, pupils' spiritual awareness, moral standards and social skills develop very well. Their cultural development is good. Attendance levels are well above average and punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils enjoy school life very much and want to learn.
- High standards of behaviour are expected and achieved.
- Relationships are very good.
- Pupils develop into sensible, confident and well-rounded individuals with a clear sense of right and wrong.

Commentary

5. **Pupils are very proud of their school.** In lessons, they are alert and attentive, very keen to join in discussions and able to concentrate well when given a task to do. They work hard and try their best. Homework is taken very seriously. School clubs are very popular.

6. **Behaviour is very good throughout the school.** Discipline is low key; the pupils know the rules well and think they are fair. The atmosphere is very conducive to learning and lessons are not disrupted through inappropriate behaviour. Acts of collective worship are treated respectfully. Movement around the school is orderly and dinnertime is a civilised social occasion with noise levels that allow easy conversation. Play areas are happy and very friendly. Pupils report no concerns about bullying or name-calling. There have been no exclusions in recent years. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were unanimous in praising behaviour in the school.

7. **Pupils get on very well with other pupils and the many adults in the school.** There is a strong family community and pupils report the best thing about the school is the great sense of friendship that exists. There are strong bonds between older and younger pupils, encouraged very much by the 'reading partners' scheme. High levels of politeness are apparent – staff to pupils and pupils to each other. The pupils make visitors very welcome.

8. **Pupils' personal qualities develop very well during their time at the school.** The strong, caring influence of the headteacher is very instrumental in the way the pupils develop a concern for others and a clear sense of right and wrong. Their spiritual awareness, based very firmly on the Catholic faith, is encouraged through assemblies. These are special occasions, where the whole school community (including catering staff and the school secretary) join together in singing, reflection, listening to music and praying. Social responsibilities develop very well as a result of the many opportunities provided for pupils to help in the running of the school. This begins with the good opportunities for personal and social development provided in the Reception class, where progress in developing these early skills is good. A good appreciation of Western and other cultures is provided through geography, history and music, although pupils' appreciation of art is less well developed. Pupils have a good appreciation of other religions.

Attendance

9. Attendance is well above the national average. Pupils love coming to school and this has a positive effect on their overall learning and achievement. No pupils were excluded during the last year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 2.5 | School data | 0.1 |
| National data | 5.4 | National data | 0.5 |

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education provided by the school is good, with some very good features.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Assessment is unsatisfactory overall but satisfactory in the infants.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 19 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 17 (89%) | 2 (11%) | 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.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned, with a good pace.
- Teachers' insistence on high standards of behaviour is very effective.
- Teachers have high expectations.
- Teachers motivate pupils well.
- Assessment information is not used well enough to provide pupils – particularly in Years 3 to 6 – with clear and realistic targets for improvement.

Commentary

10. **Teachers are very confident in managing their pupils.** They expect pupils to behave very sensibly. Pupils know the rules well and live up to the teachers' expectations. This allows teachers to use the full length of the lesson for learning and ensures good levels of concentration. This is particularly effective in the mixed Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 class. The teacher plans very well for a wide range of learning activities, uses the support assistant very well in managing that learning, and reviews it effectively towards the end.

11. **Lessons are well planned, with clear objectives, so that pupils know what they are expected to learn.** Support staff are well briefed on their role in the lesson. This was particularly effective in a Year 5 and 6 science lesson where the support assistant worked very well with a small group of pupils, enhancing learning through ICT. Lessons begin briskly, usually with a quick question and answer session on previous learning. This ensures that any new learning is based firmly on existing knowledge and skills. Pupils of different ages or abilities are well catered for by being given work that is appropriate to their needs. The good pace generally continues throughout the lesson and, at the end, when appropriate, teachers review with the pupils what has been learned.

12. **Teachers have a good knowledge of most subjects they teach.** This allows areas of learning in the Reception class and subjects to be taught with enthusiasm, which in turn motivates the pupils to be interested in learning. Most teaching observed during the inspection managed to sustain pupils' interest throughout the lesson. Teachers have good subject knowledge in lessons observed in mathematics and in science. They use this knowledge to set good challenges which motivate pupils.

13. **Pupils achieve well because teachers set suitable tasks and provide challenge and encouragement.** Teachers have high expectations and make the pupils think seriously during discussions and investigations. For instance, in a science lesson in Years 3 and 4, pupils thought hard about what might happen to eggs submerged for a period of time in a range of liquids, from cola to orange juice – and came up with many sensible predictions.

14. **Assessment has improved since the previous inspection, but the data is not being used well enough to drive up standards.** Assessment in the infants is satisfactory. Marking throughout the school is good. For instance, in mathematics it often challenges a pupil to try something harder. For junior pupils, the school collects a range of valuable information on what they know and do not know. However, a system has yet to be developed to use this information to give individual pupils clear and realistic targets on how to improve, together with a programme for monitoring progress in achieving these targets.

The curriculum

There is a broad and balanced curriculum, which promotes learning and good standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good planning to ensure all groups of pupils make appropriate progress.
- Improved planning and provision for the Reception-aged children.
- Good range of enhancement opportunities, given the size of the school.
- Inadequate provision in physical education.

Commentary

15. **The good curriculum covers all the legal requirements including religious education.** There is a good focus on literacy and numeracy. Literacy skills are satisfactorily developed in other subjects, such as history, when pupils write about life in Tudor times. Information and communication technology and numeracy skills are developed well in many different subjects as pupils apply their mathematical knowledge in geography and science, or use ICT to enhance their work in science and art and design. The curriculum is broad. As pupils mature, so staff make good links between subjects in their planning. For example, data handling is integrated well into mathematics using ICT, and there is a strong link between religious education and history.

16. **Planning of the curriculum is good.** The small numbers of pupils in each year group make it essential that planning is precise so that all pupils progress appropriately. All planning is completed to achieve this end successfully. Higher attaining pupils, including the gifted and talented, have a curriculum that challenges them and allows them to make good progress. In mathematics, for example, several pupils have recently completed a 'Junior mathematics challenge', with a strong focus on problem solving. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, are given good support and very good encouragement through detailed and helpful marking in their books. Work is suitably adapted to meet their needs and access to the curriculum is good, fully meeting legal requirements. Good planning for the children in Reception ensures all areas of learning are taught. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

17. **The full curriculum for physical activities cannot be met.** Although there are some deficiencies in physical education provision overall, the school has worked hard to put things in place. This has included using the local community hall for dance and small apparatus work, for example. However, the current provision does not permit the physical education curriculum to be taught to the full due to a shortage of indoor space and essential equipment, such as wall bars.

18. **The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of activities, visitors and visits.** For a small school, the range of extra-curricular activities and other enhancement opportunities are good. For example, there are lunchtime and after school clubs in netball, musical instruments, crafts and cycling proficiency. There are residential trips, and day excursions to places of interest such as the Jewish Museum in Manchester, or the Bridgewater Hall. There are constructive relationships with the church and the local high school. French is currently being taught to Year 5 and Year 6 pupils by arrangement with one of the high school staff. The good quality input helps pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, reinforcing the teaching of these skills learnt in literacy lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are very well cared for at school. They are given very good support and guidance in helping them to develop. The school is very good at seeking pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- A very caring school where pupils are treated with respect as individuals.
- Pupils are very involved in the way the school develops.

Commentary

19. **St Mary's is a small, very friendly school where everybody knows everybody and the level of care is very good.** Pupils value highly the sense of friendship that permeates the school. They feel valued and know that staff, including the headteacher, are all equally concerned about their welfare. The headteacher's very good knowledge of individual pupils, together with her regular contact with their parents, ensures a very good level of support and guidance. Supervision is good at all times. Pupils feel very safe and secure in a very caring environment. Parents are right to have a high level of confidence in the way their children are looked after while at school.

20. **The school takes child protection very seriously, with very good provision.** The responsible person has been fully trained and staff are well aware of the school's procedures. Health and safety issues are considered very important. Great care has been taken during the recent building work, safety is stressed in lessons with a practical content and risk assessments are conducted before any school visits. The school has a good level of first aid cover.

21. **Pupils have a significant voice in the school.** One reason why pupils think highly of the school is because they feel involved and their views are treated very seriously. Although there is no school council, the school actively seeks out and acts on what pupils think. For instance, the girls had a survey on whether or not to allow trousers at school – they now are allowed. Pupils have been involved in the selection of reading books, they designed the adventure playground and they chose the colours for the classroom and toilets in the new building. The school provides a very good example of how pupils can contribute sensibly to the way the institution develops, thereby contributing to pupils' personal development and raising their understanding of citizenship.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good, effective links with parents, the community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school is held in very high regard by the parents.
- There is an effective home/school partnership.
- Pupils' learning benefits from contacts with other schools.
- Parents do not receive enough information on what pupils are going to learn and what they have learned.

Commentary

22. **The school is currently oversubscribed.** Parents think very highly of the headteacher and the way the school educates their children. They particularly like the approachability of the staff, the arrangements made for children to settle into school life and the way their children are treated fairly.

23. **The school has close contact with parents, who are encouraged to talk to teachers or the headteacher if they have any concerns whatsoever.** Relationships between staff and parents are very good. The active Parent Teachers' Association is used as an effective sounding board for airing views on school development. Parents and grandparents help in the school every week, and this help is appreciated and makes a good contribution to the pupils' learning. Parents are kept well informed on progress through formal parents' meetings, informal face-to-face contact and the pupils' annual reports. These reports contain much useful information and give a clear indication of how a child is doing in each subject in terms of attainment, effort and conduct. Reports also contain targets, most of which are clear and realistic, although the lack of a formal follow-up reduces their effectiveness. The reports, however, do not contain any detailed information on what has been taught in each subject. This omission, combined with a lack of any information for parents on what is going to be taught, reduces significantly the extent to which parents are able to be involved in their children's learning.

24. **The school has good links with the local high school and these benefit the pupils.** For instance, the older pupils enjoy very much a weekly French lesson from a teacher from the high school, which enhances their speaking and listening skills. Pupils take part in competitive sporting fixtures with neighbouring schools in sports such as football and netball. The headteacher's close contact with many of the smaller schools in the vicinity allows the efficient sharing of resources, such as technical help for the computers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governance of the school is good. The headteacher provides good leadership and management. The leadership of other key staff is satisfactory. Management overall is effective in sustaining good achievement. Leadership and management have improved since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The headteacher is committed to maintaining a positive ethos in the school and doing her best for the pupils.
- The governors are supportive, well organised and active.
- Financial management is good.
- School development planning is not focused clearly enough on raising standards.
- The lack of adequate physical education facilities is a barrier to learning.

Commentary

25. **The school has a very positive ethos based firmly on Christian principles.** The headteacher is a very good role model, showing a very clear, caring instinct combined with deep respect for the individual. She has a strong and effective influence on the school, and has the confidence and respect of parents and staff. She knows all her pupils very well. A high value is given to pupils' personal qualities. The headteacher tries to ensure that each pupil does well academically and, at the same time, develops into a well-rounded individual.

26. **Management of the school is good.** Roles and responsibilities are clear, but with recent staff changes and the small number of teachers, subject manager roles are not yet well embedded or effective in all subjects. The induction of a newly qualified teacher into the school has been good.

27. **The headteacher has recently successfully overseen a period of great change in the school.** A new building has increased the number of classrooms from two to three and there have been significant changes in staff. Both the governors and headteacher have been pre-occupied with the inevitable problems of the new building. School development in a wider sense has suffered. The school development plan is vague, apart from a good section on the development of ICT, where standards have risen. There is a lack of focus on how to improve standards in some subjects. This is unsatisfactory.

28. **The governors are firmly committed to supporting the school.** They have a well-organised committee structure and take their responsibilities seriously. They meet their statutory responsibilities in full, apart from the lack of facilities for the teaching of gymnastics and some minor omissions in documentation for parents. They are well informed and have a good appreciation of the strengths of the school. They are clear on how they want the school to develop but they have had insufficient training on how to interpret performance data, particularly when referring to small schools. However, there is a barrier to pupils learning gymnastics skills caused by a lack of adequate facilities. Governors are aware of this, and have focused on other priorities so far, which have taken several years to achieve. The lack of facilities for gymnastics is causing a barrier to learning, as there is a failure to deliver part of the statutory requirements in this subject.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Total income | 192,146.00 |
| Total expenditure | 183,759.00 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 3,063.00 |

| Balances (£) | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Balance from previous year | 24,994.00 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 33,381.00 |

29. **The school's finances are sound.** Financial planning and control are good, but the high mobility of pupils and the small number on roll inevitably means that income and reserves can vary significantly from year to year. Medium-term planning is as good as it can be, given the school's particular circumstances in terms of size.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in Reception is good. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. The issues from the previous inspection have been addressed successfully. Nine children of Reception age are taught alongside 12 Year 1 and eight Year 2 pupils in a new purpose-built classroom, which provides a bright and stimulating environment. Further improvements since the last inspection include a new secure outdoor area, where many worthwhile activities take place. On entry to school the attainment of the majority is average.

Teaching and learning are good, as is children's achievement. By the end of the year it is likely that the majority of children will reach the expected standards in all areas of learning, and that a few will exceed these levels.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Adults and children enjoy very good relationships.
- Independent skills are well promoted.
- Attitudes and behaviour are very good.

Commentary

30. The good relationships, teamwork and quiet manner of the staff ensure that all children are provided with a warm and caring environment where they settle quickly to the good range of activities set out for each session. Daily routines are well established and children's independent skills are well promoted, as when they distribute milk confidently and choose from a variety of construction activities. Children are polite and are learning to tidy up after themselves, following the good examples set by their older classmates. They have very good attitudes to learning and are very well behaved. They co-operate well in joint activities; share resources sensibly and spontaneously offer assistance to their peers who find difficulty with dressing. This earns the praise of adults and raises self esteem all round.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Adults question children well.
- Activities are carefully planned to provide appropriate challenges.

Commentary

31. Most children enter Reception with good speaking skills. They learn to listen intently to familiar stories and confidently join in with the poem 'We Want to Wear our Wellies' which helps to reinforce their understanding of sounds within words. Staff model handwriting clearly and children are learning to form letters correctly as they practise the correct movements. Staff use every opportunity to question children well and plan very effectively for children to be active learners in everyday situations, thereby helping to develop their listening skills.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children's progress is enhanced by the good use of resources.
- Teachers' high expectations of children are well rewarded.

Commentary

32. Children's progress in mathematical understanding is enhanced by the good use of resources. They are intrigued by the use of a 'postman's bag' to introduce parcels of different three-dimensional shapes, and eagerly explore them. The teacher skilfully emphasised correct vocabulary and provided good opportunities for speaking and listening skills, which develop well. This active learning reinforces understanding of the properties of shapes as children examine a 'Toblerone' shape and discover the triangles and rectangles, which together comprise a triangular prism. Children are continually motivated by teachers' high expectations and they concentrate well on tasks, for example, when finding numbers 'one more than' up to ten.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Opportunities for children to explore and investigate are good.

Commentary

33. Children have good opportunities to explore and investigate, for example, when they observe that liquids such as water may change to ice as a result of freezing. Teachers make this activity even more exciting as children engage enthusiastically in making ice-lollies. Good questioning by adults ensures children are aware of new language, and they are encouraged to use new vocabulary in meaningful sentences. These activities are good in raising the levels of independent work and general understanding.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is satisfactory overall, with a significant weakness.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Outdoor accommodation is spacious and secure.
- The hall is inadequate for indoor physical education.

Commentary

34. The new outdoor accommodation is spacious and secure, enabling good physical development. Children are keen to use pedal bikes and other wheeled toys to demonstrate their growing physical development. Inadequate hall space restricts the number of children who are able to perform movement phrases at any one time and this is unsatisfactory. Children are provided with good opportunities to handle tools and malleable materials, and do so with confidence, thereby improving their manipulative skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good use is made of role-play.

Commentary

35. Children are given a wide range of experiences to develop creatively. Role-play areas are suitably resourced and encourage children to develop language, social and mathematical skills through play. The theme of the 'Post Office' prompted both boys and girls to pretend being the customer and the counter attendant. The enactment of the Nativity story helped children to understand the significance of Christmas, so that learning was good. Staff intervention during art activities encourages children to experiment and be creative with a variety of media, and enhances learning.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils have very positive attitudes and are keen to learn.
- Teaching of English has improved.
- Targets do not involve pupils sufficiently in their learning.
- The library is now adequately resourced.
- The role of the co-ordinator is underdeveloped.

Commentary

36. **Pupils have very positive attitudes and are keen to learn.** Relationships are very good; pupils enjoy lessons and collaborate well when making decisions. Children enter the school with standards of language and literacy which are at the expected levels. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are in line with expectations. For most pupils, including those with special educational needs and the gifted and talented, overall achievement is good, which is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection.

37. **Teaching and learning of English have improved and good opportunities are now provided to develop pupils' communication skills.** They are keen to engage in discussions, where they are suitably challenged. Teachers' questions are carefully thought out to encourage pupils to use descriptive words, voice their opinions or use new vocabulary appropriately. However, pupils are not provided with individual targets which are regularly reviewed to enable them to know what they need to do next in order to make the best progress that they can. Marking is generally helpful, but lacks a consistent approach. In the infant class, where teaching methods are imaginative, the brisk pace led to a high level of interest from the pupils, and activities prepared matched closely all needs and abilities. This enabled younger pupils to discuss pattern in words and older pupils to identify common spellings and explain their meaning in sentences. Upper juniors demonstrate how writing can be made lively and convey feeling through poems. They are confident to edit and improve these and share them with their peers. Homework is set regularly and includes reading and the learning of spellings. These activities enable parents to be involved in their children's learning and are effective in helping to raise the quality of pupils' work.

38. **The library is now adequately resourced and reference books are suitably classified.** This enables pupils to read for enjoyment and to access information. In the lower junior class the teacher promotes pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills well when they study playscripts, learn how plays are written and enact the role of the nativity scene as preparation for the school play.

39. **The role of the co-ordinator is underdeveloped.** Monitoring of teaching and learning is at an early stage of development. There are limited opportunities for the co-ordinator to work alongside colleagues in order to identify and demonstrate the most effective teaching strategies. The co-ordinator understands what is needed in the school to raise standards. She analyses test results and, from her findings, she plans for weaker areas to be addressed. Displays in the junior classes do not promote topics as well as they might. Most are not labelled clearly to promote pupils' reading skills. They do not include description and questions that encourage children to develop their vocabulary and read for information.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

40. Written work in other subjects makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' achievement. Displays in history show pupils have learnt to write creatively about Henry VIII in Years 5 and 6. Teachers ensure pupils acquire a good range of technical vocabulary in subjects such as science, music and geography. Pupils' literacy skills are further enhanced as individuals read poetry in assemblies.

MATHEMATICS

Provision is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good teaching, leading to good pupil motivation and better learning.
- Good achievement, given pupils' starting points, with above average standards by Year 6.
- Effective leadership of the subject, including assessment.
- Information and communication technology is used effectively, but not regularly enough.

Commentary

41. **Teaching is good throughout the school, leading to good levels of learning in classrooms.** Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons, especially the mental sessions at the start. In Years 3 to 6, there was a flurry of hands in the air every time the teachers set high challenges or problems to be solved mentally. Learning is greatly enhanced. Teachers are careful to check out how pupils arrived at answers, and suggest alternative ways of reaching those answers. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learnt the properties of shapes through good experimentation using a ramp. The teacher was keen to ensure that pupils learnt the correct mathematical language when describing the shapes. As a result of the high motivation of pupils, behaviour is very good and pupils throughout the school learn good social skills by working co-operatively. Standards are generally above average, with a consistently high level of skills development building well on prior achievement.

42. **Achievement is good, with pupils making good progress over time.** Progress in lessons is always good. Higher attaining pupils, including the gifted and talented, are given additional challenges in lessons when working independently so that they are constantly learning new techniques or advanced skills. Extension work is challenging through problem solving, as opposed to more examples of the same thing. This enhances learning and leads to the good progress these pupils make. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, are given additional support when needed. Teachers always use a good range of questioning in the opening mental sessions in order not to daunt the slower thinkers; this enables them to recognise that they are achieving, thereby boosting their self-confidence, which in turn motivates them. Pupils' work shows good progress. Teachers mark work very effectively, often giving clear guidance on how to improve. This is particularly effective for the lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs, who are shown how to lay their work out more neatly into rows and columns, enabling them to add up or subtract correctly.

43. **The subject is well led and managed and good leadership has been effective in raising standards.** There is a good level of assessment used to track pupils' progress. This information, coming through national and optional tests and other testing, helps the planning of the curriculum to ensure pupils make sufficiently good progress as they mature. Work is effectively marked and good records are kept. Targets set are realistic and based on good knowledge of pupils. Resources are shared fairly. Planning is good. As a result, the subject has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

44. Information and communication technology is used effectively to produce graphs from data. However, the use of ICT to enhance learning is not planned for in a consistent way and opportunities to support learning are sometimes missed, such as in problem solving.

Mathematics across the curriculum

45. **Pupils use numeracy skills effectively in many other parts of the curriculum.** In geography, pupils calculate rough distances between places when reading maps; in history, through looking at chronology, they learn the sequences of dates in British history. In science experiments, pupils estimate and measure as they work on fair tests. In music, pupils learn to count so that they enter on time when singing or when playing in harmony together. Pupils use mathematical skills when completing spreadsheets in ICT prior to converting them to graphs. All these instances help pupils appreciate the value of numeracy in many areas of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The quality of teaching is good; it stimulates and challenges all pupils and so learning is good throughout the school.
- Pupils' attitudes are good; they show interest and enthusiasm in their work.
- High quality relationships and teacher expectations support pupils' learning.
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating provision and standards in science are not established.

Commentary

46. **Standards in science across the school are average.** Pupils in Year 6 are in line to achieve the expected standards by the end of the year, as a result of the good teaching and the teacher's insistence on the correct use of technical vocabulary. No differences were observed between the achievement of boys and girls. All pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs and those who are gifted or talented.

47. **In the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was good.** Lessons have a lively and interesting pace that keeps the pupils interested and keen to learn. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident in teaching science. They support pupils and enable them to test out explanations. They invite discussion, correcting misconceptions and supporting pupils in their thinking. Teachers introduce new scientific vocabulary and ideas, continually taking opportunities to reinforce them in the lesson, explaining new words and using visual clues.

48. **Because of this, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make good progress.** Relationships in lessons are good. There is a good level of trust and teachers value the contributions made by all pupils. However, although there were some good examples of teachers using assessment verbally with individual pupils, assessment is not consistently used to inform teachers' planning.

49. **There have been many improvements since the last inspection.** These include:

- The appointment of a co-ordinator.
- Links with other subjects, such as English, mathematics and geography.
- Good use of ICT for researching, recording and analysing scientific information.
- New revisions to the scheme of work and policy document.

50. Co-ordination by the previous co-ordinator of the subject was good, giving it a high profile. It is too soon to judge the work of the new co-ordinator, but she does have a good understanding of the subject's strengths and weaknesses and is very aware of what her priorities are.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good teaching making effective use of resources.
- Above average standards by Year 6, and good learning by pupils, who achieve well.
- Good subject management.
- Good links to other subjects.

Commentary

51. **Standards are above average by Year 6.** This is an improvement since the school was previously inspected. Pupils achieve well and learn many good skills through sharp, focused teaching. Pupils learn the skills of using the keyboard in Years 1 and 2, and how to save and retrieve work. They begin to do simple editing jobs as they move up the school, extending and broadening their skills as they use ICT in a wider range of subjects. Throughout the school, progress is good in the use and application of spreadsheets, handling data and producing graphs and the use of sensing devices linked to the digital camera.

52. **Teaching is good.** Staff encourage pupils to be creative, as well as giving them a range of practical skills which they reinforce and consolidate well in many subjects. In science, the use of digital cameras and microscopes linked to the computer was a very good and effective way of enhancing the learning about habitats preferred by woodlice. In art and design, good colour mixing using a commercial program enables pupils to be creative and to experiment. A very good feature of teaching is the way in which pupils support one another under supervision. Once a small group of pupils have learnt a specific skill, they work alongside others, helping them acquire the skills and knowledge. This frees up the teacher or support assistant to help those who find it difficult. In this way, use of resources is maximised for the benefit of pupils' enhanced learning. Gifted and talented pupils are able to be creative and make good progress, often quite independently.

53. **Leadership is good.** There are clear priorities for developing the subject, and good records of pupils' achievements are kept. This enables future work to be planned with greater progress in mind. As a result, standards have risen.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

54. **Information and communication technology is used effectively to support learning in other subjects.** Spreadsheets are used to present information for data handling and graphs in mathematics; digital cameras and microscopes are used to improve the quality of learning in science; and pupils use ICT for research in geography, and for designing repeating patterns in their art work.

OTHER SUBJECTS, INCLUDING HUMANITIES, CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Only a small amount of evidence was available during the inspection, with single lessons in some subjects and none in others. Reference is made to discussions with pupils and information obtained from subject leaders, and also scrutiny of pupils' work where relevant. It was not possible to make a judgement on standards in art and design, geography or history by Year 2, and design and technology throughout the school, due to the lack of evidence available during the inspection. No music lessons were observed and only one lesson could be seen in physical education.

Overall provision is satisfactory in all subjects barring physical education.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good planning, with some elements of good teaching.
- Good links made between subjects.
- Pupils enjoy lessons, especially in music.
- Inadequate provision for gymnastics in physical education.
- Below average standards in art and design by Year 6.
- Insufficiently well developed subject leadership in art and design, design and technology and physical education.

Commentary

55. In the small number of lessons seen, teaching and learning were good. Pupils enjoy their lessons in subjects such as geography and physical education. Teachers plan lessons that encourage and develop creativity, with plenty of opportunities for the pupils to discuss their work, investigate and undertake research. By Year 6, achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average in geography, history and some aspects of physical education. Achievement is good in music, with a large number of pupils learning to play ocarinas in Years 1 and 2, recorders in Years 3 to 6, and a wide range of other instruments. Progress in music has improved since the previous inspection. Work on Tudor times in history shows that pupils have been encouraged to do a good amount of investigative work and some creative writing. Pupils are aware of the lifestyles of that period and its strengths and weaknesses. When studying geography, teachers place good emphasis on skills development, especially mapwork. Pupils by Year 6 are familiar with world maps and the major countries and continents. They have a satisfactory understanding of places and their locations; they can distinguish between a physical and political map. By studying a typical township in India, pupils develop an awareness of differences in climate, lifestyle and economic conditions. This, coupled with the work on Tudor times, makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development, and helps pupils' understanding of multicultural dimensions.

56. Good links are made between subjects. Learning is enhanced when teachers make connections between subjects, helping pupils to consolidate their understanding. Information and communication technology is used effectively to help pupils produce repeating patterns in art and design; the water cycle is well illustrated using a computer program, enhancing learning in geography. Pupils write well and creatively in history, enhancing their literacy skills. They link their work in history well to their studies in religious education as they examine the impact of Henry VIII's reign on religious life at that time. In music, pupils have developed a good scientific understanding of how musical instruments create their sounds.

57. Pupils learn well, especially in music. They develop good levels of knowledge and understanding of musical ideas, technical language and how instruments work. They know that a reed vibrates in a clarinet to produce the sound, or that string instruments are strummed or plucked. They know, and can use appropriately, terms such as 'staccato' and 'allegro'. In performance in assemblies, infant pupils play the ocarinas tunefully and in good time with one another; older pupils

are inventive when playing the clarinet or piano; singing is of good quality and tuneful. Pupils enjoy taking part in these and other activities. For example, pupils enjoy researching from maps in geography; they enjoy learning about Tudor times in history, and creating designs on the computer to enhance their art and design work.

58. Statutory requirements are not met in provision for physical education . The school has worked very hard to improve its provision across the curriculum, with the exception of gymnastic equipment. The school hall has no wall bars and insufficient surface space for pupils to develop their gymnastic skills. As a result, provision in this area and this aspect of physical development are unsatisfactory.

59. Standards in art and design are below average by Year 6. Pupils have scant understanding of the work of great artists and the contributions they made to art. There is little good quality art on display. Pupils' creativity is not developing. However, standards for pupils by Year 2 have improved since the previous inspection and are now in line with national averages.

60. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall but there are inadequacies in some areas. In art and design, design and technology and physical education, there are insufficient opportunities for subject leaders to monitor the lessons. Portfolios of work are not kept, so that there is no clear guidance available to colleagues on expected standards in different classes. This results in assessment not being used as effectively as it might. In other respects, leadership and management are good, with subject leaders keeping a careful watch on resources and helping colleagues plan lessons. Co-ordination is new to some teachers, due to recent staff changes, so that their roles are developing.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

There was a very limited range of evidence available during the inspection.

Commentary

61. Pupils develop good citizenship skills throughout the school. They are frequently consulted over issues affecting them, and become involved in decision making early on. For example, they have been consulted over the colour of paint in their toilets, as well as the equipment for the outdoor play areas. Pupils develop good social skills through the frequent opportunities provided for them by the staff. Pupils raise good sums of money and gifts for a range of charities , enhancing their understanding of moral and social issues.

62. The sense of community built up in the school is a great strength in promoting better learning in a calm, peaceful and orderly atmosphere. Pupils are aware of their responsibilities to themselves and to others. They show care and consideration, and undertake seriously tasks and other responsibilities such as those of dinner monitor or register monitor. The school keeps informal records of pupils' progress in these areas, and teachers use this information to enlighten parents when reports go home or during consultation evenings. The school has also been involved in healthy eating initiatives, promoting pupils' awareness of choices.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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