

INSPECTION REPORT

OUR LADY'S CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL

Wellingborough

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 122049

Headteacher: Mrs Christine Glover

Lead inspector: Bernice Magson

Dates of inspection: 8th – 10th November 2004

Inspection number: 267457

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	168
School address:	Henshaw Road Wellingborough Northamptonshire
Postcode:	NN8 2BE
Telephone number:	01933 224900
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev. Deacon Peter Griffin
Date of previous inspection:	May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This voluntary aided infant school admits pupils from the Catholic parish of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Wellingborough, St Peter's parish in Rushden and the parishes in other surrounding districts. There are 168 pupils on roll, aged from 4 to 7 years of age. Some families experience poverty, unemployment and family deprivation and socio-economic indicators are below average overall. Movement of families in and out of the area is above average, at 20 per cent in the last school year. An above average number of families are entitled to free school meals. Most pupils are of white British origin, with a small number of Asian, Caribbean and Chinese heritage. A few pupils speak Gujarat, Italian and Portuguese as their mother tongue and a small number are at the early stages of fluency in English. At present there are 60 children in the reception year. On entry to school, there is a significant variation in attainment within each cohort. For the current reception children attainment is average in all areas of learning. A well above average number of pupils is identified with special educational needs, including learning and behavioural difficulties. There was significant instability in leadership and management following the last inspection, including the appointment of two temporary and a permanent headteacher.

In 2004, the school achieved Investors in People status and gained a bronze "Healthy Schools" award. An achievement award was received in 2001 in recognition of high standards.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18143	Bernice Magson	Lead inspector	English; history; geography; personal, social and health education; English as an additional language
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector	
20911	Judy Dawson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; science; information and communication technology; art and design; music
21411	Adrian Portlock	Team inspector	Mathematics; design and technology; physical education; special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school providing a good quality of education for its pupils. They attain above average standards by the age of seven. The quality of teaching and learning and of leadership and management are good. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- This is a caring and inclusive school which has a strong Catholic ethos;
- In Year 2 standards in reading, mathematics and art and design are well above average;
- Standards are below average in information and communication technology (ICT) in Year 2;
- Teaching and learning are good, except in ICT, enabling all pupils to achieve well;
- Assessment systems are not used sufficiently, except in literacy and numeracy;
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good;
- The roles of key staff and most coordinators are underdeveloped, including in the Foundation Stage and special educational needs.

There has been a good rate of improvement since the last inspection. All key issues have been addressed. There is good improvement in the leadership and management of the school, despite a significant period of instability. Standards are at an above average level, as previously. The ethos of the school and all its relationships are now very good. The learning environment has been developed extensively and provides pupils with better opportunities, particularly in the Foundation Stage and outdoors. Staff training has improved the quality of teaching and learning in design and technology but in ICT improvements in staff training and resources have been insufficient.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average points scored in National Curriculum tests.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
Reading	D	C	C	A
Writing	C	B	B	A
Mathematics	C	C	B	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

The achievement of pupils is good. In the Foundation Stage children achieve well and reach the expected goals for their age in all areas of learning by the end of reception. In some cohorts, attainment on entry is higher and children exceed expectations for their age, as is predicted for the current reception. Standards have improved significantly in the last two years to above average levels. In the 2004 national tests, Year 2 standards are above average in writing and mathematics and average in reading. A third of pupils have attained the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics. Compared to schools in similar settings standards are well above average in all areas tested. The performance of girls is

much better than boys in reading and writing. The school has introduced strategies to improve the performance of boys, initially for the present Year 1. In the current Year 2, standards are well above average in reading, mathematics and art and design, above average in writing and history and average in science. More able pupils, those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language achieve well and meet their individual targets.

Pupils' personal development, including their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good**. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school and have very good relationships with each other and with staff. Attitudes to learning are very good. Although attendance was below the national average over the last school year, it is currently average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. The majority of lessons seen during the inspection were good or better. In the Foundation Stage a third of the teaching was very good and the remainder of a good quality. In exploratory play and teacher led activities, reception children are challenged effectively in a wide range of activities which enables them to explore very well the world around them both in the classroom and outdoors. In reception, there are good numbers of teachers and other adults to ensure that learning remains effective. In Year 1 the teachers have good subject expertise in most subjects and they question pupils skilfully to extend their knowledge. Almost all lessons seen in Year 1 were of a good quality or better, and one in art and design was of an excellent quality. In Year 2, teachers use a good range of teaching strategies in literacy and numeracy, which challenge and interest pupils and are effective in raising standards. However there is insufficient use made of ICT to extend knowledge and skills in other subjects. Teaching assistants make a very effective contribution to the teaching and learning in all classes and give good support to the pupils with special educational needs. Assessment is satisfactory in ensuring that pupils are challenged appropriately and its use to track progress is good in literacy and numeracy. In other subjects its use is too inconsistent for it to be satisfactory.

The curriculum is good throughout the school. Lessons are planned well so that knowledge and skills are extended systematically and with a good focus on the provision of first-hand learning experiences. It is a very inclusive curriculum; additional activities support many different groups very well so that they have equal access and opportunity to learn. There is a very good range of activities to develop pupils' personal, social and emotional development and promote pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness. Teachers care for pupils very well and give good support and guidance. The school works hard to develop effective links with parents. There are good links with the church and other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. Since her appointment, the headteacher has provided the school with a very clear educational direction, which is raising standards and improving the quality of education for all pupils. She has been very successful in gaining the trust, loyalty and support of the school community and the church. Under her guidance the leadership and management roles of key staff are

improving. Governance of the school is good. Governors have a good understanding of their role, are committed to school improvement and meet all statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils hold very positive views of the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in ICT
- Improve the use of assessment
- Develop the roles of key staff and coordinators

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are above average overall and pupils achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Compared to similar schools, pupils have achieved well above average results in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics
- Standards are high in art and design by Year 2
- In ICT standards are below average by Year 2

Commentary

1. When children join the reception year there is a significant variation in their attainment. For the current cohort, attainment matches that expected for their age in all areas of learning, apart from their creative and personal, social and emotional development where it is above average. However, the attainment of the previous cohort was below average on entry in all areas of learning and with a significant weakness in their language skills. All pupils achieve well in the reception year and at least attain their expected goals by the start of the National Curriculum in Year 1. It is predicted that the standards of the current reception class will be above average in all areas of learning. The school has identified some lower attainment of younger boys on entry, which is reflected in the results of the national tests by Year 2. The provision of extra support last year is having a positive impact on standards.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.2 (16.2)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.5 (15.9)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.9 (16.3)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 56 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The Year 2 national test results are continuing to improve from the decline, which followed the previous inspection. In national tests, since 2002, there has been a significant improvement in standards. In 2004, national test results are above average in writing and mathematics, and average in reading. A third of all Year 2 pupils have attained the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics. Compared to pupils in similar schools, standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics, and in science, the results are in the top five per cent of schools for pupils attaining the higher Level 3. The performance of girls is better than boys in reading and writing. It is too early to identify whether the school's initiatives to raise the standards of boys are effective, although there are early signs of improved performance.
3. Current standards in Year 2 are well above average in reading, mathematics and art and design. Pupils have a good enthusiasm for number, and in art and design, because of the high levels of teacher confidence and skill in the delivery of these subjects. In reading, additional support and regular practice is effective in raising standards. Standards are above average in speaking and listening, writing and history. Pupils are

learning technical vocabulary, which they use well in drama and role-play. In writing they organise their writing well and write at length, and sequentially. However, many Year 2 pupils make insufficient use of their wider vocabulary to give interest and variety to their written work. Some Year 2 pupils present their work unsatisfactorily. In science, standards are currently average but improving. A new rigour is developing in analysing the subject's strengths and weaknesses and this is raising standards.

4. By Year 2 standards are below average in ICT and achievement is unsatisfactory. There is a lack of expertise among teachers in the delivery of this subject and insufficient resources to enable pupils to learn or practise new skills in other subjects. As a result, standards are improving too slowly. There is an insufficient challenge of pupils across the ability range and, particularly the more able, because assessment in ICT is insufficient.
5. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language have good support, which helps them to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and with regard to their targets. The more able are challenged effectively to achieve their best.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes and behaviour are very good overall. Personal development is very good due to the very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory overall. Standards have improved on those described in the previous inspection report.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Catholic ethos permeates the work of school
- Pupils enjoy school and all its activities
- Pupils are confident and maturing well
- Good systems promote and monitor attendance

Commentary

6. The very strong Catholic ethos permeates the work of the school and has a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes and personal development. The pupils respond very well to the mission statement; "Love one another as I have loved you." This is reflected in the very good relationships established throughout the school and especially in the affection and respect the pupils show to their teachers and their headteacher. This helps create a calm and caring atmosphere, which encourages pupils very well to enjoy coming to school and to learn.
7. The pupils and their parents say how much they like school and pupils appear happy. Parents refer to how their children "skip" to school in the mornings. They show a very good interest in their work, concentrate well and respond enthusiastically to teaching. The pupils in the Reception classes have quickly settled into school routines and enjoy the extensive range of activities provided. They love the new undercover play/activity area and equipment. Two spoke very enthusiastically about their physical activities as they said how much they enjoyed "going outside." One boy told his friends playing with construction toys; "We need to be quiet a bit more." In the rest of the school very good attitudes helps pupils learn well. This was seen in a Year 1 physical education lesson

when they listened very attentively to their teacher’s guidance and with great keenness improved their skills when travelling very sensibly over a range of large apparatus.

8. Those pupils with special educational needs or learning English as an additional language receive a good level of support in lessons and are able to participate and learn effectively alongside their classmates. They have good attitudes to learning and work hard.
9. Behaviour around the school, and at playtimes especially, is very good. This is helped by the very good supervision and range of playground activities provided, which members of staff encourage them to use very effectively. Pupils and parents say there is no serious bullying, racist or sexist behaviour. Pupils know right from wrong and what to do if minor squabbles or accidents happen. A very positive behaviour policy and simple set of school rules are understood and followed very well by the pupils.
10. The school enhances the pupils’ positive attitudes through the very good provision made for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, helping them to develop confidence and mature well. Achievement, success and effort are celebrated in rewards, displays around the school and the regular achievement assemblies. Pupils play an important part in church events. They undertake duties such as returning registers to the office in a responsible manner. They respond well to opportunities provided for them to reflect on wonders of life such as the display in the hall, “God made all of these,” showing rainbows, the stars and the sun. Broader cultural awareness is promoted well, especially through arts activities focusing on, for example, African Art and North American Indian sun masks. Pupils are chatty, friendly and confident when talking to visitors.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

11. Attendance levels in the current year are about average. A steady improvement in the overall level has occurred since the previous inspection because of the high importance the school places on promoting attendance. The thorough monitoring systems record and follow up the few families who do not appreciate the value of regular, prompt attendance. The good systems have eliminated unauthorised absences. Although authorised absences are above average, overall the level of attendance is close to the national average. A further improvement has occurred this term.

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions in the last reporting year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Teaching and learning and the curriculum are good, with a good range of enrichment activities. Assessment is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Assessment is satisfactory, overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In literacy and numeracy assessment is good and, as a result, work is well matched to pupils' needs
- In other subjects, assessment is not used well enough
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution in lessons
- In Year 1, the teaching of art and design is of an excellent quality

Commentary

12. During the inspection the majority of teaching and learning seen was good or better. There was some excellent teaching of art and design in Year 1 where the teacher has very good subject knowledge and teaches skills confidently, exciting and interesting the pupils to learn. In the Foundation Stage all the teaching was at least good and with some very good teaching in each area of learning. There are good communication links among the reception staff to maintain the good quality of learning experiences for children as all of the reception staff work in a job-share arrangement or have other key commitments in the school. In the reception year children benefit from the good range of expertise among teachers.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	4	12	9	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

13. Since the last inspection teaching has remained of a good quality overall and a strength of the school, with more good teaching but less very good teaching than previously. In all year groups teachers plan well together and there is a good consistency in the use of teaching methods. All teachers are mindful to provide pupils with very good access and equal opportunities to all teaching and learning experiences, appropriate to their needs. The contribution of teaching assistants is very good, particularly in their support of pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language.
14. In the Foundation Stage lessons have a good balance between exploratory play and direct teaching activities. The Foundation Stage is very well-organised and children are confident in the well-established routines. There are many exciting opportunities provided for children in the extensive provision in classrooms and outdoors, and resources are plentiful and of a very good quality. Teachers have high expectations of children and they respond successfully. They play happily and cooperatively either working alone, in groups, or in class activities. In one very good lesson the teacher gave sensitive support to hesitant children, so that they could make a valuable contribution to a class activity, creating a huge face with sticks, straw and twigs. Skilfully, using photographs, the teacher reminded children of what they had done previously,

encouraging them to suggest ideas for eyebrows and eyelashes. As a result all the children were proud of their achievement with lots of language, cooperation and fun.

15. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is in line with national recommendations. There is satisfactory completion of the children's assessment profile in all areas of learning and strategies have been introduced to help children achieve. For example, activities to interest and excite young boys in learning have been introduced as a response to a perceived need. However there is little evidence of teachers making use of assessment in their daily planning. For example there is limited planned extension of the more able children or additional learning support for those children with English as an additional language. There is early identification of children with special educational needs and these children receive suitable support. School assessment systems are effective in recognising the significant differences in each reception cohort.
16. In Years 1 and 2 teaching varies between good and satisfactory. All teachers provide pupils with a good range of activities, which are planned well across each year group and they give good attention to providing experiences, which promote aesthetic, visual and kinaesthetic learning. In lessons learning objectives are explained clearly to pupils and, as the lesson ends, there are good self-review tactics to encourage pupils to check on their progress. Often teachers adopt a cross-curricular approach in lessons to consolidate learning through a range of relevant experiences, such as in science, art and geography. However, there is insufficient use of ICT in other subjects. In literacy and numeracy teachers plan good activities to challenge pupils of differing abilities but there is less appropriate planning in ICT and, as a result, there is a limited challenge. Throughout the curriculum, in the best lessons, teachers manage their time well, so that pupils are motivated to learn, work hard and concentrate well for long periods of time. Pupils' work is marked regularly, often with helpful annotations about pupils' progress in the activity. However, the quality of the marking is inconsistent overall.
17. Assessment in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. There is a good analysis of results in national tests to ascertain strengths and weaknesses in standards and compare scores with the national and similar schools' results. The school is also using baseline data well to predict standards of future cohorts. However, some assessment information lacks sufficient rigour, such as in science and ICT. Also, in Year 1 the school relies heavily on teacher assessment and, with the instability and change in staffing, this has led to some uncertainty. Subject coordinators and the headteacher monitor teachers' planning effectively, but there is a lack of rigour in the monitoring of pupils' written work and insufficient clarity among coordinators about the effectiveness of some improvement strategies.
18. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and the classteachers produce clearly written individual education plans for each pupil. The targets in these plans are reviewed regularly and pupils' progress is assessed. Teaching assistants stimulate interest and enthusiasm with their well-directed comments of praise and carefully designed questions, which prompt pupils to try their best. Pupils have their own self-review sheets so that they can be involved in assessing how well they are doing. The teaching assistants are also involved fully in this process. For the more able pupils teachers' planning is particularly effective in literacy and numeracy, where they are challenged well with appropriate tasks to extend their learning.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very inclusive curriculum is broad and interesting and reflects the school's ethos in all its aspects
- Provision for personal, social and health education is a strength of the school

- The resources and teacher expertise in ICT are unsatisfactory and adversely influence the standards achieved
- Literacy and numeracy provision is good and extends into other subjects
- The very good quality of art and design has a positive impact on the whole curriculum
- The science curriculum is not sufficiently well-matched to pupils' needs

Commentary

19. The school's very strong caring ethos permeates all aspects of the curriculum across the school. At the heart is the very strong emphasis on caring for each other with the assurance of God's love and the delight in His world. These aims are exemplified in the personal, social and health education curriculum with very good personal and social development of pupils by all staff and good use of the community to support aspects such as drugs awareness and keeping healthy.
20. The good Foundation Stage curriculum is planned to link the areas of learning to provide relevance and continuity. The weaknesses in the provision for outdoor and physical activities at the time of the last inspection have been addressed with the very good outdoor classroom and good access to the playground. The children's learning is planned to allow daily access to this for all. The bright, spacious and well-resourced area supports the curriculum very well, although resources for ICT are unsatisfactory. The teaching assistants are deployed very effectively to support all areas of learning. Visits and visitors support learning well and interest the children with a range of practical experiences, such as when a baby was bathed in school as part of their assembly.
21. Most aspects of the curriculum for Years 1 and 2 are good. Literacy and numeracy are carefully planned to meet pupils' needs and learning is consolidated with planned activities in other subjects. Parents have been trained to give concentrated short-term support for groups of pupils and this is having a marked impact on the pupils' progress. The school is justifiably proud of the provision for art, which has enabled pupils to achieve very well. Visits, visitors and the locality extend learning in the humanities, arts and personal, social and health education. Extra-curricular activities include lunchtime recorder clubs, Language-4-all and a prayer club. A book week is organised annually. The choir will resume soon and there has been a recent art week. Several sporting initiatives are planned. Although no design and technology lessons were observed during the inspection, the planning and examples of pupils' work indicate that the curriculum has improved since the last inspection and is now at least satisfactory. The teaching assistants are used well and support the curriculum effectively.
22. The science curriculum, although satisfactory, at present lacks flexibility to cope with the needs of pupils of all abilities, and some materials need amending to meet pupils' needs. The coordination of the subject has suffered because of the death of the subject leader and the new coordinator for science has not yet had time to influence the provision. The curriculum for ICT is unsatisfactory. Access to the computers is limited, there is not enough hardware and some staff lack the expertise to extend learning effectively. ICT is not used enough in other subjects and pupils have few opportunities to consolidate their skills.
23. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils are given individual and small group support and their individual education plans are used effectively to support pupils' learning and to measure success. Resources to help these pupils to learn are good and, wherever possible, parents are involved, for example, two teaching assistants and six parents carry out a programme of work in improving basic literacy skills.
24. The accommodation has improved since the last inspection and continues to improve. New toilets are of high quality and appreciated by all. The open plan of the school

does, however, cause some disturbance between classes as the noise from one imposes on the other, especially in Year 2.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement is good. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is very good. Standards have improved on those described in the previous inspection report.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection and health and safety arrangements are very good
- Pupils are valued and cared for very well
- The induction arrangements are very good

Commentary

25. All adults present 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. The love and care shown to the children is outstanding. There is a most sensitive and thorough approach to child protection procedures, with very good staff awareness. Very good evaluation of health and safety risks and very good first aid procedures and supervision of pupils at break and lunchtimes, enable pupils to feel very safe and work in confidence. Very good care is taken to ensure a responsible adult collects all children at the end of the school day. Pupils say they all feel very confident about talking to teachers or other adults if they have any worries. Care is shown in the importance placed on a clean, tidy and attractive school especially the recently refurbished toilet areas. Pupils feel that members of staff value their views and this gives them confidence to discuss issues and raise questions. The headteacher obtains pupils' views on issues very effectively through discussions with small groups. This has had a significant effect in improving areas such as lunchtime supervision and the provision of playground equipment.
26. Good induction arrangements and continuing care and support ensure the youngest pupils quickly settle into the reception classes and make good progress in their personal development. The school makes outstanding provision to help include and settle pupils who move to the school other than at the start of the reception year. They are made most welcome, as being featured in displays and assemblies where existing pupils are invited to develop new friendships with them. The appreciation of this support by the pupils is reflected in some wonderfully moving letters they have sent to their headteacher in thanks.
27. Support, advice and guidance is very good for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. In lessons teaching assistants are used very well and are effective in their support.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a very good partnership with parents that has a positive impact on pupils' achievements. Links with the local community and local schools are good. The quality of the partnership has improved on those described in the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works very hard to involve parents in children's education
- Annual reports are of a very high standard
- Links with the church are good
- The school is developing links with local schools well

Commentary

28. The very successful encouragement of parental involvement provided by the school is a strong factor on pupils' very good attitudes to school and good achievements. The school successfully encourages parents to be part of their children's learning through strategies such as the 'ROWA' (read on write away) scheme which trains parents as volunteers to support specific groups of pupils for a 10 week period of focused help. An open door policy, the availability of teachers, especially the headteacher, at the start and end of the day, and the use of an annual questionnaire to gauge opinion has helped to establish relationships with parents very successfully. Issues are dealt with promptly and to high levels of satisfaction from the parents. "TAF" (The Active Friends) provide vital fundraising events and also hospitality at a number of events that helps to bring parents together as an important part of the school. The school takes every opportunity to share its mission statement with parents.
29. Parents receive very good information to help their children further in their learning. Annual reports give very good and evaluative information on progress and achievements and very helpful developmental points in the very precise "Future targets" section. These help parents to understand how they can assist in their children's learning. Parents value the quality of individual information given in consultation sessions. Regular newsletters give very good information about school life.
30. The school makes good use of its very strong links with the church. Pupils love to take part in festivals and Masses, especially singing. The school hall is used extensively for church and community activities. The partnership with the local schools, including the local junior school, ensures pupils are given good pastoral support enabling them to be confident about their move to the next stage of their education. Good plans are in hand to further develop curriculum links to improve educational support. Good links have been established with local pre-school provision, ensuring a smooth entry to reception classes. Work with the local cluster is effective, such as in sporting events and through staff development opportunities.
31. The school keeps parents of pupils with special educational needs well informed about their children's progress and they are involved in their children's individual education programme. The school believes that the support from parents is vital to the children's progress and suggestions are made to parents about their children's targets.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and the effectiveness of her management is good. Key staff provide sound leadership. The governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides the school with a very clear educational direction and is instrumental in developing its very good ethos
- The headteacher, staff and governors have a very good shared ownership of the school's aims and mission statement

- The roles of key staff and many coordinators are under-developed, including in the Foundation Stage and special educational needs

Commentary

32. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. She has brought very good stability to the school, after a significant period of instability. The key issues of the last inspection relating to leadership and management had not been fully addressed. The current headteacher has been skilful in her assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses and honest and open in her actions to overcome difficult situations. She has given a very good emphasis to team building and has successfully established very good relationships among all personnel. The school has continued to receive considerable local authority support, as necessary. The headteacher has employed very good strategies to develop the good partnership with the church and privately run pre-school playgroup, both on the same site, and all relationships with outside agencies are now cordial.
33. The headteacher has a very clear philosophy and a very strong sense of direction for the school. She has worked hard to share her ideas with others and gain their trust, loyalty and respect. The leadership and management key issues of the last inspection have now been fully addressed. The school shares its mission statement very well and it is evident in all its work. In choosing annual priorities for school improvement there is a very good consensus that equality of opportunity for all pupils and staff is of greatest importance. There is a strong sense of ownership about all decisions and developments and a good sense of pride about what the school has achieved. Staff and governors show visitors the extensive building developments in the Foundation Stage and outdoors with satisfaction, and all speak knowledgeably about the work involved and describe the wider range of opportunities, which are now offered to pupils. A "Journey" is how the headteacher describes her leadership and she recognises that there is still more to achieve, particularly in maintaining the recent improvements in standards.
34. The deputy headteacher provides good support for the headteacher and shares her vision with clarity. His skills effectively balance with the headteacher's expertise and he is a good link with the staff and a good mentor of new staff. The induction procedures for less experienced teachers are good and they are full members of the staff team.
35. However, the leadership and management role of other key staff is underdeveloped. There have been recent changes of responsibility as alterations in staffing have occurred. The review of responsibilities has been necessitated by new job-share arrangements, and as a consequence of the long-term illness and death of a senior staff member. The headteacher has dealt with these adjustments with very good sensitivity and understanding, but there is limited knowledge of subject strengths and weaknesses among some subject managers. Additionally, these changes have affected the coordination of the Foundation Stage and special educational needs and these key roles are not well enough developed. Governors have taken effective actions to assist by providing a good amount of non-contact time this term for the special educational needs' coordinator (SENCO), but opportunities to develop this work have been limited by the time of the inspection. There has been some useful monitoring by the literacy and numeracy coordinators, but infrequently, and there have been limited actions to improve performance based on observations. Nevertheless, the senior management team has monitored pupils' progress through assessment in the core subjects of literacy and numeracy and very good strategies have been introduced to improve performance based on the findings.
36. The school has growing numbers of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. The recently appointed special educational needs co-ordinator is beginning

to develop her role and the provision for pupils with special educational needs continues to be managed satisfactorily. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities in meeting the needs of these pupils and ensure that personal targets and needs are catered for. However, there is not a clear procedure for the initial identification of pupils causing concern and whose particular special education need requires additional support. At present, class teachers carry out this task for pupils in their class and, therefore, decisions can be made using different criteria; they also monitor the pupils' progress whilst they are on the lowest level (School Action) of support. Teachers have not received any recent training.

37. The role of the governing body has developed well since the last inspection and their governance of the school is good. There is a very good understanding of the need to support the school by participating in its activities and sharing with its responsibilities amicably. Governors support the school's aims and mission very well. They monitor the school's work regularly and are beginning to question its actions more rigorously. Nevertheless there is a reliance on the headteacher to direct them and in the preparation of the school improvement plan. This plan is a thorough document, which includes the ideas and contributions of all members of the school community. Because the school seeks the views of pupils and parents very well their ideas are also incorporated. Pupils are pleased with the recent improvements in the toilet facilities and parents are happy to join in with initiatives, such as the "May Day" celebrations, which also included members of the church. The improvement plan is a well-costed document in which actions for governors and staff are clearly stated and outcomes identified. It is proving to be a good working tool for school improvement.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	440,552	Balance from previous year	47,760
Total expenditure	390,732	Balance carried forward to the next	97,580
Expenditure per pupil	2312.02		

38. The financial management of the school is good. The headteacher uses funds wisely to develop the work of the school. The recent audit report has shown that financial systems are now well established and monies are secure. There is now better use of funds identified for staff training, linked to the performance management targets of staff. Daily management of funds is good. Spending of capital grants is the result of good consultation, effective planning and careful attention to ensuring that best value is achieved in allocating resources. Currently the school budget is above recommended levels; however, there are good plans for these monies, which include maintaining staff levels and further building developments.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

39. Children join the two reception classes on a part time basis for the first half term of the academic year. At the time of the inspection they had been in full time education for one week. They have had a variety of experiences before joining school and many have attended the independent pre-school situated in the heart of the building, which has very good links with the school, including some shared resources. These links are extended through the headteacher's Friday visits to the pre-school and the Little Fishes toddler group. The children's attainment on entry to the school varies considerably from year to year. While last year's children, now in Year 1 had below average abilities on entry to the reception class, the present cohort has average abilities in all areas of learning on entry to school.
40. There have been considerable changes in both the staffing and the accommodation since the last inspection. Teachers share class responsibilities, as do the teaching assistants. This works very well and both organisation and teaching are good. The new outdoor classroom, with easy access to the good outdoor area, is used very effectively and is a very good resource. Children are organised into three groups for much of the day, with a skilled teaching assistant overseeing the central activity area. There is a good curriculum with very good links across all areas of learning, although the use of ICT is limited. Rather complex timetabling enables all children to have access to direct teaching, play, group work and the outdoor classroom. While this is very inclusive, it makes it difficult for teachers to plan work to meet individual children's needs.
41. Many children enter school with records from their pre-schools, and adults make notes of individual children's achievements and attitudes during the daily activities. In spite of these, and having been in school for several weeks in small classes for half the day, there was little evidence during the inspection of planned extension activities for the most able children or additional learning support for those who need it. Teachers are not yet making the most of assessments to assist their planning. Good questioning addresses this to a degree and pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties have their needs met well. Overall, children make good progress and, by the time they leave the reception classes, most of the present cohort will meet or exceed the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, creative and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.
42. No **physical education** lessons were observed during the inspection but inspectors saw children using the toy vehicles on the playground. The accommodation for physical development has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now good. Although no direct teaching was observed, teachers' planning shows that children receive an appropriate range of activities. The teachers provide many opportunities for the children to improve their manipulative skills. During the week, for example, children made firework pictures, constructed model Catherine wheels, sorted small objects and completed jigsaws. Most hold drawing and writing tools accurately. Outside, they use space very well and show a good regard for each other's space. They pedal accurately, even backwards, and use scooters with skill. The teaching assistants are deployed very well to allow all children to use the outside area during the day, and are skilled in teaching them the rules of the road and how to use the equipment safely.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults maintain consistent expectations of children's behaviour
- The good curriculum and organisation provide many opportunities for cooperative work and play
- Very good relationships encourage children to care for each other and their teacher
- Snack times are sometimes too long and children cannot sustain their "table manners" and good behaviour

Commentary

43. The very good relationships established between the adults and children enable the children to swiftly feel secure and valued. The teachers and teaching assistants show how pleased they are with acts of kindness, sharing and taking turns to encourage the children to understand the needs of others. The school ethos and strong spiritual focus help children to develop self-esteem and a deep sense of appreciation of the world around them and of other cultures. The Diwali festival of light is celebrated alongside the Christian sacrament of Baptism, for example, and links with the invitation theme of the week's act of worship. Play activities extend the children's understanding as they dress up in Indian clothes. The many opportunities for children to interact with each other help them to understand the needs and opinions of others. The teaching is good. Adults provide consistent expectations and children have a very clear understanding of acceptable behaviour. Children are expected to share, tidy up and move sensibly round school. Children generally sustain concentration well whether working with an adult or learning through the independent activities. Many engage in role-play very effectively, showing above average abilities to interact with others. For example, children in the home corner developed a domestic situation with a family, where each maintained his or her role for some time. Children are less well behaved when expected to sit still for some time with little to do, for example, when they have finished their snack and drink. Overall, however, by the end of the Foundation Stage the children exceed the early learning goals for personal and social development and many already achieve them.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good
- Letter sounds and writing are taught systematically
- Role-play extends and enhance the children's speaking and listening skills
- More could be expected of the more able children

Commentary

44. Most children are confident speakers in the present reception classes. They swiftly learn to listen, guided by the gentle voices and high expectations of their teachers. All adults make the most of opportunities to extend the children's vocabulary. For example, when children are in the kaleidoscope, a prism with internal mirrors, children

are encouraged to describe what they can see and how they feel. As a result, some children use terms such as “experiment” with accuracy and ease. Books are readily to hand and stories are used to reinforce learning as well as for enjoyment. Even at the beginning of the year several children read a range of simple words accurately. Less skilled children discuss pictures eloquently and sometimes guess what happens at the end of the book. Children’s writing is valued and encouraged and they are expected to write their names. During the inspection few activities promoted opportunities for children to write as they played although the curriculum planning shows that opportunities increase through the year. Children use drawing materials confidently and accurately and more able children should be experimenting with writing as part of their daily activities. Nevertheless, the careful and well-structured teaching enables children to learn well so that by the end of the Foundation Stage the children will have made good progress in all aspects of communication, language and literacy with most achieving and some exceeding the early learning goals.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are well planned to provide a good range of mathematical experiences
- Basic number skills and mathematical vocabulary are reinforced effectively
- Direct teaching is good but sometimes opportunities are missed to reinforce and extend children’s skills as they play

Commentary

45. Many children have joined the reception classes with a sound understanding of numbers and counting and some are already exceed the teachers’ expectations with their numeracy skills. In discussion with children building a castle, for example, children counted up to 25 bricks accurately, named some of the solid shapes and used positional vocabulary accurately. Number skills and counting are taught systematically [the classes were up to number five during the inspection] and children practise writing the numeral as they learn. Teachers assess the children’s abilities in small groups but at present these assessments are not used to adjust the children’s learning. Other aspects of mathematics are promoted very well. The playground and outdoor classroom help children explore shape and space and sand and water play consolidate an understanding of capacity and quantity. Children learn about pairs of socks, the spirals made by Catherine wheels and to set out place settings accurately. The interesting and relevant curriculum promotes mathematical development well. The teaching is good overall although more could be done to extend more able children, even at this stage of the academic year. Pupils make good progress overall and almost all achieve the early learning goals by the time they join Year 1.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

The school makes **good** provision for children’s knowledge and understanding of the world.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is good, making learning fun

- The rich curriculum builds on the children's own experiences and introduces the wider world with well structured and interesting activities
- Opportunities for ICT are limited

Commentary

46. Most children have an average general knowledge when they join the reception classes. Some talk with authority about the world, have a good knowledge of the seasons, modes of transport and how to keep safe. The very good learning environment in school enables the teachers to plan interesting and relevant experiences to extend the children's learning. In one class, for example, a child explained how children had made handprints in slices of bread, using clean or dirty hands. These were then put in polythene bags. She predicted that the bread with the dirty imprint would go mouldy first. Teachers have been emphasising careful hand washing and this was an effective way of proving the point. Children have plenty of opportunities to design and make things. In one impressive lesson, for example, a group of about 20 children worked together to make a huge face from straw, twigs, sticks and fir cones. They managed this with impressive speed and accuracy and the utmost cooperation, down to the pupils of the eyes and the eyelashes. Others used pictures of famous buildings as a stimulus to construct buildings themselves. Children understand that humans change over time and that young creatures and babies need nurturing. They supervised the bathing of a baby during the inspection.
47. However, the provision for ICT is limited and the use of computers is not well established. The school's very special ethos in which faiths and cultures are celebrated and shared, enables the children to have a very good understanding of the beliefs of others and that food, clothing and celebrations vary. They describe significant events very well and have a simple understanding of the similarities between celebrations and beliefs. In this respect, the school serves the children very well. Most will achieve the early learning goals by the end of their Reception Year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are a wide range of opportunities to promote creative development
- Imaginative play is a central part of the curriculum
- There are many opportunities for children to sing during the day

Commentary

48. The central area is designed to provide many opportunities for the children to use their imagination through role-play and with construction toys. A range of activities is planned to develop artwork and children often have the opportunity to select their own materials from a limited range available. They selected cut out shapes, paper pastels and glitter, for example, when completing a firework frieze. The adults teach techniques well and teaching is good overall, but there were few opportunities for children to select their own media or theme during the inspection. In role-play situations, children sustain concentration for long periods. Many show a pleasing empathy with the characters they are assuming. One boy, for example, hoovered the carpet with gusto, mimicking a harassed mother with a cluster of untidy children. The children already know a good range of nursery rhymes and other songs. The teachers and teaching assistants encourage singing in spare moments, for example, while waiting for another group to join the class or after snacks. The children sing tunefully with a good sense of rhythm. Most will achieve the early learning goals for creative development.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading are well above average in the Year 2 cohort
- The performance of pupils over time in reading and writing is above average
- The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 in writing is in the top five cent nationally compared with similar schools

Commentary

49. There was a decline in standards in English following the last inspection. However, when stability was achieved in the school's leadership and management, the decline in standards was arrested. Pupils have achieved well in speaking and listening, reading and writing skills in the last two years. In the latest national tests standards are above average in reading and writing, and well above average when compared to similar schools. This improvement has been achieved by improving resources and, through a better analysis of assessment data, by giving additional support to specific pupils in carefully planned teaching groups. All pupils are now set targets in reading and writing to improve their performance. The school has recognised that girls perform significantly better than boys in both reading and writing and new reading materials and games have been purchased to interest boys in reading.
50. The quality of teaching is good overall and in some lessons very good. Teachers plan well with a good emphasis on providing activities, which are appropriate to pupils' needs. The school has recognised that there is a significant variation in the language skills of some pupils based on their attainment on entry to school and teaching is adapted accordingly. The current Year 1 pupils have much lower language skills than in other cohorts and language activities are adapted well to suit their particular needs. Role-play and discussion are given increased significance in Year 1 to improve vocabulary skills. Topics for writing are chosen for relevance and interest, such as the recent instructional writing on "How to make a jam sandwich!" All pupils are taught how to write for different audiences and by Year 2 they can write poems, use bullet points in lists, write instructions and factual reports or write their own stories. Teachers give good attention to reading a wide range of literature with pupils and by Year 2 they have learned to appreciate different types of text.
51. There is good identification of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Following detailed assessment and monitoring of their performance, pupils are given an individual education plan, which seeks to bring about improvement by providing targets based on needs and with additional support wherever necessary. Teaching assistants give very good support to these pupils, sensitively supporting and enabling pupils to access the curriculum. A small number of pupils are identified as gifted and talented in their reading and research skills. Additional materials are provided which extend and develop their reading competences further.
52. The school has recently started a very good scheme, "ROWA" (Read On and Write Away), which involves parents working with staff to promote reading and writing skills. Led by two very enthusiastic and knowledgeable teaching assistants, pupils and parents work on a ten week programme of targeted support. In this project pupils learn four platforms of words in four

stages of activities, which are completed either at school or home. As this is the first time the programme has been undertaken its effect has not yet been evaluated but the obvious enthusiasm of pupils, parents and teaching assistants is promoting an interest in reading.

53. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The literacy coordinator has a good knowledge of the subject's strengths and weaknesses and an enthusiasm for the subject. She is effective in analysing assessment information starting from the baseline data and including national test results. She ensures that the teaching and learning are suitably matched to the needs of pupils, because the teachers have an appropriate expectation of each cohort. For example, the below average attainment of the current Year 1 cohort has been identified and appropriate strategies to support their learning introduced. Teachers' planning and assessment information continues to be analysed regularly to ensure that priorities remain relevant. Over time the coordinator has introduced some good changes to bring about improved performance, such as in the greater use of Big Books.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. Literacy is used well across the curriculum overall. Teachers find relevant and meaningful experiences to extend pupils' speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. Pupils are encouraged to dramatise historical events, write a list of instructions for making a mask in design and technology, or write a diary account of a day in a Victorian mill. However, there are few links made to ICT. A scrutiny of work included only one example of pupils' work linked to ICT, where pupils had used word processing skills to copy a poem with results of a satisfactory quality.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and pupils achieve well
- Teaching and learning are good
- The subject is managed well

Commentary

55. Standards are rising and are higher than they were at the previous inspection. However, standards vary year from year and the standards in the present Year 1 are lower than in Year 2. This is due to different standards of attainment on entry to school. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in both Years 1 and 2 achieve well and that standards in Year 2 are now well above average with more pupils attaining the higher Level 3. Pupils are developing a good understanding in number and have a secure grasp of addition and subtraction and can recognise sequences of odd and even numbers. Progress in shape, space and measures is good. Pupils have good opportunities to explore shape and to measure accurately. They can name and describe some properties of two and three-dimensional shapes and can measure using standard measures. Data handling skills are developing well and pupils competently produce graphs. There is a good emphasis on practical work and this helps pupils with special educational needs to understand new ideas and to learn effectively. The pupils have

good opportunities to use their knowledge of number in lessons, and there are satisfactory opportunities for extending their skills in other subjects, such as in design and technology when researching pupils' favourite foods. There pupils are keen to talk about their work and can use a good range of mathematical language, for example, a lower ability Year 1 pupil using wooden shapes to form a pattern said she was using squares and hexagons. Teachers emphasise the need for pupils to use the correct mathematical language.

56. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy well to plan work and to structure their lessons, although too often the session at the end of the lesson was rushed and did not give teachers sufficient time to ensure that the pupils had fully grasped the learning objectives of the lesson. The focus on mental recall of number facts at the start of lessons has helped pupils to grasp basic concepts such as doubling. Lessons have brisk pace and good challenge. There is a good rapport between staff and pupils and this contributes well to pupils' confidence in the subject. Teachers use a variety of methods to help the pupils to understand and develop effective skills. There is a good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for the pupils to practise and extend their knowledge and understanding. Teachers' instructions and explanations are clear and the learning objectives are shared well with the pupils. Teaching assistants have secure knowledge and play a significant part in working alongside less confident and lower ability pupils. Pupils settle to work quickly, listen attentively, are keen to respond to questions and work hard. Teachers have high expectations of presentation and consequently pupils present their work well. Homework is used satisfactorily. The school has sufficient, suitable resources and teachers use them well with the exception of computers, which are underused. Work is marked accurately and there are often helpful comments to guide the pupils. Marking is used well to assess pupil's progress and identify improvement targets.
57. The leadership of the subject has changed recently and the present coordinator is developing the role satisfactorily. The subject continues to be managed effectively. Assessment is regular and pupils' performance is monitored to ensure that progress is consistent. Termly targets for improving the pupils' work are set and each pupil has a target card, although pupils vary in their knowledge of what these are and how well they are achieving. Some pupils with special educational needs have specific targets linked to numeracy.

Mathematics across the curriculum

58. Mathematics is used satisfactorily in other subjects. Pupils collect and collate information about healthy eating and favourite foods and record the data in graphs and charts in their work. In history pupils worked with clocks to find out the number of hours Victorian children worked in the mills. Pupils' work in design and technology includes opportunities for measuring linked to their model making.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving and more able pupils do well
- Teaching assistants support learning very well
- Teachers do not adjust their planning sufficiently to meet the needs of all pupils
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning

Commentary

59. In 2004, compared to similar schools, teacher assessments show average numbers of pupils achieving national expectations and significantly more pupils attaining the higher level 3 than in other similar schools. These results are an improvement on the previous year and, place the school in the top five per cent of similar schools achieving the above average standards. For the current cohort there is limited work in the pupils' books at this stage of the academic year, but indications are that standards are in line with other pupils of the same age. There is no significant difference in the achievements of boys and girls.
60. The teaching was satisfactory overall in the lessons observed during the inspection although there was some good teaching in Year 1. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and consistent expectations of good behaviour and cooperative paired or group work. In both lessons in Year 2, most pupils used a teacher generated worksheet to record the materials and a range of objects were made, following a class demonstration of the task. Some found this easy while others struggled. There was no opportunity for the more able pupils to find their own ways of recording the outcomes or to extend their learning by, for example, finding reasons why certain materials are used for each object. Less able pupils struggled with the grid format and found the task very difficult. In both classes, however, the least able pupils and those with special educational needs were supported very well as they sorted objects with the teaching assistants. Very effective questioning extended learning well and these pupils made good progress during the lessons.
61. The teacher in Year 1 promoted investigative science well as individual pupils suggested and demonstrated ways to light a bulb with a battery, bulb in a holder and wires with crocodile clips. Pupils were delighted when this worked. The group activities were less effective. The two groups working with the teacher and the teaching assistant completed their circuits well and those with the teaching assistant drew and labelled their circuits accurately. Other pupils had different tasks but these were not sufficiently adjusted to meet their needs and few achieved what was asked of them, in spite of careful explanations from the teacher. A good plenary drew together pupils' findings well and safety issues were reinforced effectively.
62. The leadership of the subject has been disrupted recently due to the illness and death of the coordinator. The new subject leader has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve provision, including developing the use of ICT, but has not yet monitored teaching and learning. There are plans to create a wild area in memory of the previous subject leader. Pupils' learning is assessed at the end of each unit and these are used to track their progress. These are not yet used sufficiently to adjust curricular planning or the teachers' lessons. Similarly, teachers' marking, although accurate and evaluative with plenty of praise, lacks rigour in suggesting ways that pupils can improve or challenging questions to extend learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average by Year 2
- ICT is not used sufficiently in most other subjects
- The subject leader's role is not sufficiently well developed
- Pupils use graphics programs to produce good quality artwork

Commentary

63. Very little ICT was seen during the inspection and samples of work show limited word processing, the same work for pupils of all abilities, and one piece of work from pupils in Year 1, using graphics tools to create a picture. Pupils do not have their own folders on the computers and there is very little evidence of the use of ICT in other subjects, apart from art and simple games to support literacy and numeracy in the reception classes.
64. Pupils in Year 1 are beginning to consolidate their word-processing skills. One or two recall technical terms such as "highlight" and some remember how to change font size, style and colour. However, many struggle with this and for some their poor control of the mouse hinders their actions. In a well-taught lesson both the teacher and the teaching assistant had to give a great deal of support to the pupils working in pairs on the computers. Other activities, such as collecting different fonts from magazines and listing labels in the classroom, were very relevant and helped to consolidate pupils' understanding of fonts and labels. The lesson in Year 2, at the end of the day, had very little pupil input as individuals clicked on objects on the screen during an interactive "Little Animals" story from the BBC website. This was difficult as pupils had difficulty reaching the computer. Some pupils were unsure which side of the mouse to click to select. Pupils enjoyed the activity but few ICT skills were used. Later a pupil demonstrated the use of the tools in a graphics program. This was a class effort but eventually the task was achieved. A more able pupil filled the shapes created with "taking a line for a walk" efficiently.
65. There are some good examples of pupils' ICT generated artwork on display and pupils have a good understanding of the artist's style. Overall, however, pupils do not have enough access to ICT. The computers are in cramped areas and some have only just been connected to the Internet. There are some networked computers but this facility is not used. Although there has been some training for teachers this has been insufficient. The new subject leader has not yet had sufficient training either in computer skills or for her duties as a manager. There is a good scheme of work developed by the LEA but pupils struggle with it as they have little opportunity to develop their skills by using them in other subjects. The pupils are a long way from using computers as tools to access knowledge or to support independent learning across the curriculum.
66. Resources are beginning to improve. An interactive whiteboard is available, although mainly the teacher used this for demonstration during the inspection. More are planned and there is a programme of improving hardware over time. The headteacher has a very good understanding of what needs to be done to improve the provision, teaching and learning of ICT, but there has been insufficient progress since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. Insufficient use is made of ICT in other subjects of the curriculum. There were some examples of word processing seen during the inspection and, in reception, number and spelling games. Teachers' planning shows that, in Years 1 and 2, there are few opportunities for pupils to consolidate their skills in other curriculum activities and as a result standards remain below average.

HUMANITIES

68. **Geography** is taught in an alternate cycle with history and during the inspection no lessons were seen. As a result no judgements can be made about the quality of provision, standards or teaching and learning. From a scrutiny of work and discussions with the coordinator indications are that pupils' achievements are average. By Year 2 pupils have a satisfactory understanding of weather and climatic change and they know how to dress in various countries in each season. Teachers' planning shows that lessons are sometimes combined with other subjects. There is a good focus on speaking and listening, reading and writing. Completed written work shows that pupils have a satisfactory understanding of their locality and of some European destinations. Pupils in Year 2 have written a holiday list, which indicates a satisfactory knowledge of weather in England and overseas and also a holiday postcard in which they show some understanding of distance and travel. The curriculum includes local geographical studies in the immediate vicinity, when pupils are taught to identify different types of buildings and amenities. In Year 1 they visit a country park to learn about simple map-making. The subject makes a good contribution to the social and cultural understanding of pupils. Subject leadership is not sufficiently well developed because of the changes in staffing and instability in leadership and management. Currently, there is no action plan for the development of this subject. A newly appointed coordinator recognises these weaknesses and is eager to introduce developments.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy this subject because the teaching is good
- Practical experiences and role-play bring a relevance to the learning

Commentary

69. By Year 2 standards in history are above average. Pupils are showing a good ability to compare and contrast their own life with that of children of previous generations. In a project on the Victorians pupils have learnt about the impact of innovation in the home and workplace. They have considered the benefits of electricity in the home and of automation in the mills. Pupils have calculated how many hours Victorians children worked in the mills and compared with rates of work and play in their own lives. By Year 2 pupils are showing good levels of empathy with Victorian children. They have learned about orphan Annie, a child of their age, who

experienced poverty and hardship as she worked in the mills daily and discussed how the concentration on healthy eating and exercise is beneficial to their own well-being. These pupils have a good understanding of chronology for their age and can place Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth in the appropriate century when making a timeline.

70. Teachers are confident in their teaching of history and they use a good variety of strategies to enliven lessons and excite pupils' interest in history. Planning is good and effective links with other subjects promotes pupils' knowledge well. In some good work in Year 1 pupils role-played Mrs Lather in her Victorian laundry. They enjoyed their teachers' dramatisation of Mrs Lather, and on her visit to the classroom asked well-conceived questions, which extended their learning very well. In a good link with art and design, pupils made observational drawings of Victorian washday artefacts. Later, in discussions, pupils used technical terms and practised with the equipment to find out how it was used in a Victorian home. By the teacher's skilful questioning pupils soon realised how computerised systems of today have made washday easier. Displays in classrooms and around the school extend pupils' knowledge very well. For example, a display on historical leaders has increased pupils' knowledge of Martin Luther King and Mother Teresa. Overall, the subject makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, moral and social and cultural development of pupils.
71. The coordinator is newly appointed to her role this term and her leadership and management are not yet sufficiently well developed. Nevertheless the subject has a good profile in school because of the high levels of enthusiasm of staff and, as a result, standards are consistently good.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

72. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the quality of provision, standards, or teaching and learning in music, physical education or design and technology. The work in **design and technology** has improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 cover a good range of learning opportunities and use a wide variety of materials and techniques effectively. These include planning and making a fruit salad, using construction kits, designing and making moving models, constructing different structures and working with some simple mechanisms. Year 2 designs for making a puppet are very well set out and show that the pupils have thought very carefully about their ideas and evaluate their work thoughtfully. The work in pupils' books and on display clearly indicates that pupils take much pride and care in their work and that teachers have high expectations.
73. In **physical education**, there is a comprehensive programme of work in gymnastics, games and dance. Only one lesson was observed. The very good lesson was active and challenging and very effectively taught by the knowledgeable teacher. The pupils enjoyed the lesson and were fully engaged in the tasks and worked hard. The lesson gave the pupils good opportunities to improve their skills in moving and creating a sequence of movement using large apparatus, which they did very well. The school's facilities and accommodation are good. Indoors there is a good sized, well-equipped hall and there is a good outdoor space, which provides good opportunities for physical activities. The effective subject coordinator has successfully extended the range of opportunities, particularly as part of the Primary Link programme. For example, the school has planned for football coaching from a local football team. Appropriate staff training in dance and gymnastics has taken place and training in games is to be provided.

74. In **music**, the singing in assemblies is good. Children sing confidently and rhythmically and obviously enjoy their performance. Occasionally, they lack concentration when learning new hymns. In the two lessons observed in Year 1, pupils understood that music can be loud and soft and adjust their singing and playing on the good quality percussion instruments in response to hand signals and musical symbols. Some used the word "dynamics" accurately. Although the teaching was satisfactory overall, in both lessons the use of time was not as effective as it could have been and pupils spent some time inactive. In one lesson the teacher had high expectations and pupils achieved well overall, although there were not enough opportunities for pupils to evaluate their performance or to make suggestions. Pupils know a good range of nursery rhymes and sing well. The scheme of work is relevant and appropriate and reflects the ethos of the school as well as the requirements of the National Curriculum. There are recorder clubs and the choir is planned to resume shortly. The new subject coordinator is knowledgeable but has not yet had time to audit provision or teachers' planning for the subject.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements in art are well above average
- There is some excellent teaching
- Good quality artwork permeates through the whole curriculum and supports pupils' spiritual and cultural development very well

Commentary

75. The subject coordinator is a talented artist and is ambitious to achieve high standards for pupils in this subject. Her teaching is excellent. Techniques are carefully taught and very clear guidance enables pupils to produce work of high quality. Her delight in their achievements results in high levels of concentration from the pupils, so that they achieve very well. Pupils in Year 1 produced high quality observational drawings of horse chestnut leaves, produced painted leaves with good texture and well-fashioned trees. The teacher's very high expectations of pupils' abilities and her love of the subject have resulted in very good quality artwork across the school.

76. In a lesson in Year 2 there was a good range of activities linking with the topic about Africa. A good discussion about pattern showed that pupils were perceptive. They identified different types of pattern and repeated patterns. Pupils began to make clay pots with the teacher and the teaching assistant. Some time was spent in experiencing the feel of the clay, with some useful discussion but preventing much progress towards producing coil pots. Other pupils successfully produced patterns with chalk, maintaining concentration and showing pride in their work. Observational drawings of wooden animals were less successful because of the lack of guidance throughout. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well supported in lessons and made good progress.

77. There has been a programme of training in a range of techniques for the teaching assistants to enable them to support pupils well and some training for the teachers. A high quality portfolio and photographic evidence of pupils' work as well as displays around the school show that pupils have a good understanding of the work of other artists and the work of other cultures. The good scheme of work, produced by the coordinator covers the elements of the National

Curriculum well and makes effective links with other subjects. Resources are of a good quality, enhanced by contributions from local shops and businesses.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal social and health education (PSHE) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is whole school involvement in PSHE
- The curriculum includes a very good focus on inclusion and personal responsibility to support the needs of others;

Commentary

78. Pupils' personal development, including their knowledge of social and health issues, is very good, because the school's mission statement, "To love one another as I have loved you", pervades all its work and influences all relationships. Pupils reflect on their personal experiences and local and world issues very well for their age. To support their opportunities for reflection there is a very strong well-planned programme of activities for the development of PSHE in lessons, assemblies and informal situations. Pupils understand very well the need to consider others in the community and they learn to be good citizens. They pray regularly for the needs of others and make financial donations to support those in need.
79. The quality of teaching of social and health education is very good. Visits and visitors enhance the provision. Health, sex and drugs education are all included in the curriculum and taught with a sensitive regard to pupils' needs. The participation in the healthy schools initiative is helping pupils to learn about healthy eating and the consequences of poor eating habits. Staff respond well to personal and social issues as they arise. Loneliness or anxieties on the playground are overcome through carefully planned strategies to develop relationships. Teachers are skilled at identifying and supporting the various needs of pupils and in different groups their needs are assessed and improvements in relationships sought. For example, the "New Kids on the Block" group helps new arrivals to feel that they belong. Skilful questioning enables teachers to understand the views of pupils and respond to their needs. The very good ethos of the school helps pupils to become mature and responsible and they show very good respect for others. Teachers give star awards to pupils to show appreciation of any good social as well as academic achievement.
80. The subject is very well led and managed by the headteacher who is committed and dedicated to ensuring that the needs of all pupils are understood and addressed. Her leadership in PSHE enthuses others to support her and enhances the provision across the school. She consistently encourages staff and governors to consider the needs of the individual, such as by improving the playground provision for pupils, or by offering a time of prayer to staff as they deal with a difficult classroom issue. Provision for the personal, social and health education of pupils is a strength of the school.

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	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
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	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
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	2
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).