

INSPECTION REPORT

ST ANNE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Basingstoke

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116379

Headteacher: Mrs C Walton

Lead inspector: Mr R Crompton

Dates of inspection: 11th – 13th October 2004

Inspection number: 267735

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	214
School address:	Pinkerton Road South Ham Basingstoke Hampshire
Postcode:	RG22 6RE
Telephone number:	01256 464165
Fax number:	01256 842083
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr L Mulkerns
Date of previous inspection:	10 th July 2000

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school serves a suburban community in the town of Basingstoke and has 214 children on roll. The children are taught in seven classes divided by year group. The level of pupil mobility is average. Very few children are from ethnic minority backgrounds or have English as an additional language. When they enter the reception class, children's attainment is above average for their age. About 15 per cent of the children have special educational needs, which is broadly in line with the national average. The school has a below average percentage children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. About 3 per cent of children are eligible for free school meals, which is well below average and indicates an area where most parents are in employment. However, because of the denominational nature of the school, many children come from beyond the local neighbourhood. Staff turnover has

been high in recent years. There have been significant changes in the teaching staff since July. Four teachers are new to the school and only two teachers have remained with the same year group.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7320	Mr R Crompton	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage curriculum Science Information and communication technology Music Physical education
13874	Ms J Chesterfield	Lay inspector	
21534	Ms K Rawson	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History English as an additional language
32106	Mr J Zealander	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs Personal, social and health education and citizenship

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an improving school which provides a **satisfactory** education. Children get off to a flying start in the reception class because of the consistently high quality of teaching. In Years 1 and 2, standards in reading and science are in line with national expectations, but in writing and mathematics they are too low. Children are making steady progress through Years 3 to 5. They get a significant boost to their learning in Year 6 where teaching is very good and standards are above average. Children are well cared for and enjoy the rich variety of experiences. They develop very positive attitudes and behave very well. The school's Catholic ethos creates a strong sense of community. The headteacher gives good leadership and is well supported by senior staff and governors. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher, senior staff and governors provide strong leadership
- Good provision for personal development contributes to children's positive attitudes and behaviour
- Very good teaching in reception provides children with a strong foundation for future learning
- Very good teaching in Year 6 provides a significant boost to children's achievement
- Children do not achieve well enough in writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2
- Gaps in the curriculum for information and communication technology mean that children cannot meet the standards expected by Year 6
- Too few opportunities are provided for children to practise and develop their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in other lessons.
- A good range of extra activities enriches school life
- Very positive relationships between home, school and parish help children feel secure and well cared for

Good progress has been made in raising standards in writing through Years 3 to 6 but writing remains a weakness in Years 1 and 2. Achievement in science has improved due to better teaching. Facilities for information and communication technology are now much better but the school still lacks all the resources necessary to teach the subject. Children have good computer skills, but they are not being taught all that they should be. Assessment has improved but inconsistencies remain in how teachers use assessment information to decide what to teach next. The high turnover of staff has frustrated other planned developments. Overall improvement since the last inspection in 2002 has been satisfactory.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

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

*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.*

Overall achievement is **satisfactory**. Children make good progress in the reception class and are on course to reach good standards in all areas of learning. In Years 1 and 2, children are making steady progress in lessons but their overall achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards in writing and mathematics are too low and children have much catching up to do in order to fulfil their potential. Progress is better in reading, science and information and communication technology where standards are in line with expectations by the end of Year 2.

Children are achieving well through Years 3 to 6, and making particularly good progress in Year 6. As the table shows, children's progress from Year 2 to Year 6 was much better than is generally expected but this reflects the low standards four years previously when children were significantly underachieving. Standards in English, science and music are now good and attainment in mathematics is average. Although well versed in computer skills, children are not achieving well enough in all aspects of information and communication technology to enable them to reach the expected standards. Standards in art and design and design and technology are in line with national expectations. It was not possible to judge standards in history or geography.

Children with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The very few children with English as an additional language make good progress.

Overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Very good provision for children's spiritual, moral, and social development results in very good relationships. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Children have very good attitudes to school and behave very well. Attendance levels are above average and children are punctual.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. Teaching is of a consistently high quality in the reception and Year 6 classes where the level of challenge is carefully matched to children's needs and lessons move at a brisk pace. In other classes, teaching is satisfactory overall with

some good and very good teaching. The curriculum offers satisfactory opportunities for children to learn according to their individual needs. They enjoy a good variety of additional activities that promote learning and personal development. There is a good partnership with parents and children are well cared for.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher, the associate head and key staff provide good leadership. Governance is good. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and support the school well. They carry out their statutory requirements. Overall management is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy with most aspects of the school, although some feel that they could be kept better informed about how their children are getting on. Children have very positive views. They say they like their teachers and they particularly enjoy the friendly and caring atmosphere in the school

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise achievement in Years 1 and 2 in writing and mathematics
- Improve the standards achieved in Years 3 to 6 in ICT
- Increase opportunities for children to practise and develop their numeracy, literacy and ICT skills in other lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is **satisfactory** overall. It is **good** in the reception class and Year 6 where children are reaching above average standards. In Years 3 to 5, achievement is **satisfactory** and standards are improving. In Years 1 and 2, achievement has been **unsatisfactory** in recent years and standards are below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good progress is made in all areas of learning in the reception class
- Children in Years 1 and 2 are making satisfactory progress now but are not yet reaching average standards in writing and mathematics
- In Year 6, children are making rapid progress in English, mathematics, science and music
- Achievement in information and communication technology in Years 3 to 6 is unsatisfactory because children are not taught all aspects of the subject

Commentary

1. Children in the reception class achieve well because the learning is very well organised and they are expertly taught. They reach good standards by the end of the reception year. A strong emphasis on personal development, literacy and numeracy means that they soon acquire good social skills and a firm foundation in English and mathematics. The well-balanced curriculum helps to ensure that children develop a very secure knowledge and understanding of the world outside their immediate home and school environment and that they make good progress in physical and creative development

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.8 (16.5)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.2 (13.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.2 (15.9)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. In recent years, results of national tests at the end of Year 2 have been mostly below those of similar schools, particularly in writing and mathematics. Although results were at or above the national average, most children did not fulfil the potential they showed when they started school. More able children have done reasonably well in reading, writing and science but not in mathematics. Although children in these year groups are now making satisfactory progress, standards in writing and mathematics are lower than they should be and children have a lot of

catching up to do in order to get back on track. In reading, science and ICT, children are making steady progress and reaching the expected levels.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.8 (27.5)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.0 (27.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.4 (27.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Results of national tests in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 have been below those of similar schools in recent years. The results in 2003 were better but remained below those of similar schools. This year's performance was better still with well above average results¹ in mathematics, good results in reading and average results in writing. This improved performance is clearly the result of the high quality teaching in Year 6. A renewed effort to improve learning since the school was judged to be failing to provide a satisfactory education in 2000 had a dramatic affect on the 2003 results. Year 6 children built very well on their attainment when in Year 2, often referred to as the 'value added' from Years 2 to 6. Currently, children in Year 6 are attaining good standards in English and average standards in mathematics.
4. Children are achieving well in science and music and reaching good standards by Year 6. Practical approaches in these subjects are paying off and children are building up their skills systematically from year to year. This is not the case in information and communication technology, where standards are below those expected by Year 6. Children use computers confidently and have some good skills, but their experience is too narrow. They have not been taught several important aspects of the subject so, however good their general skills, they cannot reach the standards expected across the board.

Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Children have **very good** attitudes to school and behave **very well**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Attendance and punctuality are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults and children get on very well together
- Children benefit from a good range of clubs and extra activities
- Work in literacy, art and music broadens children's cultural horizons
- Assemblies make a strong contribution to children's personal development
- Attendance has improved over the last year

Commentary

¹ National comparisons are not available at the time of writing so these judgements are based on last year's national performance tables.

5. Children think highly of the school. They particularly like the friendly atmosphere and the fact that adults and children get on so well. Their attitudes and behaviour are very good thanks to the hard work and consistent approach of the staff. In class, teachers and support staff build positive relationships with children and set high standards for their behaviour. Consequently, children want to behave well because they like their teachers and want to please them. Those children who find it hard to control their behaviour are mostly well managed both inside the classroom and at breaktimes. The recently introduced peer mediation scheme is already helping to sustain the harmonious atmosphere across the school and giving those providing the service a strong sense of responsibility, fairness and justice. There have been no recent exclusions.
6. A good range of extra-curricular activities has a big impact on children's social development. By playing an instrument, for example, or competing in sporting tournaments, the children learn a lot about their own capabilities and about working with other people. Outings to places linked with the curriculum similarly give children the chance to show how they can represent the school, and provide them with memorable experiences.
7. The good quality of displays around the school shows the effort teachers make to increase children's knowledge and understanding of literature, art and music. Assemblies and religious education lessons provide insight into different faiths, but other cultures are not generally flagged up in the everyday life of the school. The school identifies this as an area for improvement in its development plan.
8. Assemblies make a very useful contribution to children's all-round personal development. Older children and younger ones alike take their 'prayer partnerships' seriously and the family atmosphere created when all staff and children are gathered in the hall provides a very strong sense of community. The headteacher and associate headteacher lead these occasions very well, successfully encouraging children to reflect on world events and their attitudes and feelings towards family, friends and those less fortunate than themselves.
9. Attendance is now above the national average, thanks to the hard work of the school. Parents support the school and make sure that their children attend regularly and on time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0 (2003/4)	School data	0.3 (2003/4)
National data	5.4 (2002/3)	National data	0.4 (2002/3)

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year. There is no national data available yet for 2003/4

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education. Teaching and the curriculum are both **satisfactory**. There is **good** provision of extra-curricular activities. The school

provides **good** care and guidance for children. Links with parents and the community are **good**.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory** with major strengths in the reception class and Year 6. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's learning is very good in the reception class and Year 6 classes because the teachers inspire them to do their best
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to many lessons, although they are sometimes not used effectively
- Some lessons lack pace which means children become restless
- Good use is made of homework to support learning in years 3 to 6
- Older children are developing good skills in self-evaluation, but individual targets could be more user friendly
- Marking and the tracking of individual progress is inconsistent
- Some teachers lack confidence in teaching information and communication technology

Commentary

10. A strong feature of the teaching in the youngest and oldest classes is the promotion of independence. In the reception class this shows in the way children choose their own activities, sustain their concentration and make their first attempts at talking about what they have done and what they have learnt. Working closely as a team, adults pitch the work at just the right level to ensure children are stimulated and motivated to improve. They are successfully encouraged to be imaginative and to think about how they can solve simple problems. This approach is evident at a much higher level in the Year 6 class where children are motivated and excited by learning. They respond very well to the level of challenge and to the expectation that they should take increasing responsibility for their own learning. They are quickly learning to review their own work and to identify aids and barriers to their progress. Children's feedback on what they find most effective, such as extra resources, adult help or group work is increasingly used by the teacher to modify and refine lessons.
11. Teaching assistants provide good support in most lessons by taking small groups and working with individuals. They support children with special educational needs well. For example, children were able to sustain their concentration during a Year 1 mathematics lesson because they worked in four separate groups. Some teachers use teaching assistants very effectively to note children's responses during lesson introductions and summaries. This provides valuable assessment information and helps the planning of subsequent work. The effective deployment of teaching assistants is inconsistent, however, and more could be done to harness their expertise and experience in supporting learning.
12. Where teaching is lively, dynamic and taken at a brisk pace, children learn more quickly. Some lessons lack pace and energy. Because the level of challenge is too high or too low, children become frustrated and this leads to restlessness and less positive attitudes.
13. Teachers are making good efforts to involve children in evaluating their own work. For example, most children have targets stuck into the cover of their exercise

books and teachers highlight them when they are achieved. This is a step in the right direction, but some of the statements are taken from National Curriculum documents and are not written in child friendly language. As a result, children do not know the precise steps they need to take to improve. Some teachers use these targets when marking work to provide constructive feedback but this is patchy, ranging from on-going dialogue between teacher and child to cursory ticks. The lack of a schedule of skills which children should aim to develop through and across years means that teachers and children do not have much to measure progress by in some subjects. As a consequence, some work is unnecessarily repeated. This is the case in information and communication technology, where similar skills are involved in the use of painting programs in Year 2 and Year 5. Information and communication technology is the subject in which teachers are least confident and they are not helped by the lack of clear guidance on what has been taught previously and what they need to teach next.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 19 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	5	4	7	1	0	0

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory** and provides an appropriate range of learning opportunities. Additional activities provide a **good** enrichment of the curriculum. The accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision in the Foundation Stage is very good and gives all children a good start in their learning
- The curriculum is enriched well by visits and after school clubs and activities
- Insufficient consideration is given to the development of skills and links between subjects
- The accommodation and resources have been improved
- Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to support the curriculum

Commentary

14. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. It ensures that all aspects of the recommended curriculum for children of this age are covered and makes very good links between them. It provides a very good range of activities that are planned in a systematic way to support children's learning. Children are provided with good opportunities to learn through self-directed play. The range of these activities is broad with very effective links made that enable all children to

develop and to consolidate knowledge and skills, to organise themselves and to develop greater confidence in their own abilities.

15. Staff follow school guidelines for all subjects but have not yet given sufficient attention to the development of skills, such as children's understanding of chronology or time and space in history and geography. Children do not have sufficient opportunities to develop coherent links between the subjects, such as using the skills of information and communication technology in writing to enable them to draft and improve their writing in other subjects. As a result, there are still insufficient opportunities for children to use and develop their literacy and information and communication technology skills in other subjects. However this is being encouraged in Year 6 and the children are successfully using a range of writing skills across the curriculum.
16. The overall provision for children with special educational needs is satisfactory. It is very good in the reception class. The school reviews the provision for children with Statements of Special Educational Needs regularly and works effectively with outside support agencies. There are also individual education plans for children who require them. However, although these are written to address the needs of the children, too often the targets are not explicit enough in teachers' planning. There are teaching assistants in every class and they support the teaching and learning in the classroom well. They take responsibility for groups of children as well as those with Statements of Special Educational Needs. They support the teachers by ensuring that the children understand what they have to do and helping them to achieve it.
17. The school provides good enrichment of the curriculum for all children through a wide range of after school clubs and other activities. The curriculum is made interesting through visits to the locality. Children participate in drama, sports clubs and artistic activities and there is a residential visit to the Isle of Wight for children in Year 6. The school has undertaken a number of successful additional activities that have involved children working alongside professionals from outside school, including a writer of children's books who has inspired some of the older children in their writing.
18. Accommodation has been improved since the last inspection with the provision of a good space for the school library. In addition the school office has been enlarged and the staffroom facilities improved. The school grounds are used effectively to support children's learning and the newly created outside area for children in the reception class promotes learning in different settings. Resources are good overall. There are sufficient computers but overall resources are unsatisfactory in information and communication technology because of a lack of appropriate software and peripheral equipment.

Care, guidance and support

The attention given to children's care and welfare is **good**. Support, advice and guidance for children based on monitoring are **good**. Involvement of children is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between staff and children are very good
- The school's daily routines are well organised
- There are some good new initiatives for consulting children

Commentary

19. Teachers and support staff get on very well with the children and treat them with respect and, as a result, the children are confident that they matter and feel well supported. This was very evident from the inspection questionnaire, where many children commented that they would not want to change a thing. The successful induction process in the reception class ensures that new children and their parents settle in without fuss. Academic guidance for children is still developing with the introduction of good new strategies, such as pupil conferencing, though target setting is now an established part of the school's work.
20. The school day runs like clockwork thanks to the smooth team working of all staff. Breaktimes and lunchtimes are happy occasions even during bad weather. The school community operates like a family, socialising together and helping one another out. Visitors from the parish and the community have lunch with and chat to the children, for example, and older children read to younger ones in the library or play games with them in their classrooms.
21. The school has recently introduced some good new ideas for consulting the children and involving them more widely in the school's work. Last year the school council and the peer mediator scheme began; this term children have completed questionnaires about their views of the school. The children have shown that they are more than capable of taking on these responsibilities.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnerships with parents and the community are **good**. Links with other schools are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works closely with parish and parents
- General information for parents keeps them well up to date with developments
- Information for parents about their children's progress has not been good enough

Commentary

22. The school welcomes parents and staff are always friendly and readily accessible to them every day. Parents in their turn have stood by the school through thick and thin and do what they can to support their children's learning. The parish too provides support for both the school and its families. The strong Catholic ethos is a source of strength for the school and underpins the children's personal development. It comes through in the daily life of the school, through assemblies and masses, and through special events such as the harvest collection.
23. Newsletters and curriculum letters for parents are very good. The newsletters go out weekly, so parents always know what is happening at the school, and the headteacher tries to keep them informed about areas which are of concern to them, such as staff departures and recruitment. Curriculum letters are full of detailed information about what the children in each class will be covering each term. They include practical ideas on how parents can help and realistic expectations about homework. The school's website is also developing well, and there have been some good new initiatives to canvass parents' opinions, undertaken both by senior staff and by the school council.
24. The school has plans to improve its arrangements for keeping parents informed about their children's progress, as these were not adequate last year. The school did not follow the conventional pattern of consultations by appointment in the autumn and spring terms with an optional appointment after reports in the summer term, and parents have felt dissatisfied as a result. On top of this, reports to parents on their children's progress do not give a clear picture of how well the children are doing for their age. Targets for improvement are often written in jargon, which is not helpful for parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall. Governance is **good**. The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is **good**. Management is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses
- The leadership team are establishing a good team ethos focussed on improving teaching and learning
- The key stage managers offer very good role models through their own teaching
- As several subject managers are new, their role in monitoring standards is not fully developed

Commentary

25. Since the last inspection in 2002, the school has made satisfactory progress. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have provided strong leadership. Underachievement is now being tackled successfully. Significant changes in staffing and staff absence have contributed to some lack of continuity in children's education and difficulty in developing some subjects. The school has also experienced difficulties in appointing a deputy head and is now, additionally, seeking a new headteacher. The governors, supported very well by the local

education authority and the diocese, have managed this situation well. They have appointed an acting headteacher for the time being and she is already working alongside the outgoing headteacher. She has gained the confidence of the staff and has established a very good rapport with the children. Governors support the school wholeheartedly. They also have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses. The committee structure is well-developed and governors use their committees effectively to obtain a good understanding of what is going on in the school. They ensure that they obtain training in areas that will help them be better informed and understand issues. The headteacher's reports to the governing body are good and help ensure that they are kept fully informed.

26. Together with the existing key stage managers, the headteacher and acting head are forging ahead with developing the school's priorities. Particularly notable has been the good induction of staff new to the school. The leadership team has already observed these teachers teaching so that they have received feedback and well-targeted support. The impact of this has been their developing confidence, an openness in discussing their development needs and supportive teamwork. The senior staff have made very explicit their aim of promoting and supporting good teaching and learning and have been very proactive in using the support of the local education authority to help them work towards this. The two key stage leaders provide very good leadership offer excellent role models through their own teaching expertise and practice. Additionally the English subject manager demonstrates a perceptive insight and very good analysis of teaching in English across the school. This is a very good model for subject leadership.
27. Management is satisfactory overall. The school makes satisfactory use of performance data and plans to develop this further through using information and communication technology. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and it has made good use of support from the local education authority in identifying weaknesses and determining action to rectify them. Monitoring of the curriculum is satisfactory. There is an overview plan of what should be taught when. However, in the past teachers have not adhered to this so that in some classes children's experience of work in history and geography has been patchy and there is no evidence that teachers have planned to ensure that pupils develop their skills progressively in these subjects. Additionally, there is insufficient development of literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology across the curriculum. Currently, several subject managers and the co-ordinator for special educational needs are new to their roles and have not yet had the opportunity to make an impact on learning in their areas of responsibility.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	495 356	Balance from previous year	(10 958)
Total expenditure	480 708	Balance carried forward to the next	3 690

Expenditure per pupil	2 289
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28. The deficit carry forward in the previous year was mainly the result of extra spending to alleviate the staffing difficulties. The school takes satisfactory note of best value principles. Given its circumstances and context, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

29. Provision in the Foundation Stage is very good. Children achieve well because of very good teaching and adult support. They are on course to reach good standards in all areas of learning. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed by a knowledgeable co-ordinator who enthuses others and who has helped create a very good team of committed colleagues. Teachers and support assistants provide an exciting and relevant curriculum, taking great care to ensure that all children get equal access to all the activities. Very good systems are in place to monitor and record children's progress. Meticulous planning is based on day-to-day assessments, which identify the small steps in learning that children need to make.
30. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have improved as more children are reaching or exceeding the levels at the end of the reception year. The accommodation has improved and there is now a very good range of equipment for use in the outdoor area.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very strong partnership with parents helps children to become independent
- Warm relationships underpin children's social and emotional development

Commentary

31. Children achieve well and reach good standards by the end of the reception year because the teaching is very good. Each morning parents bring in their children and complete a 'task card' with them. They discuss the range of activities available and help their children to make sensible choices. Parents are welcome to stay to ensure their children are settled and during this time the reception staff are on hand for advice or an informal chat. This works extremely well in helping children to feel secure enough to engage in useful activities straight away. Later, adults help them to review what they have done, successfully sowing the seeds of self-evaluation at this early stage of school life.
32. Throughout the day, children respond very well to the exciting, yet calm environment. All adults are caring and supportive and this encourages children to try things out for themselves. Children delight in responding in similar fashion to the teacher's sing-song instructions. This helps the transition from group and individual work to whole class activities to be seamless and enjoyable. There are very good opportunities for children to learn to work together, for example when

using the two-person vehicles in the outdoor area. Adults take every opportunity to encourage responsibility; for example, children place a photograph of themselves on a chart to indicate they have arrived and rise to the expectation that they tidy away after activities.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good range of stimulating activities promotes children's speaking and listening skills
- Systematic teaching helps children to build up early reading and writing skills

Commentary

33. Both reception teachers adopt a lively and dynamic approach which helps to sustain children's attention. Children respond very well to the expressive way that teachers use their voices. Because they are fully absorbed, children get into the habit of listening intently. Teachers and teaching assistants are also very good at encouraging children to join in and offer contributions to discussions. This happens frequently on a one-to-one basis as adults engage children in conversations and also in larger groups where adults respond very positively to their ideas. As a result, children are confident when speaking and they are quickly learning take their turn and to listen to the contributions of others.
34. Each day, due emphasis is given to teaching letter sounds. Following an introduction by the teacher, children engage in a wide range of activities designed to reinforce the 'sound of the day'. This was very successful during an excellent lesson focussing on the sound *m*. Children selected foods beginning with *m* from the *magic menu*, paying with *magic money*. Working in small adult led groups they played 'sound lotto', matched letters to objects or attempted to write the letter *m* in pencil crayon or paint. Plans show that this kind of approach is used throughout the year and assessment records indicate that it is very effective, providing a very strong foundation for early reading and writing activities. Most children have started to read simple texts by the end of the reception year. Children achieve well and reach good standards by the end of the reception year because the teaching is very good.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Early numeracy is promoted very well through daily routines and many opportunities are provided to sort and count
 - Practical activities help children to develop their understanding of shape and space
35. Children achieve well and reach good standards by the end of the reception year because the teaching is very good. Frequent references to numbers in daily

routines reinforce children's understanding very effectively. Adults often seek children's 'help' in counting everyday objects or the number present and absent. When children are sure what numbers represent, they are taught systematically how to write them. Games are used very effectively to support children's understanding of number. Counting songs feature regularly and children are frequently asked to spot patterns – for example in a sequence of teddy bears of different colours and sizes. By the end of the reception year, most children have good counting skills.

The classroom has a good range of construction toys. Using large wooden blocks, magnetic and interlocking shapes, children learn about the differences and similarities of shapes, which will roll, how many corners they have and so on. In arranging shapes in different patterns, they find out which will fit together. This is a good foundation for future learning in mathematics. Children weigh objects and sort them into those that are heavy and those that are light. Outdoors, large, colourful plastic blocks help to reinforce children's understanding of shape and size. During all activities there is a strong emphasis on mathematical vocabulary. During a successful lesson on shape, all the children knew the names of a circle, square and triangle and identified the number of sides of each. The level of challenge was raised when the teacher introduced a hexagon and helped children to count the number of sides.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' planning is very good and ensures that the children have a wide variety of experiences.

Commentary

36. Work in this area successfully promotes children's curiosity and supports their early investigative and problem-solving skills. This was clearly demonstrated during follow-up activities after a visit to the parish church. Using a large road map prepared by the staff, children recreated their route. Highly appropriate preparation had ensured that there were photographs of significant places they had passed en route. Children used these as reference for their own model houses and trees and were obviously pleased with the result. The high quality of adults' questions and comments ensured that children got as much as possible from the visit and the subsequent activities. In addition to learning early mapping skills, the outing provided a good opportunity for adults to discuss with them the special significance of the church building.
37. Seasonal activities, such as looking closely at autumn leaves, extend children's understanding of the natural world. Sorting games introduce children to categorising things using specific criteria, such as colour, shape and size. They develop an awareness of information and communication technology and learn early computer skills because they have opportunities to explore programs and to practise using the keyboard and mouse. There is only one computer available in the classroom, however, and this limits access. Children achieve well and reach good standards by the end of the reception year and the very good teachings provides a solid basis for future work in subjects such as science, geography and history.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- Very effective use is made of the outdoor play area
- There are good opportunities for children to choose activities both indoors and outside
- Effective methods help develop children's manipulative skills

Commentary

38. Children achieve well and reach good standards by the end of the reception year because the teaching is very good. Teachers provide very good opportunities for children to choose activities both indoors and outside throughout the day. The outdoor play area is well resourced with a very good range of large toys, vehicles and play equipment. Staff set up different activities each day in the outdoor area to encourage children to climb and balance on apparatus and to pedal and steer wheeled toys. Encouraged and supported by adults, children gain increasing confidence and extend their range of movements. Staff motivate children to have a go, even when they are a little uncertain and most children respond well. This makes a significant contribution to children's very good progress. Tasks which demand fine movements, such as threading, weaving and cutting out, are part of the daily routine. Close tracking of children's developing confidence using large apparatus and classroom tools helps teachers to carefully plan appropriate activities for individual children. By the end of the reception year, most children move with confidence and an awareness of others around them. Many develop good pencil control and this helps them to make a good start in handwriting.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of different experiences is planned and resources are good.
- Role-play promotes effective learning
- Children enjoy music and sing enthusiastically.

Commentary

39. A good range of art and craft materials is always available and children spend part of most days expressing their ideas through paint and other media. They enjoy creating colourful two and three dimensional pictures and artefacts, often working independently and selecting materials. Children achieve well and reach good standards by the end of the reception year because the teaching is very good. The role-play areas in the classroom and outdoors are popular and staff often join in with children's imaginative play, prompting suggestions and encouraging children to create their own dialogue. Children are encouraged to bring in an article from home and to discuss with adults how they are going to include it in their imaginative play. They enjoy singing and accompanying each other using a range of musical instruments. A significant number of children are beginning to explore the different sounds that can be made on a range of instruments and some can maintain a continuous beat on wooden blocks, scrapers and drums.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent teaching in Year 6 ensures children reach high standards
- Leadership of the subject is very good.
- The skills taught in English are not developed or applied well enough in other subjects
- Standards in writing are below national expectations at the end of Year 2

Commentary

40. Standards in English are improving overall, but they are still below average at the end of Year 2 because of weaknesses in children's writing skills. They are in line with national expectations in reading, speaking and listening. Standards are improving, but there is some underachievement in Years 1 and 2 where children are not yet meeting their potential. The school is aware of this and is successfully supporting teaching and learning in these classes. By the end of Year 6 children reach standards above those expected nationally. This is because of the high quality of teaching in Year 6. Children therefore achieve satisfactorily overall.
41. Standards in English have risen since the time of the last inspection. Standards in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 2 were lower than those found nationally. There is no comparative data to the most recent national tests as yet, but all the children in Year 2 attained the expected standard in reading with a below average number attaining the higher level. Standards at the end of Year 6 were higher than those expected nationally, with a significant number of children attaining the higher level. During the inspection, standards in reading were judged to be broadly average in Year 2 and good in Year 6. Children have a secure understanding of how books are organised and stored in the library. Older children have a good understanding of how to retrieve information and compare evidence from more than one source.
42. The previous inspection identified standards in English as an area of weakness. Concerns were focused particularly on writing and the quality of some of the children's speaking skills. In writing, children are still not building sufficiently well on previous learning but this is gradually improving. The school has undertaken a review of its work with support from the local education authority and is aware of this. As a result, it has put in place measures to raise standards. Younger children are now making better progress in lessons, but the improved planning and more effective strategies for teaching, such as changes to the way that children develop their writing skills have not yet had a significant impact on raising standards. However, children in the current Year 6 class are progressing well in writing and reaching good standards. Teachers are now making good provision for children to

develop their speaking and listening skills and the standards have risen so that they are now good by the end of Year 6

43. The quality of teaching and children's learning are satisfactory overall and there are specific strengths, particularly in Year 6. In this class, children are involved in evaluating their own progress, working with partners to assess each other's work and to consider how best it can be improved. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and tell the children what they are to learn in each lesson. All children in Years 1 to 6 are given targets for their future learning, but these are not made sufficiently explicit to them. Marking and assessment do not always give children enough guidance for them to understand what they need to do to improve. In the most successful lessons, children are reminded of these targets as they write so they work towards them. Teachers are developing more secure judgements on standards. They are using the information more effectively now to plan the next stage in children's learning. At present, however, there are too few opportunities for children of all ages to write at length and in a variety of styles, particularly in other subjects.
44. Children with special educational needs are well supported and enabled to take an effective part in the lesson. They make satisfactory progress towards the targets identified on their individual educational plans. At present there is no set time for the children to work on their individual targets with an adult either individually or in a group other than in class sessions, and this reduces the clear focus that some need to ensure good progress. The very few children with English as an additional language are achieving well.
45. Leadership by the subject manager is very good and has focused on a very detailed analysis of what the school needs to do to improve. The findings have driven in-service development activities with new strategies for improvement. Management of the subject is also very good. As a leading teacher of English, she is an excellent example for colleagues and provides advice and support through the provision of ideas and resources. Under her expert guidance, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

46. Children's speaking and listening skills are developed in lessons, particularly through the use of discussion partners. Too few opportunities are taken, however, to use the reading and writing skills developed during literacy lessons in other subjects, particularly the humanities.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's achievement is very good in Year 6 as a result of consistently good teaching
- Children do not achieve as well as they should in Years 1 and 2.
- The way in which children are involved in assessing their own learning in Year 6 is very good.

Commentary

47. At the time of the last inspection, standards were well below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. There has been satisfactory improvement. Standards are now below average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6.
48. The statistics from recent test performance support these judgments. Although there are no national comparisons yet available, the test results for 2004 indicate that results in Year 2 dipped from average in 2003 to below average this year. These children did not achieve as well as they should have based on their prior attainment. Standards reached in Year 6 have been improving since the tests in 2003 when the children in Year 6 attained average results. The test results in 2004 indicate above average performance. More children than previously reached the average level and half the children in the class attained the higher level. When compared to their performance when they were seven this represents very good achievement.
49. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, although there are variations, with the teaching in Year 6 being consistently good. The good teaching and learning in this class are major factors in the very good progress that these children make. The features of this, which the school is seeking to disseminate, include the teacher's very good involvement of the children in assessing their own learning. During each lesson, the children have to consider how confident they feel about what they have learned and if the work has challenged them. They have a written dialogue with their teacher. 'I did not get it the first time but this was fun' wrote one. The lessons have a good pace. The teacher has high expectations of the presentation of work, and of the amount of work she expects children to complete each session. She prepares different work for children of different abilities and the children know this. The teacher plans for a good range of work, covering all aspects of mathematics. She uses her own time well and ensures she makes best use of the good skills of the teaching assistants allocated to her class. Other teachers are working hard to follow this example. All the staff are keen to share good ideas and raise the overall quality of teaching.
50. The work from last year indicates deficiencies previously in the teaching in Years 1 and 2. Although the children were taught to add and subtract, insufficient emphasis was placed on developing their understanding of multiplying and dividing. Teachers did not plan sufficient opportunities for children to use and apply their numeracy skills when solving everyday problems or to develop their knowledge of shape and measures. The new teachers are planning carefully and are being supported effectively by the senior management team. The work children are doing currently is of a satisfactory standard.

51. Leadership of the subject is good. The subject manager receives good support from the senior managers. She has begun analysing test performance and identifying targets. These have been shared with all teachers, which is good. She has initiated talking to sample groups of children about their work and this is providing a clearer picture of how the children are responding to their lessons. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The subject manager is developing a system for tracking children's progress year on year. Samples of children's class work are monitored but not sufficiently frequently to ensure that children are making consistently good progress.

Mathematics across the curriculum

52. The subject manager is keen to develop children's use of mathematical skills in other subjects. She has supported teachers in looking for ways to do this, for example, in geography. However, the use of mathematics across the curriculum is unsatisfactory overall. Teachers do not systematically identify opportunities for children to use and develop mathematical skills, including data handling and measuring, in other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving due to better teaching
- Children's achievement accelerates in Year 6
- There are too few opportunities for children to use computers in science

Commentary

53. Children's performance in national tests at Year 6 has improved recently. Results were above the national average in 2003, having been below average in the previous two years. Achievement through Years 3 to 6 is good. Work in the current Year 6 class suggests that this year group is also on course to achieve above average results. The more able children are already reaching the levels expected by the end of the year. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Teacher assessment in Year 2 last year showed that children were reaching average levels. Children's current work and the level of understanding they showed during lessons indicates that standards are broadly as expected at this stage of the year. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in driving up standards. Renewed attention to practical work has improved children's investigative skills and their knowledge of scientific facts and ideas. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The newly appointed subject manager is aware of what needs to be done to sustain improvements. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection.
54. Teachers are setting more challenging work this year than previously. They are providing more practical tasks and this is helping to improve children's investigative skills. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with very good teaching in Year 6 where children are doing particularly well. For example, they have a very good understanding of how plants and animals adapt to their environment. Children are encouraged to think for themselves and are successfully encouraged to work independently, for example when using the Internet for research. They co-operate well when undertaking fieldwork, such as classifying animal and plant life around the school and meet the high expectations set in recording their findings and writing explanations.
55. Computers are sometimes used for finding information and word-processing accounts of investigations. However, there is insufficient use of temperature, light or sound sensors to measure and record changes over time. Children therefore miss opportunities to harness the power, speed and accuracy of computers in their classroom investigations and to compare the use of information and communication technology with traditional methods.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Gaps in the curriculum prevent children from meeting the expected standards by Year 6
- Children have good computer skills, but have too few opportunities to use them in day-to-day lessons.
- The school is aware of what needs to be done to improve the provision

Commentary

56. The school has made some headway in the two years since the last inspection but staffing changes have frustrated developments and not enough progress has been made. Children are achieving reasonably well in Years 1 and 2 and reaching the expected standards. Although children in the older year groups are mostly good at what they do in information and communication technology, the range of work covered is too narrow. Achievement is unsatisfactory through Years 3 to 6 because children cannot reach the standards expected by the end of Year 6 in important aspects of the subject.
57. By the end of Year 2, most children have good word-processing skills. These develop well in the older classes so that, by Year 6, children are very confident. For example, they produce newspaper pages using columns, a variety of text styles and pictures copied from Internet sources. Most children use the Internet very confidently to search for information. Other aspects of the subject are not sufficiently developed in Years 3 to 6. The skills that younger children learn in using painting programs are not extended to include more sophisticated work with digital images, and earlier work with a programmable floor robot is not followed up by teaching more challenging aspects of control technology. Database work is patchy. The older children learn to compile a branching database², and use a spreadsheet but have little understanding of how to search a database or to compile their own. A further gap is the use of sensors to record changes in temperature, light and sound.
58. Little direct teaching of information and communication technology was seen during the inspection but discussions with teachers and the scrutiny of children's work indicate that the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. Teachers and teaching assistants have a reasonable level of computer competence but lack confidence and experience in many aspects of the subject. Following the appointment of a new subject manager, supported by a teaching assistant with a good level of expertise, leadership and management are now satisfactory. An action plan has been devised to address weaknesses and the school is aware that this needs to be urgently implemented.

² This is a series of 'yes/no' questions which lead to a single conclusion – for example, the identity of a specific animal.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

59. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. It is most prevalent in English, where children use word-processing programs to publish their work. Some good use is made of painting programs for illustration in history and art for example, Year 2 children produced some very effective images of the Fire of London and Year 5 children produced pictures in the style of Matisse. That said, there is little use of information and communication technology in other subjects. Where children gather information in geography and science this is not often entered into a database. Computer programs sometimes back up work in mathematics but opportunities are missed to link children's work on handling data to computer databases.

HUMANITIES³

60. In history and geography, children's work was analysed but no lessons were seen. It is therefore not possible to give a judgement about provision. From current work available, the curriculum is satisfactory. Assessment in both subjects is an area for development.
61. An overview of topics shows the school plans for satisfactory coverage of the National Curriculum. In **history** there is some good practice in developing links with literacy and information and communication technology. In Year 6, for example, the teacher plans very carefully to identify ways in which the children's work on non-fiction texts can be used to enhance learning in history and help the children develop their writing skills. The teacher's planning is thorough and clearly identifies the learning that should take place in each subject. In Year 2, the most recent work in history, on the Fire of London, has clear links to literacy. The teacher has focussed on developing the children's historical knowledge and on ensuring that standards in their written work are suitably high. As a result, the work is well written and presented. Some teachers ensure that children consider how to place events on a timeline in order to develop their understanding of chronology but this is not a feature throughout the school.
62. Children in Year 3 are enjoying using computers as an integral part of their learning about maps and settlement patterns in **geography**. However, children's books from last year show that not all teachers planned sufficiently for children to acquire the relevant skills, knowledge and understanding. Too little in the way of written responses was expected.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

63. No lessons were seen in **art and design** or **design and technology** so it is not possible to make a judgement on provision. However, displays around the school

³ Religious education is inspected separately in a Catholic school

and discussions with children suggest that standards are in line with those expected nationally.

64. The school has adopted national guidelines as the basis for its work, and this ensures that all children experience the full range of activities. Teachers are beginning to give consideration to how they can make sensible links between subjects and, as a result, children in Year 6 will be making Greek slippers that link to the work they will do on Ancient Greece.
65. Displays around the school show that both these subjects are valued and children are encouraged to evaluate their efforts and improve upon them. Teachers are beginning to develop portfolios of work at different levels to support teachers in their assessments of children's work. Both subjects have adequate levels of resources.
66. One full lesson was seen in **physical education** and brief observations were made of other lessons and related activities. Although it is not possible to judge overall provision or standards, children talked enthusiastically about the subject and demonstrated good sportsmanship. Children benefit from coaching in tennis provided by the local specialist college and from a good range of after-school clubs. The subject manager successfully promotes the subject across the school and is leading the current bid for the ActiveMark.⁴

Music

Provision in music is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are enthusiastic and reach good standards
- Many children learn to play instruments
- Music makes a good contribution to children's personal development

Commentary

67. Children achieve well and reach good standards because of the good teaching. Class teachers are very well supported by a visiting specialist who sets high standards and successfully encourages children to do their best. The newly appointed subject leader is providing good leadership and management. A strong emphasis on composition and performing helps children to make good progress. During a very good lesson in Year 4 taken by the subject leader, children showed a good understanding of the elements of music, such as pitch and duration, as they evaluated one another's compositions. They played a variety of instruments sensitively and successfully combined layers of sound, showing good skills in performance. Good standards were also evident during a Year 6 lesson where children worked very well together to compose pieces with recurring themes and

⁴ This is awarded to schools which provide particularly good opportunities for physical education and sporting activities.

learnt the terms *rondo* and *leitmotiv*⁵. Children listened in wrapt attention as each group performed.

68. About forty children are learning to play an instrument. This not only enriches their own school experience but also contributes to the good standards achieved in class. The presence of a saxophone, flute or keyboard player in a small group working on compositions brings an additional quality to the overall sound and this inspires better performances all round.
69. The good contribution made by music to children's spiritual development is clearly evident during assemblies and singing practices. Children are successfully encouraged to reflect on the message of the inspirational music played as they enter the hall. Their singing is tuneful and expressive, and they share an obvious delight in singing rounds with energy and joy, and in listening to the delightful harmonies they produce.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

70. No judgement is made about the school's overall provision as no lessons were seen. However, children's learning and standards in this area are both good. This is because the school places a high emphasis on children's personal development.
71. The well thought-out scheme of work and planning for assemblies address all the relevant themes. In addition, there are opportunities embedded in all the work of the school to enable children to develop into confident, healthy and motivated individuals who want to learn and succeed. They benefit from an enriched curriculum that gives them many opportunities for learning beyond the school in terms of visits and visitors. These include the school's liaison police officer whose visits and lessons support the work of the school in this aspect. The consequences of this provision are seen throughout the school, where most children work and play together in harmony.
72. The school operates a system of peer mediators and has trained children over a number of weeks so that they have the skills to fulfil this task. They are proud of this and the opportunities they have to take on responsibility in the school. The programmes for sex and drugs education are well established. A school council has been established recently but it is too early yet to comment on its effectiveness.

⁵ Both these terms refer to the use of recurring themes; rondo is a leading theme; leitmotiv is a theme linked to a particular person or idea.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

