

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **St Augustine's Catholic Primary School**

Iford, Essex

LEA area: Redbridge

Unique reference number: 102842

Headteacher: Ms Delia Doyle

Lead inspector: Mr S Hill

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2005

Inspection number: 267739

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Voluntary Aided  
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 434.5

School address: Cranbrook Road  
Gants Hill  
Ilford  
Essex

Postcode: IG2 6RG

Telephone number: 020 8554 1919

Fax number: 020 8554 8858

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Peter Wade

Date of previous inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> May 2003

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

This is a large primary school with a nursery, in Gants Hill. Pupils come from a wide area in north-east London. There are 407 full-time pupils in the main school, and 55 children who attend the nursery part-time, either in the mornings or in the afternoons. Many pupils in the main school have previously attended the nursery, but the proportion varies considerably from year to year. Just over half the pupils are of white British heritage, and the rest come from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds. The school has an increasing number of bilingual pupils, and about a dozen are at an early stage of learning English. Most of these are in the youngest classes. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below average at around 10 per cent. The number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs is also below average. The most significant special education needs are dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and physical difficulties. Pupils come from a wide range of social circumstances but overall they are above average. Their attainment when they start in the nursery is similarly wide, but overall is average. The mobility of pupils (the extent to which pupils leave or start at the school, other than at the usual junctures) is high in the older classes. The school has a Healthy Schools award and a School Grounds award.

After the previous inspection, when the school was judged to have serious weaknesses, there were significant changes in management before the current headteacher took over a year ago, initially on a temporary basis.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21277	Steve Hill	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education
9173	Sarah McDermott	Lay inspector	
12301	Joan Boden	Team inspector	Foundation Stage <sup>1</sup> Art and design Design and technology
15023	Ali Haouas	Team inspector	English English as an additional language Music
25799	Geraldine Lewendon	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Personal, social and health development Citizenship Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

ALTECQ INSPECTIONS LTD  
102 Bath Road  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL53 7JX

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES ONE AND TWO</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>29</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an improving school that has overcome serious weaknesses to provide a **satisfactory** standard of education. It has made great strides over the last year under the leadership of a new headteacher. Achievement and teaching are now satisfactory and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are good in English, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education.
- This is a harmonious, multi-racial community where pupils enjoy school, behave well and have very good relationships with each other.
- Very good leadership from the headteacher, and hard work from staff and governors are ensuring improvements throughout the school.
- Assessment and its use are unsatisfactory overall.
- Children get a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage.
- Standards are too low in science.
- Pupils are very well cared for.
- Not enough use is made of ICT in lessons in other subjects.
- The school works very effectively to involve parents and to deal with their concerns.

The improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Serious weaknesses in achievement in the older classes, and in leadership and management, have been eliminated. The school now has clear direction in its work. Staff and governors have identified the major remaining weaknesses, and put plans in place to address them. Provision for bilingual pupils has improved considerably, as has the curriculum in the Foundation Stage. More opportunities are provided for multicultural education, but these are still not systematic enough across the school.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is **satisfactory** overall, being good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in other year groups. However, achievement varies between different subjects and is good in English, physical education and ICT, and unsatisfactory in science. Children start in the nursery with a wide range of attainment, but overall their standards are broadly average. They achieve well and many of the current reception class will be ahead of expectations by the time they go into Year 1. Results of national assessments at age seven have generally been good in reading, writing and mathematics in most years, compared with both all and similar schools, although writing was weaker in 2004, being only average against all schools. Inspection evidence shows that current standards in Year 2 are above average in reading and speaking and listening, and average in writing, mathematics and science. In Years 3 to 6, standards are above average in all aspects of English, are average in mathematics, and below average in science. This is generally reflected in the results of the most recent national assessments at the age of 11, as can be seen in the table below.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	C	C	A	B
Mathematics	C	C	B	D
Science	C	C	D	E

*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.*

Throughout Years 1 to 6, standards are above expectations in ICT and physical education, and average in history. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they achieve well. Bilingual pupils are supported well and learn English quickly, attaining similar standards to their classmates by the end of the school.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **good**. Their behaviour is good and they have very positive attitudes to school and to learning. Their relationships with each other and with staff are very good. Boys and girls, and pupils from the wide range of ethnic backgrounds, work and play together happily throughout the school. Attendance is satisfactory, and punctuality is good.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. Teaching has many positive features, but is variable in quality between classes and in different subjects. There are weaknesses in subject knowledge in some areas, notably in teaching investigative skills in science. Teachers manage classes well and are good at promoting pupils' interest in their work. Pupils are very good at working collaboratively, because teachers encourage this consistently through the school. Pupils work hard in response to their teachers' high expectations of this. Teaching and learning are good in the reception and nursery classes. Throughout the school, teachers manage pupils well and ensure good behaviour and concentration in lessons. Assessment is unsatisfactory, however. The data collected is variable between subjects, but in most areas not enough use is made of assessment information to match work to pupils' needs. This varies between classes and there are examples of good practice, particularly in English. The curriculum is satisfactory, but is weak in aspects of science, and teachers do not make enough use of ICT to support work in other subjects. A good range of visits and visitors contributes well to the curriculum and to pupils' learning. The care given to pupils and the provision for their health and safety are very good. Very good attention is paid to pupils' views, particularly through the medium of the school council. Links with parents and the community are good. All pupils, whatever their ability, gender or ethnic origin, are fully included in the school and its work, and are valued by their teachers and their classmates.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **satisfactory** overall. Very good leadership from the headteacher is helping to improve provision significantly. The leadership from other staff is satisfactory, but varies between different subjects, partly because of how much time has been spent on different areas recently. Governance is good, and governors are very supportive, and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They ensure that the school meets most statutory requirements, but weaknesses in assessment mean that they are not properly tracking the achievement of different ethnic groups. In addition, some statutory information is missing from the governors' annual report to parents and the prospectus. The strategic planning for improving provision is now good, but not enough use is made of assessment data to guide the school's work.

### **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Pupils very much enjoy school and like the fact that their views are taken into account. They value the company of their friends, teachers and the other adults in the school. Parents are positive about the school and feel confident about approaching the school with concerns. They value the care taken of their children, and the school's high expectations. A substantial minority are unhappy about the information they receive. Inspection evidence

shows this is satisfactory overall, but the reports on pupils' progress are not consistent in reporting clearly on different subjects.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve standards in science, particularly in pupils' investigative skills in the older classes.
- Make better use of assessment data to plan work for individual pupils and to analyse the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision.
- Make more use of ICT to support work in other subjects.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Keep consistent records of the achievement of different ethnic groups.
- Ensure that the governors' report to parents and the prospectus contain all the required statutory information.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **satisfactory** overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in other year groups. Achievement is good in English but unsatisfactory in science. Overall standards are above average throughout the school.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve good standards in English, ICT and physical education.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in their investigative skills in science.
- Children do well in most areas of learning in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Pupils with different home languages are given good support and learn English quickly.

#### Commentary

1. Achievement has improved since the previous inspection, particularly for the youngest and the oldest pupils. The achievement of the increasing numbers of pupils with special educational needs, and those who are just starting to learn English has also improved because of better provision.
2. Pupils come into the Foundation Stage with a wide range of attainment, which varies from year to year. Overall they have average skills when they start. They achieve well and, at the end of the current reception year, children's attainment is above average. They meet the standards expected at this age (the Early Learning Goals<sup>2</sup>) in their creative development, and exceed them in all other areas because of good teaching and an interesting curriculum. Children's good skills, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in their personal, social and emotional development, stand them in very good stead for making further progress in Year 1.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.4 (16.8)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.0 (16.1)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	18.1 (17.5)	16.2 (16.3)

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

3. Achievement is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2. The results of national assessments at age seven, as can be seen from the table above, have generally been above average in comparison to all schools. In 2004 this was the case in reading and mathematics, and writing standards were average. In comparison with similar schools (those with a similar proportion of free school meals), standards were good in reading and mathematics, but below average in writing. Inspection evidence shows that despite the increasing numbers of pupils starting at

<sup>2</sup> These are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with: language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning; for example, in language and literacy, children should be able to write their own name and begin to write simple sentences.

the school with little knowledge of English, and increasing numbers with special educational needs, the high standards in reading have been maintained in Years 1 and 2. Standards in writing, mathematics and science are all average. Standards are good in speaking and listening, so overall standards in English are above average. Standards are also good in ICT and physical education.

4. Achievement is satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6. Results of national assessments at age 11 had generally been average for several years in comparison with all schools, but in 2004 improved and were well above average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. Results for similar schools (based on pupils' attainment at age seven) had been weak for several years and, although they recovered somewhat in 2004, were still below average overall. Results were above average in English, below average in mathematics, and well below average in science.

### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004***

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.9 (27.3)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	28.2 (27.4)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	29.1 (28.2)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 68 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

5. Inspection evidence shows that a concentration by the school on writing and speaking and listening has ensured that standards in Years 3 to 6 are above average in all aspects of English and pupils are achieving well. Standards in mathematics are average, but are below average in science because of pupils' weak understanding of investigative work. Standards are good in ICT and physical education.
6. In all the year groups, pupils are developing good computer skills because they have good opportunities to use computers on a regular basis in the suite. In physical education, pupils show good skills across the range of activities, but particularly in games, where their good collaborative skills come to the fore, and help them to work effectively in teams.
7. There is not enough attention paid in science to pupils' skills in investigative work. This becomes more of an issue as pupils get older. Although pupils have opportunities to do practical work, this is often planned and controlled by the teacher, with far too few opportunities for pupils to plan their own investigations, or even to contribute to their planning. As a result, their understanding of this major aspect of the science curriculum is unsatisfactory.
8. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their targets. This is because of the good quality of support they usually receive in lessons, so that they are able to keep up with what is happening and achieve well at their own level.
9. The majority of pupils with English as an additional language achieve well against their prior attainment. They are effectively targeted and benefit from the effective support provided. Progress of pupils across the school is highly consistent because of the good knowledge and skills of staff and the effective leadership of senior managers. This represents a substantial improvement on provision at the previous inspection.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes are **very good** and their behaviour is **good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall. Attendance is **satisfactory** and punctuality is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils behave well as a result of the high expectations set by adults.
- Relationships and respect for others are very good between all pupils, irrespective of gender or background.
- Many opportunities are provided that promote children's personal development.
- Pupils' good collaborative skills support their work across the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

10. Pupils' attitudes towards learning and school are very good. They show thoughtfulness and care towards each other and towards the staff. They respond well to the staff's high expectations of behaviour, and try to listen carefully in lessons. As a consequence, behaviour in and around the school is good. Occasional lapses are managed well by the staff with the minimum of fuss and children clearly respect this, as they are happy to be in school. There have been no recent exclusions.
11. Most pupils concentrate very well during lessons and respond positively to teachers' demands that they think things through. They respond enthusiastically to responsibility. For example, at lunch times some older pupils are proud of being 'playground friends', helping to care for younger children by teaching them new games. Those who represent their fellows on the school council are proud of their role and are eager to talk about it. Pupils with special educational needs display good attitudes towards their learning. They show good levels of interest and perseverance in their work and this contributes well to the good achievement of this group. Pupils with English as an additional language mix well with their peers whatever their background and are very keen to participate fully in activities and school events. They are highly motivated and very keen to learn. This contributes significantly to the progress they make.
12. Provision for spiritual and moral development is good, and children grow in confidence and maturity. They clearly understand the difference between right and wrong, and this is continually reinforced by staff throughout the school day. Pupils are sensitive to differences in culture and values in the school community, and respect and value each other's differences. In assemblies, and in some lessons, they experience moments of delight, surprise or sympathy with others. They work very well together, are polite and helpful to strangers and generously support local and other charities. They enjoy the arts, sport and local activities. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Work has taken place to inform, involve and enrich children's learning for their role in a wider multi-cultural society, although this is not systematic in the planning of different subjects. There is emphasis upon visual arts, music and cultural development and this is reinforced by displays around the school. Social development is good. The personal, social and health education programme has a positive influence on children's social and moral development. Whole-class discussions are used well to stress the importance of values such as fairness, honesty and respect for the views of others. The school is a happy, racially harmonious community. Extra-curricular activities further develop and broaden the social, spiritual, cultural, and community dimensions to school life. These include a Rosary club, orchestra and netball club.

13. Pupils' collaborative skills are very good. They are frequently encouraged to work together in groups and pairs, which they do very well. They share ideas or equipment amicably and listen to each other carefully. In younger classes, with their talking partners, they share ideas before contributing to class discussion, learning to listen to each other and to express their views clearly. By the older classes, larger groups are able to work together effectively to reach a consensus, and formulate a plan of action for tackling their work. It is noticeable that boys and girls, and pupils from all ethnic backgrounds and of all abilities, work together very effectively.

### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.2	School data	0.2
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.*

14. The attendance and punctuality of the pupils are not as good as at the time of the previous inspection. Absence has increased over the last few years, bringing attendance more in line with similar schools. A particular problem is the high number of holidays taken by families in term time. The headteacher emphasises that term time holidays are not an entitlement and that they disrupt the pupils' education. She is working very methodically with the office staff and education welfare officer to instill good habits in parents and pupils and to follow up unexplained absences. Most pupils arrive in good time in the morning. However, a few pupils in the junior department do not arrive punctually enough for the proper start time of 8.55am and slip into their classrooms during registration.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but assessment is unsatisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory and provision for its enrichment is good. Pupils are cared for very well and their views are valued and acted upon. There are good links with parents, other schools and the community.

#### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall, and are good in the Foundation Stage. Assessment is **unsatisfactory**. Systems for gathering data on pupils' progress vary between different subjects and are satisfactory overall, but not enough use is made of these assessments to plan work for different pupils.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Strong relationships support good classroom management so that pupils behave well and work hard.
- Teachers successfully encourage high standards of collaborative work.
- Subject knowledge is too inconsistent between teachers.
- Not enough use is made of assessment data to plan work for different pupils.
- Bilingual pupils make rapid progress in learning English.
- Pupils with special educational needs are taught well.

#### **Commentary**

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 52 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (6%)	3 (6%)	25 (48%)	19 (36%)	2 (4%)	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages.*

15. Classes are managed well and teachers insist on high standards of behaviour. Expectations are clear and routines are well established. More importantly, teachers and other staff have very good relationships with their pupils, who are keen to please them by working hard and behaving well. Teachers try to make lessons interesting through practical experiences and a range of resources, and are successful in enthusing pupils with a desire to learn and do well.
16. Teachers across the school are very successful in promoting collaborative work across a range of subjects. The strategy of talking partners, where pupils are encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas with a classmate on a regular basis, is used consistently and generally effectively. This ensures that all pupils are able to be involved at key points in lessons, and can also rehearse their ideas and answers before either contributing them to a discussion, or using them in their written work. This contributes to pupils' good speaking and listening skills, as well as to their understanding of particular topics. In other lessons, pupils often work effectively in pairs or small groups. This is particularly effective in the computer suite, when pupils are successfully encouraged to share ideas and to help each other. As pupils get older teachers extend this approach into working in bigger groups and older pupils are able to collaborate, independently of adults, in organising themselves and reaching decisions.
17. There is a lot of variation in teachers' subject knowledge, both between and within subjects, and this impacts on the effectiveness of some lessons. Even though teachers plan together and use the same planning in parallel classes, the differences in their understanding of particular aspects of the subject can lead to very different outcomes. This was well illustrated in two mathematics lessons based on the same planning. A major issue across the school is the weakness in many teachers' understanding of how to develop pupils' investigative skills in science. Conversely, the generally good levels of subject knowledge in physical education and ICT support the good progress pupils make in these subjects.
18. Assessment varies considerably between different subjects and in different classes. It is unsatisfactory overall, because not enough use is made of assessment data to plan work for pupils. Assessment is good in English, and there are examples of outstanding practice in particular classes, but the use of assessment is very inconsistent across the school. Teachers' planning is satisfactory overall. In most classes, teachers plan different work for different groups of pupils. Those pupils who often struggle with their work are given easier work, and high-flying pupils are often given extension work for when they finish, or are given a more difficult recording task. However, for all groups of pupils, including the average, teachers usually plan the work based on national schemes of work, and pay too little attention to what they know their particular pupils know and can do. This has most effect on the brighter pupils who sometimes have to plod through the basic work, which is too easy for them, before moving onto their extension activities. Occasionally this issue impacts on almost everyone, because the planned work is too hard for the class as a whole.
19. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good, an improvement since the previous inspection. This is because assessment is used effectively to analyse their linguistic needs and build carefully on their prior learning. Pupils in the early stages of acquiring English are effectively targeted and often benefit from intensive small group support by the specialist teacher or teaching assistants. In the majority of lessons seen, teachers carefully identified opportunities for developing pupils' language skills, and planned effective strategies for supporting them. In the best teaching, this approach has been developed into a routine where skilful questioning, high expectations and a range of approaches are used to draw on pupils'

previous knowledge and extend their learning. The emphasis placed on speaking and listening is of particular value in helping bilingual pupils make good progress. The specialist teacher works in close partnership with class teachers and tasks are devised to activate pupils' prior knowledge and build on it through the use of talk and active learning, for instance, through one-to-one support and the use of initial assessment to focus on specific needs. Most teachers are adept at using questioning and prompting to ensure that bilingual pupils are helped to respond.

20. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good, so that pupils with learning difficulties usually have a similar rate of progress to their mainstream classmates. Teaching is well focused on pupils' specific needs. Lesson plans make sure that pupils have appropriate work so that they achieve as well as they can. Assessment procedures for these pupils are satisfactory and are used appropriately by teachers to identify pupils who have particular needs. Support staff are generally well deployed to support pupils in small groups, especially in literacy and numeracy. Pupils also receive good support from the special educational needs co-ordinator.

### **The curriculum**

The school provides **satisfactory** opportunities for pupils' learning and a **good** range of activities for enrichment. The school has **satisfactory** accommodation and resources.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is planned and organised to enable good access and involvement of all pupils, irrespective of their gender, ethnicity or cultural background.
- The range of visits to enrich the curriculum is good and enhances pupils' learning well.
- The school promotes pupils' personal, social and health education well.
- ICT is not planned and used sufficiently to enhance learning across the curriculum.
- Insufficient attention is given to investigations in science.

### **Commentary**

21. The curriculum is well planned, meets statutory requirements and is relevant to pupils' needs. Issues of imbalance in the previous inspection have been addressed and the curriculum is now broad and balanced. The school has appropriately invested time and effort in improving standards in literacy and numeracy, and is now well positioned to improve provision in other subjects. It places important and very effective focus on the development of personal and social attributes, encouraging pupils to develop good skills and make appropriate choices. Provision for developing pupils' speaking skills is good and is making a positive impact on their achievement. Pupils' good ICT skills, however, are not yet widely used to support learning in other subjects. In science, although pupils have broadly satisfactory knowledge of different scientific topics, their understanding of investigative work is weak because they do not spend enough time on planning their own investigations.
22. All pupils, whatever their background, have good access to the curriculum, including activities organised outside the school day. Boys and girls participate on an equal footing in most activities on offer. Pupils with English as an additional language, those with special educational needs or from different ethnic backgrounds are fully involved in all activities and, in the majority of lessons, their teachers support them well in their learning. The school has a positive inclusive ethos and robust procedures for monitoring pupils' access to all activities provided. Although the school does not

analyse achievement by ethnicity, plans are in hand to focus support on specific groups such as African Caribbean boys, some of whom are at risk of disaffection. The school acknowledges and values the wide range of pupils' home languages through a variety of displays and notices around the school, but there is scope to draw more on these resources and use them in the curriculum.

23. Pupils from all backgrounds have good access to the curriculum, including activities organised outside school hours. Opportunities are planned in a number of subjects and outside the basic curriculum to celebrate and enhance cultural diversity. This is done through events such as Black History month, African week, Chinese New Year and a wide range of visits. As a result of this emphasis, pupils feel pride in their own multicultural identities and are predisposed to explore other cultures openly and spontaneously. The school has a positive and inclusive ethos and the headteacher is keen to improve provision further by drawing more on resources in the community including parents. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
24. The school offers a satisfactory range of activities to extend pupils' learning during and outside the school day. The curriculum is effectively enhanced through a wide range of visits catering for a wide range of subjects. Good use is made of these resources, for instance, to develop drama and through visits to museums to support the history curriculum. The headteacher is very committed to adding to activities after school hours. A range of activities such as short tennis, football, netball, tag rugby, dance and an orchestra are well attended.
25. The school provides an effective programme for the promotion of pupils' personal and social development. The school caters particularly well for the emotional well-being of pupils and has received an award as a healthy school. A successful 'PSHE week' was organised last term, addressing themes like bullying, safety issues, healthy living and care for the environment. The school meets statutory requirements with regard to sex and drugs education and both areas are due for a review to integrate them more effectively within the personal, social and health education programme.

### Care, guidance and support

The provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils is **very good**. The school supports and guides pupils **well**. The involvement of pupils by seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very safe and secure in the school's care.
- The very good relationships ensure that all pupils have an adult to turn to when they are upset.
- Pupils have a very strong voice in the school because staff value their ideas and suggestions.
- The school is working very effectively to make playtimes interesting, positive social occasions.
- Academic support is not accurate enough because teachers are not consistently ensuring individual pupils are set work appropriate to their ability.

### Commentary

26. The school continues to have very good systems to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for. There are plenty of staff with first aid qualifications. Accidents are

recorded properly and parents are always informed if the school is at all concerned. Pupils with particular medical needs are carefully monitored and there is a well-maintained log to record the administration of medicine. Following a recent health and safety audit, the school is working well to ensure that relevant staff are trained in safety procedures. However, the governing body does not have a sufficient overview of health and safety because there is no governor nominated for this responsibility. The staff are up-to-date on child protection training. There is a good number of staff to welcome pupils in the morning and see them safely off the premises in the afternoon.

27. Relationships in the school are very good. Teachers and support staff not only know the pupils very well, but also enjoy their company. Consequently, all pupils are clear that they have an adult to turn to if they are feeling upset or worried. Staff are quick to notice if pupils are not enjoying school as much as they should and to sort out the cause of any anxiety, so pupils are back on track as soon as possible. Some very good work has been done in preventing incidents of bullying by checking that pupils, staff and parents understand the concept and by holding 'Friendship Days' to encourage the pupils to play and work well together. Pupils are supported very well in their personal development and leave school mature, sensible and well prepared for secondary school.
28. Pupils with special education needs and those whose home language is not English receive improved care, even if it means finding extra money out of the school budget to ensure they receive the most appropriate assistance. However, the support of pupils' academic progress is still not consistent enough. Assessment systems are not well enough established to allow the school to know exactly how different groups are progressing. This means it is difficult for the school quickly to identify and remedy any inconsistencies in achievement.
29. The school has effective induction procedures for bilingual pupils so that they are settled quickly and are fully integrated. Effective support is also provided for pupils' social development and this clearly contributes to the progress they make. The school's monitoring procedures are effectively used to focus on their specific needs.
30. Pupils are very well involved in the life of the school and all feel that they have a genuine voice in how it is run. The school council is very well structured so that there are regular times for councillors to find out their classmates' views and good opportunities for the older councillors to run the meetings. Pupils have been consulted well on changes to their uniform and have had a positive input into how playtimes are organised. The headteacher has been quick to react to recent concerns that playground behaviour was becoming too boisterous. She has introduced playground games and ensures that midday supervisors are treated with respect. Pupils now look forward to active and friendly lunch breaks, and incidents of inappropriate behaviour are falling.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school has **good** relationship with parents. Links with the community and with other schools and colleges are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school values the views of parents and includes them very well in the life of the school.

- Parents provide very good practical and financial support for the school.
- Reports do not give parents a sufficiently clear message on the progress their children have made in each subject over the year.
- The school's Catholic ethos is complemented well by the strong links with the Parish.
- The school has good relations with a wide range of schools for pupil activities and professional development.

## Commentary

31. On her arrival, the headteacher quickly established good relations with parents so that home and school work well as a team for the good of the school and the pupils. The headteacher is very visible and makes herself available every morning to meet parents informally. Consequently, many small queries and problems can be sorted out straight away. Should concerns be more serious, the school has very good procedures to ensure parents' problems are dealt with professionally and sympathetically. The school is keen to include the views of parents in management decisions. Most recently they have been consulted on the uniform and changes to the times of the school day.
32. The information provided to parents is satisfactory. On the positive side, the headteacher's newsletter to parents is excellent. Parents look forward to the bright, cheerful and very informative news-sheet every Friday. Parents receive useful letters each term on what is being taught in lessons. However, there have been no recent information meetings to let the parents, and in particular parents who do not speak English fluently, know more about how subjects are taught and how they can help their children progress. Parents are clear about the homework timetable so can encourage their children to return their work on time. The annual governors' report to parents misses many legally required items and does not give parents a sufficiently clear overview on how the school is managed. Academic reports give parents a satisfactory idea on what has been covered in lessons. However, as assessment systems are not well enough established in school, the inspection team concurs with parents' concerns that teachers cannot report accurately to parents on how well their children have been progressing over the year in each subject.
33. Most parents continue to be very supportive of the school. There are still a few concerns resulting from past instability in leadership, but these are being tackled systematically by the new headteacher. The parent teacher association remains very active and successfully organises a very wide range of social and fund raising activities. The Playground Improvement Partnership (PIP) not only raises prodigious amounts towards the grounds development, but also puts in hard physical work to make the outside areas stimulating and attractive.
34. The school has very good links with its linked Catholic parishes. It is held in high esteem and is over subscribed by local Catholic families. The spiritual and religious education is boosted by the involvement of the parish priest in assemblies and class masses. Extra curricular activities include a Rosary club run by the parishioners. Links with the local Gants Hill area are satisfactory. Like most primary schools, pupils visit the local parks and museums, but there are no links with the elderly and visits to the local library are only just being set up.
35. There are useful links with a good range of schools. The headteacher is outward looking and keen to share in good practice found in other schools. She has attached the school to the Assessment for Learning Network because she is aware that

teachers' expertise in using assessment needs improving. Midday supervisors have visited a neighbouring school to find out more about managing break times. Pupils develop socially by participating in sports events and music festivals and the school works supportively with nearby special schools.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory** overall. The serious weaknesses identified in the previous report have been eliminated. Although the new headteacher was only appointed recently, she is providing **very good** leadership. Management is **satisfactory**. Governance is **good**. The governors play a key role in directing the work of the school and provide good support for the headteacher and staff. However, some statutorily required elements are missed from the information sent home to parents.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher gives a very good steer to the work of the school, and this is bringing about improvement.
- The headteacher, staff and governors work as an effective team.
- The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and fulfils its role as a critical friend well.
- There is inconsistency in the co-ordination of different subjects.
- The needs of pupils who have just started to speak English are addressed well.
- The school does not properly track the achievement of different ethnic groups.

### Commentary

36. The headteacher leads the school very well. In the short time she has been in post, she has made a good start to improving the provision for pupils. She has identified the key areas for future improvements and put into place appropriate strategies to achieve them. She has been supported well in this by the willingness of the staff to take on extra work and by the effective governing body, who take an active part in managing the school.
37. Governors are knowledgeable and share a very good range of expertise that enables them to play a valuable role in key aspects of the school's work. They have a clear idea of the school's strengths and the areas for development, as a result of their monitoring visits and the wealth of information provided by the headteacher. A weakness in governance is the failure to comply with the statutory requirement to track how well different ethnic groups are achieving. In addition, there are several omissions in the information provided in the annual report to parents and the prospectus.
38. Subject leaders fulfill their roles to the best of their abilities, but with varying degrees of success. Some are new to their roles and do not have the knowledge or expertise that is required in their areas. The headteacher is committed to staff development and has identified training opportunities to ensure that co-ordinators have a good working knowledge of their subjects, so that they can play a more effective part in managing their areas and influencing standards. This is linked effectively with performance management. A good start has been made to monitoring by the subject leaders. This has been particularly strong in English, which has been a focus for the school this year, with consequent improvements in provision and standards. However, co-ordinators' work in monitoring teaching and learning is not well enough developed

across many subjects to fully evaluate the effect of teaching on pupils' learning. Senior staff give good support to trainee teachers and those who are newly qualified.

39. The leadership and management of special educational needs are good. The co-ordinator has a good overview of provision across the school and communicates effectively with the support staff via regular meetings. The deployment of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant is effectively targeted to provide for specialist staffing and staff development. The school has good procedures for monitoring and analysing these pupils' progress as individuals. The specialist teacher provides good advice and support to staff and is effectively supported by the strong leadership of the headteacher.
40. Strategic planning is good. The school development plan has improved since the previous inspection, and is well-focused on improving standards. It is used effectively as a management tool, with progress reviewed regularly. The financial implications of developments are made clear.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,309,535	Balance from previous year	50,788
Total expenditure	1,235,985	Balance carried forward to the next	124,388
Expenditure per pupil	2,710		

41. Financial organisation and management are good, with the finance officer playing a strong and confident role. The school applies the principles of best value well. Although the carry-forward figure looks excessive, this surplus accrued during the time when the school was without a substantive headteacher and successive acting headteachers were reluctant to commit expenditure. Once the present headteacher was appointed to a permanent position, she quickly identified areas for improvement and all the under-spend is now committed. This spending has been carefully linked to the school's educational priorities, so as to bring maximum benefit to pupils. For example, high spending on ICT has improved standards in this subject over the last year. Developments for the next year are already focused accurately on the need to further increase ICT resources, to improve assessment, and to develop investigative work in science, with money targeted on these areas.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

42. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. The weaknesses identified in the previous report have been tackled successfully. The curriculum has improved and there is better provision now for children who speak English as an additional language. Children born between January and August are admitted to the nursery in the September following their third birthday and the rest are admitted in January. (This will change from September 2005 when all the children will start in September.) Attainment on entry varies from year to year because of changes in the local population, but overall it is broadly as would be expected. Most of the children in the nursery transfer to the reception classes in the September following their fourth birthday. However, a third of the children in the current reception classes came from other nurseries or pre-school settings. The curriculum is good. It is planned well to meet the needs of all the children in all the areas of learning. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. Although the nursery is spacious, the reception classes are small. Fine weather during the inspection meant that the classrooms could, effectively, be extended into the outside area. However, the outside learning areas are not big enough for children to run about or to use large equipment.
43. Children learn well because of good teaching. A very good range of interesting activities is provided to stimulate learning in all areas. Teachers and support assistants make effective teams. In guided activity sessions, they intervene well to check on learning and move children on. However, a weakness in planning is that unguided activities do not always challenge children sufficiently because they do not always have a clear learning purpose. As a result, children tend to drift too readily from one to another. Leadership and management are good because of the strong team approach. Children's progress is tracked effectively. However, the information is not always used as well as it could be to plan further learning.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children settle in quickly and feel secure because of the warm and friendly approach by all adults.
- Children know that they are expected to behave well and work hard, and they achieve well as a result.
- There are good opportunities for children to take on responsibilities.
- In the nursery, opportunities are missed to develop good social skills.

#### **Commentary**

44. Boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds learn and achieve well because of consistently good teaching. All but a very small minority are on course to exceed the expectations for their age in this area of learning. Good induction procedures mean that nursery children settle in quickly. They get to know the staff through home visits and taster visits to the nursery and, helped by the very caring attitudes of all the adults, they adapt quickly to school routines. Throughout the Foundation Stage

children work hard and behave well because they like their teachers and want to please them. Bi-lingual children, including those at early stages of learning English, learn and achieve at the same good rate as the rest because of the very good relationships that exist. Staff constantly encourage the children to co-operate in groups. As a result, children of all abilities and backgrounds get on well together whether working or playing. Children with special educational needs also achieve well because they are supported by very caring assistants who help them to modify their behaviour. Children take on responsibilities willingly, and jobs such as taking the register to the office, tidying up and getting out equipment for physical education lessons safely are carried out very efficiently. However, some opportunities are missed in the nursery to develop independence and good social skills. At snack time, for example, adults are too ready to serve the children rather than using it as a learning opportunity.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Reading and writing skills are taught well and children achieve well as a result.
- Children achieve well in speaking and listening because adults take every available opportunity to engage them in conversation.

### **Commentary**

45. Teaching is good and this enables boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds to learn and achieve well. By the end of reception, all but a very small minority are on course to exceed the standards expected for their age. Children who do not speak English as their first language achieve particularly well because of the good support they receive. Children with special educational needs also achieve well through good support. Most children in the nursery know some letter sounds and can copy their own names. Higher attaining children in reception, including some who joined reception unable to speak any English, write correctly punctuated sentences independently. Average attainers still write independently, but are not consistent in their use of punctuation. Children do well because teachers interact well with them when they are engaged in free-choice activities, asking them to explain, for example, what they are doing. Apart from structured literacy sessions, they have good opportunities to write independently, for example, when booking holidays with the 'Travel Agent'.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well because teachers make learning activities fun.
- Mathematical skills are developed well through other areas of learning.

### **Commentary**

46. Boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds learn and achieve well because they are keen to join in with activities, which they see as games rather than work. Most children in reception have already exceeded the standards expected for their age. Teaching is good. Teachers are particularly good at reinforcing learning at every available opportunity, such as during registration when children practise their counting

skills. Teachers use well-thought-out activities for children to explore and develop mathematical ideas for themselves. Working with sand or water, for example, they reinforce their understanding of weight and capacity. Bilingual children and those at the early stages of learning English make the same progress as the rest because of the good support they receive. Children with special educational needs achieve well because of good support.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A good range of interesting activities and resources arouses children's curiosity and stimulates their learning.
- Adults use questions well to draw out children's ideas and increase their knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

### **Commentary**

47. Good teaching ensures that boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds learn and achieve well. Most children in reception have already exceeded the standard expected for their age in this area of learning. Children learn a lot about the world around them because there are plenty of interesting activities that capture their interest. The role-play area in reception, for example, supports children's learning well. Currently set up as a Travel Agent's, it helps children to make good progress in their knowledge about both the local area and other countries. Adults interact effectively during these activities, drawing out children's understanding and moving their learning on. Structured lessons in history, such as comparing their own toys with those in the past, develop children's understanding of how things change over time. Children learn about growth and change, and respect for living things through planting and caring for their own garden. They also learn about life cycles, for example, by observing the changes from caterpillars to butterflies. This caused great interest and excitement in the nursery as children observed butterflies emerging. Children gain a satisfactory understanding of the properties of materials by using a good variety of discarded packaging to make models, joining the parts in a variety of ways. Computer skills are as would be expected for their age.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children develop good manipulative skills through a good range of activities.
- Despite the limited accommodation, teachers provide good opportunities through structured physical education lessons.
- Children do not have enough opportunities to play with large wheeled toys.

### **Commentary**

48. Children of all backgrounds and abilities learn and achieve well because of good teaching. By the end of reception, standards are above those expected for this age. Teachers plan a good range of activities to develop manipulative skills through using tools and equipment, such as pencils, paintbrushes, small and large construction toys

and scissors. Children write well because they have many good opportunities to practise tracing over letters, and teachers pay close attention to developing good pencil grip. Mathematical activities enable children to practise their hand-eye co-ordination through pouring water, for example, or aiming at skittles. The limited accommodation means that it is not possible to have large outdoor equipment. However, this does not impede learning because teachers compensate for this with well-structured physical education lessons in the hall. In the lesson seen, standards were above average. Children had good spatial awareness and above average agility.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan good opportunities for imaginative play.
- Limited space in reception means that there are not enough opportunities for children to explore and investigate materials independently.

## **Commentary**

49. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with good teaching in some aspects. This leads to satisfactory learning and achievement for all groups of children. In imaginative play, children benefit from very effective adult intervention and interaction. As a result, they make up their own stories and adopt roles well. In the nursery, for example, chairs became a bus and children took it in turns to be the driver. Conversations between the 'passengers' showed very good imagination as they talked about where they were going and why. Children build up a good repertoire of songs and enjoy performing the actions. Good teaching means that children in reception have a good sense of rhythm and they can copy clapping patterns. They enjoy using percussion instruments and higher attaining children can keep to a rhythm when accompanying songs. Children join in confidently and sing tunefully with the rest of the school in hymn practice. The limited space in reception means that activities have to be rotated, so children do not have enough opportunities to explore materials and paints for themselves. Work on display reflected a lot of adult help, with children not having had enough opportunities for independence in this area.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Lessons are very carefully and effectively planned and this leads to effective acquisition of key skills, particularly in reading.
- Speaking and listening are well promoted in the subject and across the curriculum.
- Both subject leaders are knowledgeable and use their skills well with a positive impact on pupils' achievement.
- ICT is not sufficiently harnessed to support learning in the subject.

## Commentary

50. Overall standards in English are above expected levels in Year 2 and Year 6 except for writing in Year 2, where they are average. This is clearly reflected in the most recent results of national assessments in each year group. This is a good improvement on the previous inspection for pupils in Years 3 to 6, where achievement was previously weak. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve well, and make consistent progress. Effective strategies, such as additional literacy support and booster classes are used to raise pupils' achievement. The support given to pupils in the early stages of learning to speak English is good. Overall achievement is good because teaching is often good. Monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress to ensure that they are doing as well as they can and the quality of leadership and management of the subject are good.
51. The majority of pupils speaks confidently and express themselves clearly. They listen attentively, both to their teachers and to each other. Opportunities to develop these skills are effectively used across many subjects and enable pupils to practise and hone their skills, for instance, when they discuss their ideas in pairs in literacy and across a range of other subjects. Pupils respond spontaneously and carry out these exchanges as a matter of routine. They collaborate well and respond positively to each other's efforts. Pupils achieve well because listening and speaking are effectively promoted through partner talk, skilful questioning and opportunities to use drama.
52. Pupils read well. They read aloud confidently and the majority acquire good expression rapidly. This is because reading is effectively managed with many opportunities for silent and guided reading. Pupils read with good understanding, and this supports their work in other subjects very effectively. Reading is well supported by parents. Teachers keep effective records with assessment against specific objectives. Pupils develop their critical responses well and are encouraged to write reviews of what they read. However, library facilities are inadequate for pupils in Years 3 to 6 because the library is very small and inadequately sited.
53. Writing standards in Year 2 are average, but quickly improve as pupils move up the school. By Years 5 and 6, pupils' writing uses a wide range of vocabulary and shows a good grasp of grammar. Standards in spelling are above average because of the consistent quality in teaching this skill. The school is focusing on improving the quality of writing and using extended writing more extensively to improve standards.
54. Teaching and learning are good overall. During the inspection lessons ranged from unsatisfactory to excellent. Planning of lessons is thorough and detailed. Teachers are clear about just what they want pupils to learn. These objectives are used to focus learning and assess pupils' achievements at the end of lessons. A distinctive strength of teaching is the use of partners to enable pupils to brainstorm ideas and promote speaking and listening skills. In the best lessons, pupils are given challenging work and the teacher questions them astutely, and keeps a careful check on progress to ensure that pupils have fully grasped the purpose of the activity. In a lesson in Year 5, pupils were given clear guidance about what to do and the teacher very effectively modelled this, so they had a clear example to follow. This approach is reflected in the positive response of pupils and the effective way they draw on what they have been taught before. Pupils' work is generally carefully and constructively marked, with clear comments on strengths, and guidance on how they could improve their work. However, this is not consistent between classes, and marking in Year 2 is not as

effective as in Year 6, for example. Where teaching was only satisfactory or worse, this was mainly due to the teacher not making the learning purpose clear to pupils. This meant they were unable to use what they had learnt in the introduction effectively in group work. Not enough use is made of ICT in English lessons to support learning and opportunities are missed to practise drafting and redrafting.

55. Both subject leaders demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the subject and use their skills well, leading by example. They have a clear overview of the subject and have used monitoring well to review teaching and learning and provided good advice to further improve practice. Overall provision has improved markedly since the previous inspection especially with improved achievement in Years 3 to 6 as a result of improved teaching.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

56. Pupils' literacy skills are promoted well in most subjects and this has a clear impact on pupils' achievement. All teachers use other subjects well to focus on specific vocabulary. Discussion and the structured use of talk are common features of many lessons. Opportunities for pupils to work in pairs or groups are promoted well, and pupils respond to these in a very positive way. Pupils are enabled to make good use of both their reading and writing skills across the curriculum. All these features promote both pupils' English skills and their learning in other subjects.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in Mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers manage lessons well and pupils work hard.
- Insufficient use is made of assessment data to match work to pupils' individual needs.
- Pupils have good mental arithmetic skills because these are taught well.

### **Commentary**

57. The results of national assessments at the end of Year 6 were average in 2004, but below average when compared with similar schools. Results in Year 2 were well above the national average and well above average when compared with similar schools. Currently, standards in Years 1 to 6 are average, which indicates a decline at Year 2. This is partly due to the nature of the cohort; there are increased numbers of pupils with significant special educational needs in the younger classes. Achievement is satisfactory throughout the school.
58. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Classes are managed well and there are good relationships between staff and pupils. As a result, pupils usually apply themselves conscientiously to tasks, show good levels of interest and work well together. The basic skills of numeracy are taught well. Pupils receive a good grounding in mental arithmetic skills in Years 1 and 2. They calculate simple addition and subtraction sums accurately in their heads and are familiar with number bonds to 20 and beyond. In Years 3 to 6 they build well upon these skills, and are confident in handling number by the end of the school. Pupils in Year 3 can count backwards in 2s and 5s, for example,

and Year 6 have quick recall of the 9 times table. However, not enough emphasis is given to investigations that extend pupils' thinking. Although teachers plan lessons thoroughly, and are clear about what they want pupils to learn, they do not always match the work precisely enough to pupils' specific needs. As a result, higher achieving pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.

59. There are differences in how teachers interpret the same planning. In two lessons observed based on the same plan, one was barely satisfactory and the other good. The differences were not due to issues such as classroom management, but to teachers' varied interpretation of different parts of the planning, and the strategies they used to get their points across because of their different levels of understanding of specific mathematical concepts.
60. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Teachers evaluate how pupils are doing in relation to their particular aims for each lesson, and keep satisfactory records of achievement. However, not enough use is made of assessment information in planning work more precisely for individuals and groups. The quality of marking is satisfactory overall, but is variable between different classes, and often pupils are not given enough guidance about how to improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving well due to the good support of the class teachers and teaching assistants. Bilingual pupils learn English quickly, and progress at the same rate as their classmates once they have been in school for some time.
61. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Monitoring procedures have been focused on evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and implementing new strategies for improvement. The school has identified weaknesses in pupils' problem-solving skills and this has become a whole school focus in mathematics teaching, so that standards can be raised.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

62. Mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. There are some good examples of the use of mathematics in other subjects. In Year 6 pupils made 'maths trail' booklets, linked to their school grounds. In Year 1, a bar chart was made of the details of pupils' holiday travel. Pupils in Year 3 made good use of their knowledge of tessellations to make mosaic pictures linked to their history topic. In science, pupils use their understanding of mathematics to record work confidently using tables and graphs. This work gives good practice in using mathematical skills, as well as supporting understanding in different subjects. Some good use is made of links between ICT and mathematics in lessons in the computer suite.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Not enough attention is paid to investigative skills, particularly for older pupils.
- Pupils enjoy science lessons and work hard.
- Teachers manage classes well but their subject knowledge has weaknesses and provision varies too much between different classes.

## Commentary

63. Achievement is unsatisfactory overall. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress and standards are broadly average. Standards are weaker in pupils' understanding of investigative work than in their knowledge of scientific topics. In Years 3 to 6, progress is unsatisfactory because the weaknesses in pupils' investigative skills are more pronounced, and overall standards are below average.
64. Results of national assessments at age seven in 2004 were broadly average compared to all schools and to similar schools, with good numbers getting higher scores, but with above average numbers failing to get to the expected Level 2. Results of assessments at age 11 were average compared to all schools, but were well below average compared to similar schools.
65. Inspection evidence broadly supports this picture. The books of pupils in the current Year 2 differ between classes but the overall standards are average. However, in one class few pupils have done work at the higher Level 3, although pupils who struggle are given work that is well adapted to their needs, and succeed with this. In the other class, more pupils have done good work at the higher levels, but work for lower attainers is not modified sufficiently to meet their needs, and much of their work is unfinished.
66. The standards of pupils in Years 3 to 6 are average in their knowledge of different scientific topics, but are below average in their understanding of investigative work. Although they do attempt practical work, this is too often planned and tightly constrained by the teacher, with pupils having little input to the designs of experiments. Although pupils understand the idea of a fair test, they do not know how to apply this to planning their own experiments. The work in older pupils' books also shows an imbalance between different classes. In Year 6, for example, one class has done much more investigative and practical work and the amount of written work was double that in the other class over the year. The school reports that this second class had spent a lot of time practising tests for national assessments. While this might help pupils to cope with some aspects of the tests, it means that their weak understanding of investigations is compounded.
67. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 but unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall because of the weaknesses in teaching investigative work in the older classes. Although classes are well managed and pupils have satisfactory chances to undertake practical work, many teachers lack the understanding of how to develop this aspect of pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy science because they enjoy the practical work, and undertake this with enthusiasm. However, because they are often following a plan provided by the teacher they do not gain as much understanding from these experiences as they should. In some classes, teachers make good use of pupils' literacy skills to write about their understanding in their own words, but in other classes these opportunities are missed. Good use is made of pupils' mathematical skills in using measurement, graphs and tables but, again, this varies in quality between classes. Assessment is unsatisfactory, because planning does not make sufficient use of how pupils have attained previously to plan work for them.
68. Leadership is satisfactory but management is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has identified the issues with investigative work, and has plans in place to help colleagues address these. However, the differences in provision in parallel classes have not been

identified or addressed because monitoring has not been rigorous enough for this. The school has identified science as an area for focusing on improving standards over the next year.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have good skills in using computers.
- Classes are managed well and teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Good links are made with other subjects in ICT lessons in the computer suite.
- Not enough use is made of ICT to support pupils' work in other subjects.
- Resources have been improved considerably but more are needed to take the subject forward.

### **Commentary**

69. Standards in ICT are above expectations throughout Years 1 to 6. Pupils' achievement is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection in terms of standards in the older classes. Pupils now cover the full range of the National Curriculum and are doing well in all elements. This is because of increased staff confidence and upgrades in equipment. Pupils are particularly skilful in using computers, and have steadily increasing confidence and competence in this as they get older. In the oldest classes, they are taught clearly some of the principles behind what they learn, so that they can see the strengths and weaknesses of using ICT in particular situations.
70. Teaching and learning are good and lessons in the computer suite are well organised and effective. Teachers prepare these lessons well and pupils thoroughly enjoy them. A good balance is drawn between clear instructions and demonstrations from the teachers, based on their good subject knowledge, and good opportunities for pupils to try things for themselves. Within these lessons, teachers make good use of pupils' strong collaborative skills. Pupils share computers amicably, listen to each other's ideas and suggestions carefully, and help each other out when needed.
71. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has a clear view of strengths and weaknesses and has worked successfully to help colleagues to improve their practice. He has clearly identified the need to improve equipment further and to make more use of ICT in other lessons. Clear plans to address both these issues are in train and are due to be implemented next term, when new equipment is installed.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

72. ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory overall. Some good links are made with other subjects. For example, in a very good lesson with Year 6, pupils used video and digital cameras to record a science experiment they had tried earlier, in order to make a Power Point presentation for other children. Other work seen involves good links with mathematics, art and design, design and technology and literacy. This helps develop pupils' ICT skills in a meaningful context and supports learning in the other subjects.
73. However, opportunities for such links are missed back in the classroom, in lessons in other subjects. Some of this is due to the lack of much suitable equipment. Classes do

not have interactive whiteboards and have only one computer per class, although both these issues are being addressed next year. However, too little use is made of the computers that classes already have. The use of ICT is very seldom built routinely into lessons, for example, in using word processing for drafting and redrafting when pupils write. This means pupils miss out on chances to practise their already good skills (outside dedicated ICT lessons) and to raise them even further.

## HUMANITIES

Religious education is not covered by this report, and was inspected separately by the diocese. Only one lesson was observed in **geography** and it was not possible to reach a secure overall judgement about provision in this subject. Evidence was obtained by looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning. The National Curriculum is covered satisfactorily, and the quality of work seen was broadly in line with the expectations for pupils of this age. In the one lesson seen, teaching and learning were satisfactory, and pupils showed a sound understanding of the use of different artifacts in Indian village life.

### History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of pupils' literacy skills
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory.

### Commentary

74. Attainment throughout the school is similar to that expected for pupils of this age. Pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons. Pupils in Year 2 listen well and actively participate in discussion with good knowledge and understanding of events. For example, in their topic on Florence Nightingale they were able to give good reasons for her being famous and asked questions about the conditions in the Crimea. Pupils in the Year 3 class showed good achievement when recounting at the beginning of the lesson their knowledge of the reasons for Boudicca's revolt. They also show good knowledge about people and events in times past. One child, for example, was able to suggest the immediate consequences of the revolt and the long-term impact for the Celts and the Romans. In Year 5, pupils were knowledgeable about Tutankhamen and good links were made with literacy – with the teacher reading from Carter's original writing. The tasks were varied in their level of challenge for different pupils and provided many opportunities for them to develop their speaking and listening skills.
75. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Teachers are good at framing questions to probe pupils' understanding and take their learning forward. They plan good opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills through the subject and there is also good use made of visits to motivate pupils' interests. However, the information gathered through assessment is not used effectively to inform lesson planning. The quality of marking is variable across the year groups, with some teachers not giving pupils sufficient guidance as to how to improve their work. Pupils enjoy their work and most are confident in expressing their views. Their written work is neat and they pay good attention to spelling and punctuation.

76. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. At the moment two people are care-taking this role and, although they have provided resources for the subject, they do not have a clear view of standards throughout the school, as no monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

Not enough evidence was available to make overall judgements about provision in these subjects, except in physical education. Just one lesson was seen in each of art and design and design and technology, both with older pupils. Samples of work in these two subjects were examined. There was no music taught during the inspection, although pupils were heard singing during hymn practice.

77. In **art and design**, there was not enough work on display in Years 1 and 2 to make any judgement about standards. In Years 3 to 6, the work on display matches expectations. Teachers place suitable emphasis on teaching basic skills and there is a good balance between two and three-dimensional work. The school recognises that standards are not as high as they were at the time of the previous inspection when all the classes were taught by a specialist teacher. Currently, there is no co-ordinator, but there are plans to employ a specialist again, to teach the subject throughout the school.
78. **Design and technology** work seen was generally of a satisfactory standard. Work in pupils' design books shows that pupils have good opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills. There are sound links to pupils' work in science. The co-ordinator has only been in post for a very short time and has not yet had the opportunity to get a clear overview of what is happening throughout the school.
79. In **music**, provision is strengthened by instrumental tuition in guitar, cello, clarinet and violin taught by a group of peripatetic teachers during school hours. Hymn singing is practised regularly and the pupils observed in assembly sang tunefully, with zest and enthusiasm.

### **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers organise lessons well and teach specific techniques clearly.
- Pupils enjoy physical education lessons and work very well together.
- Tasks are usually very well matched to pupils' abilities, but sometimes there is a mismatch.
- Chances are sometimes missed for pupils to evaluate their work.

#### **Commentary**

80. Standards are above expectations throughout Years 1 to 6 and pupils achieve well. Pupils get good opportunities to take part in different aspects of the subject and, as a result, most have good levels of agility from an early age. This was demonstrated in a dance lesson in Year 1, for example. Pupils enjoy this subject and work hard in lessons so that they make good progress. Their good collaborative skills are used effectively when they work in pairs or in a team and this also supports their learning.

They have good games skills, for example, in passing and catching large balls, and this was seen in both Year 2 and Year 3. Pupils in the older classes have good athletics skills.

81. Teaching and learning are good overall, and ranged from satisfactory to excellent in the lessons observed. Lessons are generally well planned so that all pupils are involved and make good progress in their skills. Activities are generally planned effectively to be challenging but still within all pupils' capability, so they can progress at their own level. Occasionally this is not the case, such as when pupils in Year 3 played netball games with teams that were too large. In this lesson, the very high levels of skill of some pupils enabled them to dominate the game, and less accomplished pupils hardly touched the ball throughout this part of the lesson. A significant strength is that teachers explain specific techniques clearly and back this up by demonstration, so pupils understand what they should do. Teachers watch pupils carefully and generally give them clear feedback about how they could improve their performance. In some lessons, good opportunities are provided for pupils to evaluate their work and to comment on that of their classmates. In other lessons, however, such opportunities are missed.
82. The subject is led well. The co-ordinator has a clear view of strengths and weaknesses and has monitored colleagues' planning. Extra resources have been bought in and an improved scheme of work has developed teachers' confidence. However, there is still a need for renewal and minor expansion of resources in some areas. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils to learn to swim in Year 5, with about 85 per cent able to swim 25 metres by the time they leave school.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

83. The school provides a wide range of activities that effectively develop personal, social and health education and citizenship. These are fundamental to much of what the school does across the curriculum as well as in specific lessons in these subjects. Not enough lessons were seen to make overall judgements about teaching and provision within these specific subjects. However, the good work that goes on across other subjects, and in assemblies and at playtimes, underpins the whole ethos of the school. Pupils' views are sought through the school council so that they can play an important role in the school's development. Council members' names are displayed prominently in the school hall. Drug awareness and sex education are appropriately taught. A healthy lifestyle is promoted through the 'PSHE week' and through a number of good displays around the school. Assemblies, group work and specific lessons in personal, social and health education are used very effectively to promote values of honesty, kindness and respect for others. As a result of these very good elements, pupils behave in a mature, sensible and responsible manner. The leadership of this area is good. The co-ordinator has established detailed plans to ensure effective coverage of the programme, and resources have been purchased to support it.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).*