

INSPECTION REPORT

St Bartholomew's Catholic Primary School

Swanley/Kent

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118860

Headteacher: Mr Kevin McPartland

Lead inspector: Brian Rowe

Dates of inspection: 23 to 25 May 2005

Inspection number: 267745

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: 5 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 315

School address: Sycamore Drive
Swanley
Kent
Postcode: BR8 7AY

Telephone number: 01322 663119
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of Mrs Eileen Prince
governors:

Date of previous 07 June 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Bartholomew's is a larger than average size, Voluntary Aided, Roman Catholic primary school with 315 pupils between the ages of four and 11 years. There are equal numbers of boys and girls, but variations exist between the year groups. The school draws pupils from the local area as well as further afield. It serves families who are from a Catholic background and whose social circumstances generally match the national picture, but a significant number come from disadvantaged backgrounds. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is close to the national average. About 12 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, and this is below average. Six pupils have statements outlining their particular needs. This is average for a school of this size. Pupils' special educational needs are mostly related to their behaviour and learning difficulties. The vast majority of pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds. Very rarely do pupils use English as an additional language. The attainment of children joining the school varies from year to year and is now broadly average overall, although recent intakes have less developed skills in literacy and numeracy than in previous years. Few pupils join or leave the school at other than the normal times. In 2002 and 2003, the school received Achievement Awards for significant improvements in

pupils' attainment. During the last few years, staff turnover has been very high and the school has encountered some difficulty in appointing experienced staff.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1695	Brian Rowe	Lead inspector	Mathematics Geography Physical education English as an additional language
9173	Sarah McDermott	Lay inspector	
4099	Rodney Braithwaite	Team inspector	English Citizenship History Music
12997	Chris Cheong	Team inspector	Foundation Stage 1 Science Information and communication technology Art Design and technology

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¹ 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 include knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Bartholomew's Roman Catholic primary is a **good** school that provides **good** value for money. The headteacher, who is well supported by the governors, provides **good** leadership. Teaching and learning are **good** overall and enhance the pupils' positive attitudes to school. A high turnover of staff has restricted the pace of school development and subsequently the effectiveness of management is satisfactory. Standards are above average by the time pupils leave school and pupils achieve well because of the high level of support they receive from the staff.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The Catholic ethos is a key factor in promoting the pupils' good personal development;
- Teaching and learning are good in Years 3 to 6 and this ensures that standards are above average and pupils achieve well by the time they leave school;
- The headteacher provides good leadership and has held the school together in difficult times by his determination to sustain a strong Christian ethos and high standards;
- The leadership and management in some subjects do not promote a strong enough focus on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning;
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and support staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning;
- Assessment and the tracking of pupils' progress are not used well to raise standards;
- Many lessons are too long. The daily timetables and curriculum lack variety and innovation;
- The school has established good relationships with parents, who hold it in high regard;
- A small number of pupils do not achieve well because they miss many days off school.

The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection and has dealt with most identified issues well. The provision for ICT has greatly improved with the establishment of a computer suite. New outdoor play provision for the reception classes has been provided and the health and safety issues have been fully addressed. The previous strengths associated with the care of pupils have been maintained.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - very high (top 5 per cent) A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average;*

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

Children start school with academic and social skills that are broadly average, but the range of ability is very wide. An increasing number of children arrive with poor speaking, listening and personal skills and the level of attainment is now not as high as at the time of the last inspection. Children in the reception classes reach standards that are average

when they move into Year 1 and their achievement is satisfactory. In 2004, test results for pupils in Year 2 indicated that standards were below the national average and similar schools in reading and writing. In mathematics, results were close to the national average, but below those for similar schools. Results have fluctuated yearly dependent on the ability of the group. In the current Year 2, pupils are attaining standards that are close to the national average and their achievement is satisfactory. In the 2004 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, results overall were well above the national average and for similar schools. The trend in the school's Year 6 results has been close to the national trend of improvement during the last four years. However, there has been considerable subject variability and in English, results have been stronger than mathematics and science. Compared with their test results when they were in Year 2, pupils make good progress and achieve well. In Years 3 to 6, standards are now above average, many pupils perform very well in the Year 6 national tests and their achievement is good overall. Consequently, pupils' achievement is good by the time they leave school, but especially strong in the older age groups. Pupils develop good literacy and numeracy skills and an above average competence using computers by the time they leave school. The development of pupils' personal qualities is **good**. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is good. Attendance is below average and pupils' punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good** education overall. Teaching and learning are **good** overall and result in good achievement by the time pupils leave school. They are satisfactory in the reception classes and Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6, being especially strong in Years 4 and 6. Pupils learn effectively and make good progress because teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' good achievements and support pupils with special educational needs well. The arrangements for assessment are satisfactory, but data on pupils' performance is not used effectively enough to raise standards and improve teaching and learning. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, which is enriched by lessons in personal and social education and by good out-of-school activities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher leads the school well. He has a clear vision for the school's future and is leading the school calmly and effectively following an unsettled time of high staff turnover. Governors are effective and very supportive of the school. Some subject leaders are not sufficiently well established to make a positive impact on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Consequently, the leadership of key staff and management is satisfactory. Systems to review and monitor effectiveness across the school are not sufficiently robust to ensure improvements. There is a determined commitment to ensuring every pupil is well looked after and included in the strong Christian ethos of the school. The governors do not fully comply with all statutory requirements as there are minor omissions in the school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are supportive of what the school provides and this makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. In particular, they think their children like school as they are treated fairly, make good progress because they are expected to work hard, that teaching is good and there are good arrangements for settling in. The school's effective links with

parents make an important contribution to pupils' academic achievement. Pupils feel that the school is good and were positive in their views of the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Strengthen the role of subject leaders to ensure they focus on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school;
- Improve the use made of assessment and performance data to set meaningful targets and raise standards;
- Become more innovative and flexible when planning the curriculum;
- Maintain the emphasis to improve attendance;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Rectify the minor omissions in the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Children in the reception classes reach standards that are average when they move into Year 1 and their achievement is **satisfactory**. By the end of Year 2, pupils are attaining standards that are close to the national average and their achievement is **satisfactory**. In Years 3 to 6, standards are **above** average, many pupils perform very well in the Year 6 national tests and their achievement is **good** overall. Consequently, pupils' achievement is **good** by the time they leave school, but especially strong in the older age groups.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The 2004 national test results at the end of Year 6 are well above average.
- The results of the national tests taken in Year 2 fluctuate yearly and standards have declined during the last four years.
- Recent high levels of staff change have restricted learning in some classes.
- A high proportion of pupils reach the higher grades in the Years 2 and 6 national tests.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they achieve well.

Commentary

Foundation Stage (reception classes)

1. Attainment on entry to school is now average, a change since the last inspection as increasing numbers of children arrive with poor speaking, listening and personal skills. Overall, children receive satisfactory teaching and by the time they start in Year 1, most reach the expectations for their age in the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals. Standards are average in each area of learning, except in writing where standards are below average. Children's achievement is satisfactory overall, but at times limited because teaching does not focus closely enough on their needs, especially in the development of their writing skills.
2. In 2004, test results in Year 2 indicated that standards were below the national average and for similar schools in reading and writing. In mathematics, results were close to the national average, but below those for similar schools. Girls have outperformed boys over the last three years by more than the national trend. This is partly because boys find it difficult to concentrate when the teaching has not been sufficiently stimulating or interesting. A high proportion of pupils attained the higher Level 3 grades in reading, writing and mathematics. The findings of the inspection for pupils in Year 2 indicate an improvement to the 2004 test results, but standards in writing still need to be improved further. Work in pupils' books and seen in lessons indicates that overall standards are close to the national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in most subjects and several develop very good literacy and numeracy skills.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.2 (16.4)	15.8 (15.7)

writing	14.2 (16.5)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.0 (17.5)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 50 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

² 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 communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

Years 3 to 6

3. In the 2004 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, results overall were well above the national average and for similar schools. The trend in the school's Year 6 results has been close to the national trend of improvement during the last four years. However, there has been considerable subject variability and results have been stronger in English than in mathematics and science. Compared with their test results when they were in Year 2, pupils have made good progress and achieved well. The school has been very successful in Years 3 to 6 and has gained two Achievement Awards for significant improvements in standards.
4. For pupils in the current Year 6, inspection findings indicate that standards are similar to those in the 2004 National Curriculum tests. At key times of the year, the headteacher organises booster classes in Year 6 to ensure pupils gain their full potential. The overall good-quality teaching and thorough coverage of the curriculum has ensured that pupils make good progress and achieve well. Standards in ICT are now in line with national expectations due to improvements in resources and staff confidence. Pupils' achievement was good in most of the lessons observed during the inspection, and especially strong in Years 4 and 6. Religious education is to be inspected as part of Section 23 of the Education Act and will be published as a separate report.
5. Overall, pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in Years 3 to 6. This is because assessment information is used effectively to ensure that work is well matched to their learning needs. The more able pupils also achieve well with many passing the Kent selection test and gaining the higher grades in the national tests. The school has made improvements in tracking pupils' progress. They are set targets, but many are not sure of their individual targets and do not know where or how they need to improve. Insufficient lessons were observed in art and design, design and technology, history, geography, music and physical education to enable judgements to be made about provision, standards, achievement or teaching.
6. Pupils have good literacy and numeracy skills and develop an above average competence in ICT by the end of Year 6. Good use is made of these skills in some classes, but links to other subjects do not feature consistently in teachers' daily or weekly planning. This is partly because of the high number of staff new to the school.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.0 (28.5)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	29.1 (26.8)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.7 (28.5)	28.6 (28.6)

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

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **good** attitudes and behave **well**. The school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development **well**. The attendance of the pupils is close to **average**, and their punctuality is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is good at instilling a sense of self-belief and spiritual awareness in the pupils.
- Pupils know right from wrong because the school has good systems to manage behaviour and promote moral development.
- The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to become mature and sensible and to form positive relationships.
- A few pupils do not achieve as well as they could because they miss many days off school.

Commentary

7. Pupils are very loyal to the school's strong Catholic allegiance. They take part with great respect in prayers and times for reflection. Teachers continue to provide very good opportunities for pupils to think beyond the material and superficial and to develop a stronger Christian faith. A feeling of self worth is successfully fostered in the pupils as the school celebrates talents cultivated in school or at home. In most lessons, pupils have good attitudes, value their learning and are curious to find out more. However, some lessons are not sufficiently inspiring to bring out a real zest for knowledge. Pupils are sensitively aware of the values of others. The very good contribution to fundraising demonstrates the pupils' sympathy and practical support for the plight of the less fortunate.
8. The promotion of moral development is good and closely allied to the school's staunch Catholic principles. Pupils are successfully encouraged to think through the consequences of silly or inappropriate behaviour. As a result, the behaviour of most pupils is good, although there is an increasing number of children in the reception classes who arrive not knowing how to interact sensibly with each other. There have been three fixed-term exclusions of older pupils in the past year. Pupils are particularly orderly when they are supervised moving between classes and filing in and out of assembly. Behaviour is managed well by most staff. Nevertheless, the high number of new teachers often leads to inconsistencies in promoting good behaviour, with some teachers having higher expectations of discipline than others. Consequently, the judgement on this aspect is not as strong as at the time of the last inspection. The best behaviour is invariably in those lessons that catch the pupils' imagination and move along at a good pace.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

<i>Categories used in the Annual School Census</i>
White – British

Exclusions in the last school year

<i>No of pupils on roll</i>	<i>Number of fixed period exclusions</i>	<i>Number of permanent exclusions</i>
290	2	0

Black or Black British – African	15	1	0
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The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

9. The continued good promotion of social development leads to pupils who are able to get on well with each other and have a confident approach to their learning. The good relationships mean that bullying is unusual. School councillors talk proudly of their role, but justifiably feel that they could take more charge of running their meetings and be elected democratically rather than being chosen by their teachers. Teachers are good at promoting teamwork and find learning is empowered when the pupils collaborate effectively. Opportunities for investigation and independent learning have improved since the last inspection. The headteacher places a great emphasis on courtesy and respect, resulting in polite, friendly and well-adjusted pupils.
10. The promotion of cultural awareness remains satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the school has started to introduce the pupils to festivals such as Divali, Hinduism and the Chinese New Year. The school has increased learning in a number of diverse cultures, backgrounds and faiths.
11. The attendance of the pupils is lower than in other primary schools. At the time of the last inspection, the attendance rate was very good, but in recent years attendance has been well below the national average. However, the school is working effectively to improve attendance through prompt registration and careful analysis of the registers. Over the last year, the school has managed to improve attendance to close to the national average and surpass targets set by the local education authority. Most absence is due to illness, particularly amongst the younger pupils, although there are also a significant number of family holidays taken in term-time. The vast majority of pupils arrive on time for the start of the school day. The school regularly reminds parents of the need to be punctual, but the recording of lateness is not sufficiently detailed to allow the school to follow up individual concerns effectively enough.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.7	School data:	0.0
National data:	5.5	National data:	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The quality of teaching and learning is **good** and the assessment of pupils' work is **satisfactory** throughout the school. The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall, and there is a **good** range of opportunities for enrichment. The quality of accommodation and resources to meet the needs of the curriculum is **satisfactory**. The care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils are **good**. The school supports and guides the pupils **well**. The involvement of pupils by seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **good**. The school has a **good** partnership with parents. Links with the community and with other schools and colleges are **good**.

Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is **good**, but varies between classes. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the reception classes and Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are good overall, but especially strong in Years 4 and 6. The assessment of pupils' work is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a good command of the subjects and plan lessons well.
- The most able pupils gain the higher grades in the national tests as teachers challenge them to reach their full potential.
- Assessment procedures and the tracking of pupils' progress are not effective in raising standards.
- Teaching assistants are very well deployed. Their input has a very positive effect on pupils' learning and achievement.
- Teachers have established positive relationships with pupils and manage their classes well to maintain good behaviour and encourage positive attitudes to learning.

Commentary

12. The table below indicates that a substantial amount of satisfactory and good teaching was seen during the inspection. This does not fully reflect the effectiveness of teaching that has taken place over time, ensuring that pupils achieve well by the time they leave school. Over recent years, the turnover of staff has been very high and this has impacted on the consistency and quality of teaching. The headteacher has worked hard to minimise any disruptions, but children in some classes are confused by the number of different teachers they have. At the last inspection, the quality of teaching was judged as good overall. In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning were good and in the infant and reception classes they were satisfactory. There were particular strengths in English and mathematics. This profile of the quality of teaching is still the same, but there has been a considerable improvement in teaching science and ICT. Literacy and numeracy are still taught well in Years 3 to 6. The last report indicated that the school had good strategies to ensure the pupils did well in the national tests at the end of Year 6 and this is also still the case.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	2 (4%)	17 (40%)	18 (42%)	5 (12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

13. The quality of the teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, although it ranges from unsatisfactory to good. Good teaching is characterised by effective and lively methods, coupled with supportive relationships, good class management, high expectations and an emphasis on tasks that really help children to move forward rather than just occupy them. However, teaching is not consistent between the two classes and features that are good in one class are only satisfactory and sometimes unsatisfactory in the other.
14. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good overall in Years 3 to 6. In many lessons, but especially in Years 2, 4 and 6, teachers have high expectations of their pupils' work and behaviour and plan work which is challenging and designed to stretch the thinking of all pupils in their class. Pupils respond well to this and are keen to do their best. They know what to expect and what is expected of them and, as a result, classes run smoothly and effectively. In less effective lessons, the pace of work was too slow and pupils were not sufficiently actively engaged in activities and their learning.

15. Across the school, teaching assistants are deployed well and make very effective contributions in classes. Most teachers play their part by making sure that the assistants know what to do and valuing the part they play in pupils' learning.
16. The teachers' use of questions to find out what their pupils know at the beginning, during and at the end of the lesson is effective. Using their good knowledge of pupils, teachers match questions well to different attainment levels and ensure that there are equal opportunities for both boys and girls to answer questions and make contributions. Information gained is often used effectively to plan work and to check pupils' progress.
17. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is well planned. Good support is provided which enables them to achieve well. Work is often well matched to the individual needs of pupils and staff work effectively to ensure that these pupils make good progress. The teaching assistants provide very effective support and work closely with the class teachers in planning and monitoring achievements.
18. At the last inspection, the school had established more rigorous arrangements for assessment. However, it was reported assessment was not used enough to guide planning or to set targets for improvement. This is still the case for many of the teachers. The school has established satisfactory assessment systems throughout the school. In the reception classes, assessment is satisfactory, but many targets are too generalised to promote success and too little teaching is planned to ensure that children achieve them. Observations and evaluations of children's work are recorded regularly, but the school does not examine and analyse the data it collects sufficiently closely or use the data on individual children well enough to move their learning forward in key areas such as writing.
19. In the rest of the school, systems for assessment are also satisfactory. In English and mathematics, these systems are satisfactory and in science, detailed checking is undertaken at the end of a unit of work. Systems are good in ICT and the information gained is used well to inform day-to-day planning. In some other subjects, new systems are being put in place. The current system for tracking pupils' progress in the key subjects is regularly updated, but it is not easy not easy to use and contains conflicting evidence. Target-setting is well established for cohorts of pupils, but not yet for individuals or smaller groups of pupils. Work is regularly marked and the quality of the marking is satisfactory overall, but variable between classes. Teachers generally know their pupils very well.

The curriculum

Provision for the curriculum is **satisfactory** and opportunities for enrichment are **good**. The school's accommodation and resources to meet the needs of the curriculum are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides well for its pupils with special educational needs.
- Many lessons are too long, the daily timetables lack variety and the curriculum lacks innovation.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that are well attended by pupils.
- The school ensures pupils have frequent opportunities to develop their literacy, numeracy and computer skills.
- The library provision remains unsatisfactory due to lack of space.

Commentary

20. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements and, by the end of Year 6, pupils are generally well prepared for their secondary schooling. Since the last inspection, there have been improvements in the provision for ICT and all pupils now have good access to computers. The curriculum overall in the reception classes is satisfactory, an improvement since the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory. Procedures for the identification of pupils with special educational needs are now in place, and this is also an improvement since the last inspection. Throughout the school, provision for pupils with special educational needs is good because the special needs co-ordinator leads and manages this effectively, and helps teachers to develop good individual education plans for the pupils in need of support. Additionally, teaching assistants are experienced, well trained and make a significant contribution to the learning and well-being of the pupils with special educational needs.
21. As at the last inspection, great emphasis is placed upon English and mathematics in the curriculum. This has led to some sessions being too long, especially in the mornings, and this reduces the effectiveness of pupils' learning in some classes. This is also because some lessons lack pace and flexibility. As a result, there is insufficient innovation and variety in the learning for pupils, and many lessons lack enjoyment and creativity. Opportunities for completing exciting projects, cross-curricular themes and regrouping pupils by ability are too limited.
22. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities, for example computer, art, library, music and many sports clubs. Parents and teachers organise clubs for netball and soccer and teams play competitively against other schools. The school also has links to local sports clubs and actively encourages pupils to join them. Pupils throughout the school have good access to the curriculum and the extra-curricular activities. All pupils have equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of school life.
23. The accommodation and resources for learning are satisfactory, and outdoor provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection. A large, well-equipped hall and spacious grounds provide good accommodation for physical education. However, the school library remains inadequate, as at the time of the last inspection. A satisfactory number of teaching and support staff are employed to meet the demands of the National Curriculum, although the school, for several reasons, has had a considerable number of changes of teachers that has impacted on the school's development and pupils' learning in some classes.

Care, guidance and support

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pastoral care and support of each and every pupil is paramount.
- Pupils are safe and secure while at school because systems for welfare and first aid are well established.
- Pupils are well involved in school activities and have a good voice in how the school is run.
- The monitoring of pupils' academic needs is not sufficiently consistent to ensure work is always matched to individual needs.

Commentary

24. The school has good procedures to ensure the pupils have effective practical care. There are plenty of staff with first aid certificates and accidents are carefully recorded and monitored. The school only gives medicine with parental permission, but currently is not recording details which is recommended good practice of administration to enable accurate recall in the event of an emergency. Pupils with particular medical needs are carefully supervised and staff know just what to do in an emergency. In practice, all staff know how to react should they be suspicious of child abuse. The site is effectively checked for potential hazards and health and safety routines are carefully followed. This aspect remains as good as at the time of the last inspection.
25. The school is especially proficient in giving high levels of personal support to individual pupils based on very well-rooted Catholic principles. Although many staff are new, they all get to know their pupils very well through close communication and effective teamwork. Teachers and support staff are quick to notice if anyone is not doing as well as they should and to ensure they are back on track as soon as possible. The headteacher is very visible in the school and always ready to lend an ear to pupils' concerns. Pupils feel very much "at home" in school because levels of trust with the staff are particularly strong. Pupils with special educational needs progress well because of careful support and good links with home. There is informal but effective monitoring of each pupil's personal development and teachers are able to write perceptive reports at the end of the year. However, the tracking of academic progress is not sufficiently accurate and detailed across all subjects to guarantee that every pupil is having work matched to their need.
26. Good arrangements are in place for children's introduction to school life and, as a result, most children are happy to attend school. The security of children in the Foundation Stage classes is good and staff take good care of the children.
27. The headteacher and staff value the views of the pupils. The older pupils feel that they have a genuine voice in the school. Many of the ideas and suggestions of the pupils are picked up informally at lunch and break times. Pupils have completed past surveys, but the results are sometimes not analysed and fed back to pupils sufficiently quickly. The school council is a good forum for selected pupils to air their views. Recently, the council has successfully asked the school for new play equipment for break times. However, opportunities for other pupils to contribute are inconsistent because there is no regular time to collect class ideas.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very appreciative of all that the school does for their children.
- Annual reports do not give parents a sufficiently clear message on how their children have progressed in each subject over the year.
- The very close link with the parish complements the school's successful promotion of the pupils' personal development.

- The school participates well in local events to extend the pupils' experience of their local community.

Commentary

28. Parents are very good supporters of the school. They value the Catholic aims and principles that permeate the school, and help their children to grow into well-rounded and thoughtful individuals. Parents feel that they are consulted well and do not have any qualms in approaching the school if they have concerns or questions. Parents are now better included in setting learning targets for children with special educational needs. The school keeps them well up to date on news, activities and celebrations. The prospectus and annual governors' report are very informative documents, but omit the legally required comparative national test results. Parents turn out in good numbers to events involving their children, whether they are Catholic masses, end-of-term productions or the parent teacher meetings. The school provides parents with a good overview of what is being taught in each class through regular subject information sheets and curriculum meetings. Parents are justified in their concern that homework is inconsistent. Several of the new teachers have not yet established a regular system for the setting and marking of homework. Teachers keep parents satisfactorily informed about their children's progress when they see them at the end of the day or meet them at the more formal parent teacher evenings. However, the written annual reports are not detailed enough on the rate of pupils' progress. The lack of accurate assessment information in some subjects means teachers find it difficult to give a meaningful explanation on how each pupil has improved in their learning. Work is in progress to develop new assessment systems. Overall, the links with parents are now good rather than very good.
29. The school works particularly closely and effectively with its Catholic parish. The priest is a very frequent and welcome visitor to the school to take assembly or to participate in religious education. The pupils are encouraged to prepare for First Communion and regularly lead mass at the attached church. The recent involvement in Education Sunday promoted the school well in the local community. During Lent, the pupils ran cake sales to raise funds for two Catholic international charities. The school also has positive links with other Catholic schools for professional development and to extend the pupils' curriculum. When pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, they go on to several local schools. Good arrangements are in place to prepare them for these new schools. Since the last inspection, there has been a good increase in the number of sports competitions with primary schools to bolster physical education.
30. The school is outward looking and plays a good part in local events. It is an active member of the town "twinning" project and regularly sends pupils on exchange trips to France. Pupils learn more about citizenship and democracy through visits from the chairman of the town council and regularly participate in town council competitions. The school makes good use of the locality to enliven geography lessons. A productive rapport with a large local supermarket contributes well to the pupils' education on healthy eating. The school gives in return to the community by allowing the use of the premises to the adjacent Bright Sparks Nursery and other local organisations.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governance of the school is **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is **good** and the leadership of the other key staff is **satisfactory**. The overall effectiveness of management of the school is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's future and is leading the school calmly and effectively following an unsettled time of high staff turnover.
- Governors are very supportive of the school and clear about what needs to be improved.
- Some subject leaders are not yet sufficiently well established to make a positive impact on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Systems to review and monitor effectiveness across the school are not sufficiently robust to ensure development in all areas of the school.
- The efficient financial systems ensure that spending is closely linked to educational needs.
- The school is not using data well enough to set meaningful targets for improving learning.

Commentary

31. The headteacher has a clear vision and sense of purpose for the school. He leads the school in a calm and measured way, ensuring that the Catholic aims underpin all that goes on in the school. During a turbulent time of high staff turnover, he has been a linchpin in ensuring that the ethos of the school is maintained and the pupils' care and education is the top priority. A strong Christian commitment to inclusion ensures that each and every pupil is well supported and encouraged to be well involved in all the school has to offer.
32. With the arrival of a very significant number of new staff this year, the headteacher has worked methodically to induct them into the school systems and establish effective teaching. Knowing that many of the teachers would be new to their role of subject leadership, he has worked supportively to help them plan and budget for the coming year. However, the leaders are not all knowledgeable enough about how well the pupils are learning in their subject. They have sufficient chance to check resources and look at their colleagues' planning, but are not spending enough time observing teaching and suggesting areas for improvement. The headteacher has carried out a good amount of monitoring of teaching, but the results have not been adequately analysed and acted on to bring about improvement in the quality of teaching. The newly appointed deputy headteacher knows the school well as a teacher, but as her role is in transition she has not yet been able to lighten the management load of the headteacher. Overall, the headteacher and senior managers, despite many recent changes, are committed to improvement. They continue to achieve results in English and mathematics above those of similar schools because there is a concerted boost to pupils' learning in the vital time leading up to national tests.
33. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The permanent co-ordinator is currently not in school, but has put in place some good systems. The monitoring of teaching and learning is undertaken, but currently this has too little effect on the quality of teaching.

34. The good governance of the school ensures that both governors and the headteacher work together effectively to positively promote the pupils' education. Governors are very clear about the strengths and weaknesses in the school because levels of communication are thorough. Visits to school are regular and well planned, and the headteacher keeps them well informed through detailed written reports. Governors have gauged the views of parents and feed the results effectively into management decisions. Governors know a lot about what is being taught because an innovative decision was taken to include all governors on the curriculum committee. The monitoring by governors in lessons is much more proficient than in many schools. The governors are very supportive, but do not shrink from challenging the senior management team when they feel provision could be better. They have been well involved in seeing that ICT improves, but have not had sufficient impact on ensuring standards and achievement in the infant classes are as high as in the junior classes. The governors are very well served by the experienced clerk, who ensures they are kept up to date on the latest guidance and well prepared for meetings. The governors ensure that virtually all statutory requirements are met, with the exception of reporting the comparative national data for test results.
35. The school is managed satisfactorily. The school improvement plan is a good document which highlights the main priorities and methodically identifies how success is to be achieved. The finance officer is very experienced and thorough. Together with the headteacher and governors, she ensures all spending gives value for money and is tightly linked to the pupils' educational needs. The school is less adept at analysing its academic performance and comparing how it is doing against similar schools. There is not a sharp enough focus on using assessment systems accurately to ensure the school knows exactly how its pupils are doing and what it needs to do to improve their learning. All parties in school communicate well and work as a cohesive team for the good of the pupils. The school contributes well to initial teacher training. The school continues to provide good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	772,097
Total expenditure	780,339
Expenditure per pupil	2,517

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	49,918
Balance carried forward to the next	41,616

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection where provision was found to be unsatisfactory.

36. Children make a satisfactory start to their school careers in the two reception classes. Progress is satisfactory overall. All achieve satisfactorily, including children with special educational needs, over the year. On arrival, they start with levels of attainment that are in line with national averages, although with very wide individual variation. The majority of children are likely to achieve most of the Early Learning Goals, the targets for children nationally for the end of their reception year. The exception to this is in writing, where standards at the end of the year are likely to be below average. During the inspection, teaching varied from unsatisfactory to good, but overall it is satisfactory. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory.
37. The last inspection found many areas needing improvement. All unsatisfactory areas from the last inspection are now satisfactory, with the exception of structured play. Although somewhat improved, it still needs further improvement. At the time of the last inspection, staffing levels were found to be unsatisfactory. These are currently satisfactory and are sufficient to ensure that children are well cared for and secure. The curriculum was deemed unsatisfactory. Now it is satisfactory and correctly based around the Early Learning Goals, the recommended curriculum for this age group. The school had no secure outside play area for this age group and it now has a good provision. The procedures for the identification of children with special educational needs are now clearer and being used successfully.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given some good opportunities to make choices about their play activities.
- Teachers' strategies for managing children are not always effective enough.
- Teachers use whole-class discussions well.

Commentary

38. By the end of reception, standards are average and children achieve satisfactorily. This area of learning is a priority in the school and is rightly given a strong emphasis by the staff. Whole-class teaching times are used well to promote personal and social development, teaching children how to listen and respect each other's ideas. Less directed time provides some good opportunities for children to choose activities for themselves and co-operate with others. However, too little is often done to motivate and enthuse children and the play deteriorates, as does their behaviour and social development. Overall, teaching and learning in this aspect are satisfactory.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a good knowledge of how to teach reading.
- Early writing skills are not consistently well taught.
- Assessment is not sufficiently well used to identify precise steps in children's learning or to target work to meet their precise needs.

Commentary

39. Standards in speaking and listening and reading are average by the time children move to Year 1. Achievement is satisfactory. Children make steady, and a few make good, progress in these aspects. This is because of the overall satisfactory and sometimes good teaching they receive. In good lessons, staff help children to extend their speaking and reading vocabulary well and challenge children to explain their ideas precisely.
40. The teaching and learning of writing skills is not strong and it varies between the two classes. Handwriting is taught regularly and other suitable fine co-ordination tasks are provided. However, too many children are unable to communicate their ideas in writing and have underdeveloped skills in letter formation and handwriting. Staff set individual targets for children in key areas such as reading and writing, but sometimes the targets are too large to promote success and occasionally too little teaching or learning is done to ensure that children achieve them.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use incidental moments well to promote children's understanding of number.
- Some good use is made of practical activities to extend learning.

Commentary

41. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in this area of learning. Achievement is satisfactory, as a result of which the majority will achieve the nationally expected level by the time they move to the Year 1 classes. Staff have high expectations for children's learning of number and use verbal counting successfully as part of classroom management routines. As a result, a substantial minority of children can count to a high number for their age and achieve well over their time in the reception classes for this aspect of mathematical development. Teachers provide a suitable range of varied practical tasks to help children extend their mathematical knowledge and skills. Consequently, most children are keen to take part and this in turn helps to improve their skills, such as when sorting and identifying shapes.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of the new computer suite.
- Opportunities are missed during child-led play activities and direct teaching sessions to promote exploration and knowledge of the world.

Commentary

42. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The majority of children are likely to achieve the national expected standard by the end of the year. They are provided with some good experiences to use computers independently to explore programs to “paint” butterflies, thus gaining satisfactory skills in using a mouse and understanding everyday technology. In this aspect of their learning, standards are as expected and achievement is satisfactory.
43. Teachers plan the curriculum together, but delivery in the classrooms varies considerably. More could be provided for children to explore events of the recent past, or interesting or beautiful natural objects to feel or smell in less directed learning times. Good use is sometimes made of a role-play, such as in the “garden centre”. The staff are starting to use the outside area for the development of this part of the curriculum.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

44. No sessions were observed outside or in the hall for physical development so no judgement can be made about teaching or the overall provision. However, the school’s assessment indicates that the majority will achieve the expected level by the end of the year. Last time the school was inspected, the lack of a freely available outdoor play space was noted as a weakness. The school has corrected this and now groups of children can play safely in an enclosed area outside with suitable equipment and satisfactory adult support and care. Accommodation is good overall. The children’s skills in fine movements, such as those needed in handwriting, are not as strong as those for large, whole-body movements. Some satisfactory activities are provided to encourage precise small movements such as letter formation practice, but for too many children these are not having sufficient impact on early writing standards.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some of the provision for role-play and child-led play is unsatisfactory.
- There have been significant improvements since the last inspection.

Commentary

45. This aspect of learning has improved since the last inspection. The majority of children are likely to achieve the national expected standard by the end of the year and their achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and, as a result, children in general make satisfactory progress. Teachers plan a suitable

range of activities and also provide satisfactory role-play areas. In one class, some good opportunities were given for children to develop their imagination and creative skills in free-play sessions where children were encouraged to modify their model “skate-boards” and justify their developments. However, some day-to-day activities are routine and repetitive, and the level of challenge and expectations is too low. As a result, children rarely stay long at these activities and little is learnt. No musical activities were seen.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English are above average in Year 6 and pupils' achievement is good.
- The achievement of pupils over time is good, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- Reading has improved in Years 1 and 2.
- The quality of pupils' writing is inconsistent across the school.
- Teaching and learning are good overall, but vary from class to class.
- Pupils' attitudes are good, especially when the work is well matched to their ability.

Commentary

46. In the Year 2 tests taken in 2004, standards were below average in reading and writing when compared to results nationally and with similar schools. This followed several years of inconsistency when standards have varied between above and below average. In the 2004 tests, girls far outperformed boys in both reading and writing. In the current Year 2, standards of both boys and girls are broadly average in reading and writing. In Years 1 and 2, the achievement of most pupils is satisfactory, but the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good because they are well supported by teachers and skilled support staff, and provision for their needs is planned effectively. In Year 1 and throughout the school, pupils are given many good opportunities to develop their answering and conversational skills in all subject areas. This helps them to clarify their thinking and explanations.
47. Results of the tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2004 were very high compared to the national average and for similar schools. Over the last four years, results have consistently been well above average. During the inspection, pupils' work was above average and many pupils reach very high standards. These findings are similar to those of the last inspection. Achievement by the time pupils leave school in Year 6 is good, but for some it is very good. Throughout the school, pupils are positive about literacy, but their attitudes are especially strong in Years 4 to 6. They are less motivated when involved in mundane tasks like copying texts.
48. Teaching and learning are good overall. They are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 as teaching and learning over time has been inconsistent. In Years 1 and 2 especially, some lessons are too long and the pace too slow, and pupils lose concentration when they become bored, particularly with the frequent long sessions sitting on the carpet. The teaching of handwriting is variable because there is not a consistent approach by all teachers. Many of the new teachers are uncertain in their assessment of standards, especially in writing. In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning time is good. Pupils make very good progress in Year 6 when, as the pupils say, 'the work is much harder and more is expected of us'. Marking of work varies between just ticks or lengthy comments of guidance. Assessment has improved recently and is now satisfactory. Pupils have individual targets to meet, although few could say what they were or how to improve.
49. The new co-ordinator has had little time to become established, and her management of the subject is at present satisfactory. She has, however, had a good

impact on the improvement in reading over the last few months, and her leadership of this priority has been good. During the last year, the school has targeted reading as an area for improvement, and has been successful in raising standards, especially in Years 1 and 2. However, the library remains a very cramped area and is often needed for small groups, and can rarely be used for independent learning. Writing is currently the most urgent focus as there is considerable inconsistency in standards throughout the school, although nearly all pupils are writing well or very well by the time they leave. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. Pupils use their literacy skills well in English and other subjects when they have the opportunity. They use their writing skills to good effect in history and science when researching and not merely copying. They also listen carefully to each others' views in personal and social education, and are always prepared to answer teachers' questions. Pupils improve their literacy skills as they move through the school and this supports their learning in other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 because teaching is effective.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics.
- Subject leadership is not sufficiently strong to ensure consistently high standards are maintained in Years 1 and 2.
- The pace of work is often too slow and pupils are not always active enough in infant lessons.

Commentary

51. In 2004, test results for Year 2 were below the national average and for schools with pupils from a similar background. Inspection findings indicate standards for the current Year 2 pupils are average and several will gain the higher grades. Pupils develop competent numeracy skills. Although not a significant weakness overall, pupils are less competent at using and applying their skills to resolve mathematical problems than for other aspects of their numeracy development. This is because the range of activities presented in class does not provide sufficient opportunity for pupils to develop their mathematical reasoning or problem-solving skills. During the last four years, standards have declined and not kept pace with the rising national trend of improvement. Pupils now start in Year 1 with average levels of attainment and their achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 2.

52. In 2004, test results for Year 6 pupils were well above the national average and above average when compared to similar schools. The standard of work seen during the inspection for the current Year 6 pupils was above average. Overall, achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good and there are no significant differences irrespective of pupils' gender or ethnicity. Achievement is very good in Years 4 and 6, due to particularly effective teaching and high expectations.

53. Many of the teachers are new to the school and the English education system and this has caused some inconsistency of practice. Overall, teaching and learning is good. In Years 3 to 6, the pupils benefit from mostly good teaching, which challenges them to work hard and learn well. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge, plan well and make effective use of support staff. Teachers develop good relationships with the pupils and this helps to keep pupils focused and motivated. In Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress overall. However, at times, the pace of lessons is too slow and pupils are not sufficiently active in practical activities. Some good practice was seen in these years, but this is not always shared to improve the overall quality of teaching. Throughout the school, good use is made of the National Numeracy Strategy to help pupils build on prior learning. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and information is analysed so that weaknesses in learning are identified.
54. The quality of leadership in mathematics is unsatisfactory as the subject leader does not sufficiently influence standards or the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Management of the subject is satisfactory, but mostly because of the contribution of other staff. The development of the subject has been considerably restricted by changes of staff. The school is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has a detailed action plan to address the weaknesses. Tracking of pupils' achievements is not having a sufficient impact on raising standards. There have been good improvements in Years 3 to 6 in developing the pupils' use of mathematical language and investigational work. Marking is useful, but not all teachers require pupils to show their 'workings-out', so at times weaknesses in numeracy are not quickly enough identified. Improvements since the last inspection have been satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

55. Pupils have good numeracy skills by the time they leave school. There is evidence of some good use of numeracy to present tables and charts in science, geography and history. Data is entered onto computers and presented as bar charts. Overall, the use and development of pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects is not planned consistently and it does not make a sufficiently strong contribution to extending their achievement.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, pupils' work is above average and an improvement since the last inspection, but standards have declined for seven-year-olds.
- Pupils achieve well over their time in the school.
- There is a good emphasis on investigational work.
- Pupils take a pride in their work and present it well.

Commentary

56. The 2004 teacher assessments for science indicate that standards were average compared to national results and for similar schools. In the current Year 2, standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. Inspection evidence shows that the standard has been maintained to that gained in the 2004 tests. These standards are

lower than at the time of the last inspection. Standards have not improved in line with the national trend. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

57. In 2004, science results at the end of Year 6 were above the national average, but below the average for similar schools. These results were an improvement on the previous year and over time standards in science have been above average. Standards in the current Year 6 are above the national average and teacher assessments indicate that all Year 6 pupils will attain the expected level in the national tests and a majority will attain the higher level. During Years 3 to 6, pupils make good progress and achieve well. Their achievement is very good in Years 4 to 6 due to very good teaching. Since the last inspection, the curriculum has improved and this contributes to the pupils' good achievement. Due to the good support they receive, pupils with special educational needs achieve particularly well. The current standard of work in Years 3 to 6 is an improvement since the last inspection.
58. Teaching and learning are good overall. They are good in the junior years and satisfactory in the infant classes. Pupils learn to investigate well and record accurately in a systematic way. Work is well planned to build on previous lessons and learning. In many junior classes, the level of challenge is very good and there is now a better emphasis on investigational approaches to learning than at the time of the last inspection. Now, much of the teaching uses good methods to encourage pupils to use their knowledge to make sensible predictions, to observe carefully, and to explain what occurs and why they think it is happening. As a result, pupils are developing a good and sometimes very good understanding of living things, materials and physical processes such as forces, and of the earth in space. Teachers insist on high levels of presentation and pupils' work is generally well marked. However, teaching is variable and at times teachers are less challenging, or do not give pupils enough opportunity to work things out for themselves, or to record their findings in their own words. In Years 1 and 2, although the content of lessons is well matched to the scheme of work, pupils' behaviour and concentration are less good because the pace of teaching and learning is slower and too little is done to extend more able pupils. This is why achievement is only satisfactory overall for these pupils. Some good use is made of ICT in the subject.
59. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The leader is enthusiastic and clear about her role. Teaching and the performance of the school are regularly monitored, but this has not yet managed to raise standards for seven-year-olds in recent years. The day-to-day management of the subject is efficient. The school has an up-to-date, clearly written management plan that is helping the development of the subject. The current staffing situation, with the large numbers of overseas-trained teachers who are not familiar with the demands of the National Curriculum, presents a challenge to the school. There are good systems for assessment, such as testing at the end of units of work. The school tracks pupils and has targets for particular cohorts, but these documents are not always clear or precise, nor are pupils clear about what they need to do to improve. Overall, because standards for older pupils have risen and the curriculum has developed well, the school has ensured good improvements in science since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvement since the last inspection has been good.
- Older pupils are knowledgeable and skilful in using a wide range of programs.
- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject varies widely.
- The school has a new computer suite and good equipment to teach ICT.

Commentary

60. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6. These findings are much better than those of the last inspection, where standards were below average, progress was unsatisfactory and parent volunteers were doing much of the teaching. The achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and achievement in Years 3 – 6 is good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well over their time in the school because of the good support they receive.
61. While teaching and learning are good overall, the quality seen during the inspection varied from unsatisfactory to good. Teaching and learning are more effective in Years 3 to 6 and as a result pupils make better progress than in Years 1 and 2. When lessons were unsatisfactory, not enough opportunities were given for practical exploration. Good lessons were characterised by swift, clear introductions and purposeful tasks that challenged and extended pupils' understanding. Pupils enjoy their lessons and nearly all focus on the tasks and achieve well as a result.
62. Recent improvements, with the setting up of the school's new computer suite and new equipment, enable the curriculum to be correctly taught. These improvements, coupled with improved teaching skills through staff training, are all helping to raise standards. All classes have weekly access to the suite, as well as regular access to computers in classrooms. The school's planning document now correctly covers all parts of the National Curriculum and many staff have good subject knowledge. As a result, older pupils are knowledgeable and confident, although there are small gaps in their current knowledge. These improvements have been gained from good leadership and management of the subject since the last inspection. The current subject leader is knowledgeable and determined to raise the standards even higher. She has put in place a good system of assessment and record keeping and is fully aware what still needs to be improved. There have been good improvements since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63. Good use is made of ICT in many areas of the curriculum and it develops pupils' skills and knowledge well, especially in Years 4 to 6. Pupils use their skills well in mathematics, science and in art to good effect. For example, in one good lesson seen, pupils sorted human characteristics to find each child's uniqueness, thus forming connections with mathematics, science and religious education.

HUMANITIES

64. No subject was inspected in depth, but the work in history was sampled. Standards of work seen were average at the end of both Years 2 and 6, and pupils show enthusiasm for their historical studies. Pupils in Year 6 have just started an independent study of the Victorians, and after four days a number of them already have knowledge of the era at a much higher level than normally expected for their age. Teachers develop good cross-curricular links in the junior classes to numeracy

and literacy and the subject successfully contributes to the personal and social development of pupils.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No subjects in this area were inspected in depth and no provision judgements are made.

65. In **music**, pupils were seen singing tunefully and sensitively in an assembly. Pupils in Year 6 also sang well when practising a song based on the school's motto 'Servito Domino'. The school has a visiting specialist music teacher for two days each week and this greatly enhances the provision. The pupils' musical development is also supported well by a peripatetic service that offers piano and violin lessons for a small charge to parents. Pupils from all age groups take up this opportunity. There is an enthusiastic school choir that occasionally sings publicly.
66. Two successful **physical education** lessons were observed, one in a Year 3 class and another in a mixed Year 4/5 class. In both lessons, pupils very much enjoyed the learning and practical activity. In the Year 3 lesson, pupils made good progress and the standard of work was as expected for their age. The Year 4/5 lesson was outstanding and pupils demonstrated a very good understanding of dance and movement principles. The quality of their practical performance was very high because the teaching was excellent.
67. In **design and technology**, only one lesson was observed. Pupils made satisfactory progress and enjoyed the practical tasks. Discussions with pupils, a look at teachers' planning and the lesson observation suggest that the subject is being regularly and systemically taught to a satisfactory standard for seven-year-olds. These are similar findings to those of the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

68. The work in these subject areas was sampled during the inspection. The initiatives to support pupils' personal development are clearly identified. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to learn about personal, social and health education and is very successful at developing the children into positive young citizens by the time they leave school. The very caring and Christian school ethos provides good guidance to pupils' personal development. The requirements for teaching pupils about sex and relationships education and drugs awareness are fully met.
69. Citizenship is not taught as a separate lesson, but is integrated into the whole curriculum. Work is strongly linked to the school's ethos, where pupils are encouraged to think of and care for others. During the inspection, for example, pupils were given awards in an assembly for demonstrating consistently good manners.
70. In lessons, teachers relate very well to pupils and establish very positive caring relationships with them. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils behaved very well during a session to develop their social and personal skills. They showed great respect and sensitivity to each other when every one of them made a contribution about when they should be well mannered. The teacher and teaching assistant managed these issues with great sympathy. Discussions of this nature and opportunities in assemblies add significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Good opportunities are also provided within the school curriculum for pupils to consider their wider social responsibilities such as helping charities and

preserving the environment. The headteacher leads this subject effectively and recognises it as a key factor to sustain the caring ethos of the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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