

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Loughborough

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120232

Headteacher: Mrs A Jones

Lead inspector: Rajinder Harrison

Dates of inspection: 6th - 8th June 2005

Inspection number: 267873

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	227
School address:	Hastings Street Loughborough Leicestershire
Postcode:	LE11 5AX
Telephone number:	(01509) 212 621
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Blitz
Date of previous inspection:	26 th April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is an average sized primary school with 126 boys and 101 girls on roll. There are more boys than girls in Years 2, 3 and 4. There is a one class that has both older Reception aged children and Year 1 pupils, and one with a mixture of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, but all the other classes are organised in single year groups.

The school is situated close to the centre of Loughborough but pupils come from a wide area covering the north of the town and outlying villages. The socio-economic indicators for the areas pupils come from are varied but generally average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (9.8 per cent) is broadly average. The attainment on entry is broadly average overall.

About 76 per cent of the school's pupils are of White-British heritage, with others coming from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Seven children are from the families of refugees or asylum seekers. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English (10 per cent) is higher than in most schools and two children are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs (15 per cent) is broadly average and four have statements of special educational needs. The special needs include dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech or communication difficulties, hearing impairment and dyspraxia. Four children are in public care.

The school gained School Achievement Awards in 2001 and 2002. In 2001 it gained Investors in People status which was re-accredited in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18059	Rajinder Harrison	Lead inspector	Science Art and design Music
19361	Keith Ross	Lay inspector	
5531	Janet Croft	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Special educational needs
34431	Mary Usher-Clark	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Geography History
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Mary's Catholic Primary School provides an acceptable standard of education for its pupils but it nevertheless has serious weaknesses, particularly in its leadership and management. Although teaching and achievement are satisfactory overall in the school as a whole, there are weaknesses in important subjects in some year groups. Not all pupils' needs are met well enough. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards that are at the levels expected nationally but standards are too low at the end of Year 2 and the younger pupils do not achieve enough. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are unsatisfactory.
- Achievement and teaching in mathematics and English are unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and in history in Years 1 to 6.
- Pupils are well cared for, behave well, enjoy school and form good relationships.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is good.
- Assessment procedures and the use of assessment information to plan work for groups and individuals are unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 6.
- The more capable pupils are not consistently challenged well enough.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who are at an early stage of learning English as a new language receive good support from visiting specialists where necessary.
- Activities to enrich the curriculum are good and links with other schools are effective.

Improvement since the last inspection in 1999 is unsatisfactory. The key issues from that time have not all been fully addressed, particularly those relating to leadership and management and assessment. In addition, there has been a slow decline in overall standards over the last five years at the end of Year 2. There have been improvements in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and in design and technology, where standards are now broadly average at the end of Year 6.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

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

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

Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. At the end of Year 2, national tests and assessments from 2004 show standards as below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. From teachers' assessments, standards are close to the national average in science. The weaknesses in teaching and the unsatisfactory leadership and management have resulted in a decline in standards since the last inspection. At the end of Year 6, in the national tests in 2004, results were well above the national average in English, close to it in mathematics and above it in science, an improvement since the last inspection. The school's results compared very favourably with those of other schools whose pupils had similar attainment at the end of Year 2. However, the rate of improvement over the last five years has lagged behind schools nationally and standards in pupils' current schoolwork are lower than indicated by the 2004 test results.

Achievement in the Reception Year is satisfactory, and at the end of the year most children meet the early learning goals (the standards children are expected to reach at this age). In the current Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are below the level expected nationally and in these areas achievement is unsatisfactory. Achievement is satisfactory in science and ICT, where standards are at the level expected nationally. In the current Year 6, standards are at the levels expected nationally in English, mathematics, science and ICT and overall achievement is satisfactory. Unsatisfactory provision in history throughout the school results in pupils' unsatisfactory achievement and standards that are below the expected levels.

Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets. The achievement of pupils from different ethnic groups, boys and girls and those who are in public care is broadly the same as for other pupils. Pupils learning English as a new language often make good progress. When they have been in the school for some time, their standards in different subjects match those of their classmates. Pupils of higher ability are not always challenged sufficiently and their overall achievement is unsatisfactory.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good overall. Attitudes, behaviour and relationships are good as a result of good attention to pupils' moral and social development. Their spiritual and cultural development is promoted satisfactorily but opportunities are missed to promote pupils' awareness of the diversity within a modern multi-cultural society. Attendance and punctuality are good, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education, including the teaching, is satisfactory overall. Even though the overall quality of teaching and learning is acceptable, there are too many weaknesses throughout the school. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is unsatisfactory, resulting in unsatisfactory learning and standards that have declined. The school has not tackled this decline satisfactorily, although it acknowledges the issue. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and do not inform planning well enough to ensure pupils have targets that are challenging enough to help them make greater gains in their learning. The school's most capable pupils are not always challenged enough and the school has no clear procedures to identify and provide for pupils who are gifted or talented.

Strengths in pupils' education are the positive relationships staff have with pupils and high expectations of their attitudes and behaviour. These positive features result in most pupils being keen to learn. The local secondary school has also forged good links with the school to encourage and motivate pupils further. The curriculum is satisfactory and enrichment activities, such as clubs and visits out, enhance provision well. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are at an early stage of learning English receive good individual support from visiting specialists. Provision for pupils' care and well-being is good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory overall. Governance is satisfactory and governors ensure that statutory requirements are met. Financial management is good and the school has resolved its budget deficit successfully. Leadership by the headteacher is unsatisfactory. The school lacks purpose and direction and key staff do not carry out their responsibilities effectively in order to improve provision and raise achievement. Monitoring of teaching, learning and standards is unsatisfactory and the school does not evaluate its work rigorously enough. While the governors are aware of the school's strengths, they have insufficient understanding of the weaknesses in leadership and management.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils enjoy school and like their teachers. Parents are happy with the school, although few help in school because they are not actively encouraged to do so. The inspection team found no evidence to support parents' concerns about behaviour or children not being treated fairly.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff.
- Implement effective assessment procedures and use the information gathered to plan work for groups and individuals.
- Raise achievement and improve teaching in English and mathematics in Years 1 and 2, and in history throughout the school.
- Ensure that more capable pupils are challenged fully in all lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Pupils' overall achievement is **satisfactory**, but there are weaknesses in important subjects in some year groups and the more capable pupils do not do as well as they should. Standards are at the level expected nationally in Year 6 but they are not high enough in Year 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English and mathematics are below the level expected nationally in Year 2 and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils of higher ability do not always work to their full capability.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English receive good support, where necessary, from outside agencies to achieve as well as their classmates.
- Standards, in ICT and design and technology, have improved since the last inspection.
- The improvement trend in the school's results in national tests is below that of schools nationally.

Commentary

1. Children enter the Reception Year with attainment at the level expected for their age in all areas of learning. Most make satisfactory progress and reach the early learning goals expected of them by the end of the school year, and a significant number exceed these goals. The school identifies, early, children who require additional support either because they have special educational needs or because they are learning English as a new language. Support for them is often good, ensuring that they achieve as well as other children.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.6 (15.5)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.9 (14.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.8 (16.2)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 37 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. In the national tests and assessments in 2004, standards at the end of Year 2, compared with all schools nationally, were well below average in reading, and below average in writing and mathematics. The school performed particularly poorly at the higher Level 3 and had a disproportionately high number of pupils attaining at the lower levels. In science, teachers' assessments placed pupils attaining the expected Level 2 in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally and the percentage of those attaining Level 3 as broadly average. Teachers' assessments in science do not match pupils' test results in English and mathematics. This suggests teachers' assessments may be an issue, as assessment in the school is unsatisfactory. Overall standards, of pupils in Year 2, were below average against other schools with a similar free school meals number. These results indicate that standards have declined steadily since the last inspection, when they were above the national average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.2 (27.9)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.6 (27.8)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.7 (28.5)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. The results from the national tests and assessments, in 2004, show that standards at the end of Year 6 were well above the national average in English, close to it in mathematics and above it in science. Even though the results improved in 2004, the rate of improvement in the school's results has been below that found nationally in recent years. The school failed to meet its targets in mathematics for pupils of higher ability, but it exceeded these targets in English. However, the school's performance was well above that of other schools whose pupils had similar attainment at the end of Year 2, a measure affected significantly by the school's low standards in Year 2. The school ensures pupils are well prepared for the national tests through regular coaching throughout Year 6.
4. For current pupils, standards in English are below the levels expected nationally in Year 2, although standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory. Pupils' overall achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2. The unsatisfactory achievement is the result of insufficient monitoring of pupils' individual progress and lack of challenge in the teaching of all pupils, but particularly those of higher ability. At the end of Year 6, standards in all aspects of English are as expected nationally and pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. However, there are few examples of high quality written work because the more capable pupils are not challenged well enough in this area.
5. The school has not placed sufficient emphasis on improving teaching and learning in English, particularly in the lower year groups. Satisfactory attention is given to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills through discussions in the classroom, but these opportunities are still somewhat limited in some classes where staff fail to involve everyone adequately. Opportunities for pupils to develop their reading and writing skills are inadequate in Years 1 and 2 because of teachers' high reliance on worksheets that restrict pupils' application of skills independently. Reading skills are developed satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6.
6. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 learning English as a new language, particularly those at an early stage of English acquisition, achieve well when they receive specialist support, but their overall achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are also given the necessary support to make satisfactory gains towards their individual education plans. Higher ability pupils are not sufficiently challenged to ensure they extend their skills further in order to raise their achievement. The use of literacy skills through other subjects is satisfactory but inadequate to make sufficient impact on improving writing.
7. In the current Year 2, pupils are working below the levels expected nationally in mathematics. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2, although basic number skills are taught satisfactorily. Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly as expected nationally and pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. Standards in mathematics have declined across the school since the last inspection. The decline is partly due to insufficient attention given to monitoring individual pupils' progress. This lack of monitoring of progress has resulted in work not being well enough matched to individual needs, particularly for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and those of higher ability throughout the school. Nevertheless, knowledge and understanding of mathematics are satisfactorily developed in Years 3 to 6. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as a new language are supported satisfactorily and achieve as well as their classmates in mathematics. The school makes some provision for higher ability pupils in one or two classes but this practice is not consistent to ensure their overall achievement is improved.
8. Standards in science are at the nationally expected levels in the present Years 2 and 6, but not as high as at the last inspection. Overall achievement is satisfactory. Although the teaching in science is satisfactory, there are some features of it that prevent pupils from doing better. For example, pupils do not develop enough independence in practical and investigative science because of insufficient challenge for them to do so, and assessment procedures to identify targets to raise achievement are unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, teachers ensure that pupils' knowledge and understanding across the required areas of science are developed satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as a new

language receive satisfactory support and achieve as well as their classmates. Higher ability pupils often achieve unsatisfactorily because work is not challenging enough in all classes.

- Standards in ICT are as expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6 and have improved since the last inspection. Teachers have received adequate training to ensure pupils achieve satisfactorily. Opportunities are missed to use ICT more in other subjects in order to raise achievement and to enable higher ability pupils to achieve well. The standards in design and technology are broadly at the expected levels throughout the school and have improved since the last inspection. Pupils learn with interest and enthusiasm, and many achieve well in their ability to evaluate their work and improve their designs. Standards are below the expected level at the end of both Years 2 and 6 in history, because too much of the work is pitched at middle ability pupils. Because the more capable pupils in particular do not have work at the right level, this is another subject in which they underachieve. The work seen in other subjects is at the level expected nationally. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as a new language make good gains in their learning when given individual support from visiting specialists, and their overall achievement is satisfactory. There is no significant variation in the achievement of boys and girls across the range of their schoolwork.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **good** attitudes towards learning, and behaviour is also **good overall**. Their spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is **good** overall. Attendance and punctuality are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have positive views about the school and are interested in their learning.
- The Catholic ethos of the school encourages good behaviour, attitudes and relationships, which result in a happy atmosphere supportive of learning.
- In a minority of lessons some pupils do not behave as well as they should.
- Pupils' moral and social awareness is developed well.
- Not enough is done to develop pupils' awareness of a modern multicultural society.

Commentary

- Most pupils hold positive views about the school. They believe they are treated fairly, and that teachers are kind and willing to help them. Relationships are good throughout the school. Pupils say teachers are friendly, approachable, and encourage them to make friends. They feel safe and secure in school. Pupils take a full and active part in the life and work of the school and in the Christian Catholic ethos it promotes.
- Pupils, including those with special educational needs, those in public care, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those learning English as a new language all have good attitudes to school. For the most part they show good application to their work, are attentive to their teachers and are well motivated. Children in the Reception Year have good attitudes and behaviour because the staff have high expectations of them and they follow the examples set by older pupils. They quickly learn school routines and respond positively to the expectations placed upon them for hard work and good behaviour.
- Most parents feel that children like school and behave well and most of the pupils agree. A small but significant minority of parents expressed concerns about some pupils' behaviour and occasional bullying incidents. Although in a minority of lessons there is some mildly disruptive behaviour when teaching is less inspiring and the teachers' management of behaviour is relatively weak, this is not a widespread issue. Incidents of bullying are rare and the school acts swiftly if any such incident is brought to its attention. Pupils from all groups, including those with special educational needs, feel they are fully included in the life of the school. This results in pupils working and playing happily together, with boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds mixing well. Around the school, pupils are courteous, helpful and polite to visitors.

13. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The strong Catholic ethos with its Christian principles is a cornerstone of the school and provides pupils with a satisfactory sense of spiritual awareness. However, this contribution to pupils' spiritual awareness is not always built on sufficiently in the work in subjects. The school provides well for pupils' moral and social development through assembly themes, the implementation of an effective behaviour policy and class rules. Pupils consider moral issues relevant to their age through regular class discussions. They are generally kind and caring in their regard for others' needs. Pupils contribute to regular fundraising events for local and international charities and this develops a sense of being part of the community and caring for others. Provision for promoting pupils' cultural awareness is satisfactory overall. Pupils recognise aspects of their cultural heritage well through art and design, literature and music and a range of visits to places of cultural interest. However, opportunities are missed to celebrate the growing cultural diversity within the school and within the local community. Pupils have limited understanding of the multicultural nature of the society in which they live, a fact that was highlighted in the previous inspection.

Attendance in 2004 (95.4%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.6	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

14. Attendance is above the national average. The ethos of the school encourages good attendance and incidents of unauthorised absence are rare. There were no exclusions in the last school year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although there are weaknesses in some year groups and subjects and in how well some pupils' needs are met. Assessment is unsatisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory and opportunities to enrich the curriculum are good. The school takes good care of its pupils but the guidance and support they receive is unsatisfactory. Links with parents and the community are satisfactory. Links with local schools are good and enrich pupils' learning.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall and assessment is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is unsatisfactory in English and mathematics in Years 1 and 2, resulting in unsatisfactory achievement.
- Most pupils enjoy learning and are particularly keen to carry out practical activities.
- Weaknesses in teaching result in higher ability pupils not working to their capability.
- Teachers have positive relationships with pupils and in most lessons manage classes well.
- Marking and assessment are unsatisfactory across the school and are not used well enough to plan work to meet the needs of groups and individuals.

Commentary

15. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and ensure that most pupils in most years achieve satisfactorily. Teaching was judged to be good in the last inspection even though examples of unsatisfactory teaching were seen then. Weaknesses in teaching still remain and the overall quality of teaching is not as good now as it was at the last inspection. Teaching and

learning are unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2, in English and mathematics, where standards are below average and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. The teaching is also insufficiently challenging for the most capable pupils throughout the school. Furthermore, teaching and learning in history in Years 1 to 6 are unsatisfactory.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	1 (3%)	7 (23%)	21 (68%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	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.

16. In the Reception Year, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most children watch and listen carefully when shown how to do new things, and enjoy their learning because the teaching gains their interest. Occasionally, direct teaching sessions are a little too long to hold their attention fully and not all children follow instructions well as a result. Staff encourage children to work independently and intervene during all activities to talk to them about what they are doing, but expectations are not always high enough, especially of the higher ability children. As a result, there are occasions when these more capable children do not do as well as they should. Teachers organise learning satisfactorily and ensure children experience all that is provided.
17. Assessment procedures in the Reception class are satisfactory. Adequate attention is paid to monitoring individual children's progress and recording what they have achieved, although this information is not always acted upon sufficiently in subsequent work to ensure children work to their full potential. Children with special educational needs or those learning English as a new language are identified early and given good attention to support their learning satisfactorily in most lessons.
18. Throughout Years 1 to 6, teachers and classroom assistants work satisfactorily with pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as a new language, helping them to participate in the same tasks as their classmates. These pupils generally feel well involved in all classroom activities. Where support from adults is effectively planned and managed, these pupils make good gains, particularly in one-to-one situations, where others do not distract them. Such intensive support contributes well to pupils' progress and they achieve well. Occasionally, when additional help is insufficient, a few pupils struggle to remain involved in their work.
19. Many satisfactory lessons were observed during the inspection. However, there is much evidence that too many weaknesses in teaching have had a cumulative effect on pupils' learning over time. As a result, achievement is unsatisfactory at the end of Year 2 and the more capable pupils do not do well enough throughout the school. Nevertheless, teaching is good on occasions and in these lessons, pupils enjoy their work and achieve well. In such lessons, work is presented in an interesting manner and effective class management strategies ensure pupils remain well involved and learn effectively. Relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils are good and this helps to ensure pupils remain involved in their learning.
20. The teaching of practical activities is often successful. Pupils particularly enjoy lessons in practical subjects, such as music, science and art and design, where they can see immediate results. They approach practical activities enthusiastically and work carefully on their projects.
21. The majority of pupils listen attentively, and a good number are keen to contribute, especially during directed question-and-answer sessions. However, teachers do not always spend sufficient time exploring pupils' views and observations, as was the issue in a science lesson in Year 4, and so pupils miss opportunities to learn from each other. Such discussions are also curtailed because not all groups of pupils can see each other (nor teachers see all pupils)

in some classes where accommodation is restrictive. On occasions, pupils are not given the necessary support and direction and, when this is the case, pupils lose interest and their good behaviour is not maintained. Pupils also lose interest when teaching lacks pace, often because teachers have not ensured new work builds on previous learning successfully and have not prepared adequate good quality resources to engage pupils' interest. There are also occasions when the management of pupils and activities is not effective.

22. Pupils' recorded work shows that there is a tendency for teachers to direct learning too much, rather than allowing pupils to develop independence in learning and use their own ideas. Work is too often set at the same level for all pupils without enough attention to their differing needs. When this happens, lower ability pupils do the same as those of higher attainment without any check that they understand what they have written or even if they can read it accurately. This is also the main reason why the most capable pupils are not pushed on sufficiently, but are allowed to coast. In a number of classes and in many subjects, there is an over-reliance on worksheets, which not all pupils follow successfully and which restricts their independence in writing and recording their findings, for example, in science investigations.
23. Although the individual support for pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English is often effective from visiting specialists, it is not always the case that the extra adults in lessons are deployed well enough. In some classes, teachers fail to make effective use of additional support staff throughout the entire lesson in order to promote better progress.
24. Assessment is not used well enough to meet pupils' differing needs in lessons, nor is it used sufficiently to set targets for groups and individuals. For example, the targets for almost all pupils in Year 6 are based on how well they did in Year 2, without account being taken of their progress in the intervening years. This weakness results from pupils' progress not having been tracked adequately.
25. In many year groups, teachers spend time carrying out topic tests that check knowledge but these results are not often related to National Curriculum levels to ensure some consistent measure. Inconsistency in the quality of marking means that it is unsatisfactory overall. In many classes, pupils' books are untidy, with little attention paid to presentation and completion of tasks. Pupils' understanding of how well they are doing and what they must do to improve is unsatisfactory overall.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is **satisfactory**. Enhancement of the curriculum is **good**. Accommodation overall is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good opportunities to take part in a wide range of clubs and visits and learn from visitors to the school.
- Participation in the arts and sports is good.
- The learning opportunities do not meet the needs of all pupils well enough and there is inequality of access to the curriculum in the Reception Year.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory and restricts learning in a range of situations.
- Resources are inadequate to support learning in some subjects.

Commentary

26. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements, including provision for drugs and sex and relationships education. The teaching of Italian in some classes, as a result of the school's good links with the Italian consulate, adds an additional dimension to pupils' learning opportunities. Since the last inspection, the provision for ICT and design and technology has improved. In design and technology, pupils now have satisfactory opportunities to design,

make and evaluate their work. The school follows nationally recommended schemes of work satisfactorily. In science, older pupils' investigative skills are underdeveloped, as there is not enough opportunity for them to work independently to predict, test and interpret their findings. This lack of challenge was an issue raised at the last inspection, and has not been dealt with adequately. The curriculum for children in the Reception Class meets its purpose to ensure all areas of learning are developed appropriately. The Reception-aged children in the mixed Reception and Year 1 class do not receive the same curriculum as those in the Reception class, as work is not planned together in these classes to ensure equal access in terms of the opportunities provided. Reception-aged children in the mixed class have limited access to the outdoors, and this is an area in which they miss out.

27. Overall provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and teaching assistants have received specialised training in order to support pupils well in most lessons. They are often insufficiently used to contribute to notes about pupils' day-to-day progress in order to inform planning more accurately. Specialist help from external agencies is sought where appropriate, although pupils' individual education plans are not always sufficiently clear and detailed to support their better achievement at all times. Higher ability children are not always challenged sufficiently by the learning opportunities in many lessons. Gifted and talented children have not been identified as a special group and so there is no specific provision for them.
28. Provision for pupils learning English as a new language is satisfactory and external support for those at an early stage of English acquisition is good. This specialist teacher meets informally with the class teachers but she has little opportunity to plan specific work in detail with them in the time made available by the school. Learning support assistants provide adequate support in the classroom and pupils receiving individual help make satisfactory and occasionally good progress so that they achieve as well as the rest of the pupils in the class.
29. Visits and visitors to the school enrich the curriculum well. A residential visit is offered to the oldest pupils to promote their skills in outdoor pursuits. Extra-curricular clubs offering good sports and arts provision include netball, football, athletics and cross-country as well as choir, calligraphy and dance. Opportunities for pupils to explore art through working with visiting artists are good and pupils visit exhibitions, such as at the sculpture park, to develop their creative skills. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn to play a range of musical instruments and many join the recorder clubs led by school staff. Opportunities to take part in musical events, school productions and sing outside the school are good.
30. Accommodation remains unsatisfactory. Some class areas are very cramped and the open plan nature of the school sometimes has an adverse impact on teaching and learning. In some rooms, walls restrict parts of the class, blocking some pupils' view of each other and their teacher. Classes going to the hall often have to walk through a number of classrooms and this disturbs other classes. During several lessons, the noise levels coming from the neighbouring room distracted pupils. The purchase of two interactive whiteboards has improved the ICT provision. Computers are placed in corners of various classrooms but they are not arranged in such a way as to teach whole classes and because of the layout of classrooms, noise levels detract from working quietly. There is no dedicated computer suite, although a large music room remains unused for the majority of the school week. The recently extended and attractive library area, with a good supply of books, promotes an interest in reading and research, but is underused. The outside environment is in need of further development to provide children of Reception age with more experiences to explore the world around them and there are insufficient resources for outdoor play. Resources are also unsatisfactory for pupils to have sufficient materials to support their learning in history.

Care, guidance and support

The arrangements for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are **good**. The support, advice and guidance pupils receive based on monitoring are **unsatisfactory**. The involvement of pupils in the school's work through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for ensuring a healthy and safe environment are effective.
- Pupils have good and trusting relationships with adults in the school.
- Support and guidance to ensure pupils' academic progress is unsatisfactory.
- The arrangements for settling new pupils into school are good.

Commentary

31. The school has very good procedures for child protection and all staff are aware of their responsibilities and duties if they feel a child is at risk. There are good procedures in place to help identify health and safety risks and so ensure that the premises, equipment and working practices are safe. Fire drills are scheduled regularly and first aid and medical alert procedures are good. Pupils have trusting and supportive relationships with adults in school and say that they can confide in them if they are worried or hurt.
32. The school effectively supports a healthy lifestyle for its pupils and works well with all relevant outside agencies to promote the wellbeing of individual pupils. Healthy lifestyles are included in the science curriculum and the school is effectively involved in the local education authority's 'Milk' scheme and the national 'Fruit' scheme. In addition, the amount of time spent in physical education is given a high priority so that pupils develop an awareness of the importance of regular exercise.
33. Assessment, tracking and target-setting procedures are unsatisfactory overall. There is inconsistent practice in the setting of learning targets. Target setting in some classes is not based on a systematic assessment of pupils' work. Some pupils know what their general learning targets are, but many with special educational needs do not understand what their individual education plans are or what they have to do to improve their performance. The views of pupils with special educational needs are not sought and recorded within the individual education plans. Consequently, these pupils are not effectively involved in the setting of their targets. Also the marking of pupils' work does little to help them understand how to improve their work.
34. The arrangements for bringing children into the Reception Year are good. They include home visits, 'taster' sessions and briefings for parents. Parents receive a comprehensive home visit pack that helps them to effectively support their children's first experiences of school. New pupils to the school joining at times other than the start of the Reception Year are satisfactorily integrated into classes. As a result of these arrangements, new entrants to the school gain confidence and settle well.
35. The school does not have a school council but pupils are consulted informally through class discussions. For example, pupils were involved in formulating the school's new mission statement and choosing play equipment for indoor and outdoor use. The school acknowledges the need to develop a more systematic way to gauge pupils' views and this is shown as a key priority in the school's development plan.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents and the community is **satisfactory**. Links with other schools and colleges are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The 'friends of the school' group is very supportive and makes a significant contribution to school resources.
- Good links with other schools, and colleges and the Parish benefit pupils' learning.
- The school does not always formally record discussions as it should do with parents who have children with special educational needs.

- There are a few minor omissions in the information in the current school prospectus and governors' annual report.

Commentary

36. The school provides a welcoming environment and most parents find staff very approachable. The majority of parents have positive views about the school and its promotion of Catholic values. However, a significant minority expresses concerns about some pupils' behaviour. Inspection findings do not support these concerns. However, governors have responded to this worry and have recently put in place strategies to address parents' concerns. As at the last inspection, very few parents help in school, although a number respond to requests to help out on school visits.
37. The weaknesses in pupils' written reports to parents, found at the last inspection have been addressed. Of particular merit is the home visit pack for parents new to the school. Parents find this information very useful as it enables them to help their children settle in effectively. The school is aware that some statutory information has inadvertently been missed out of the current prospectus and governors' annual report to parents, and is taking steps to remedy this.
38. Parents receive appropriate notification when their children are identified as having special educational needs. Liaison is generally adequate, with at least two formal meetings a year regarding their child's progress, and there is also informal communication. There is insufficient reference to communications with parents in records, so that what has been discussed and agreed and the level of support requested from home are not clear. This is most detrimental when several people may be involved in supporting individual pupils, for example the class teacher, special needs assistants and visiting specialists, as they do not have clear records to which they can refer.
39. There is a very committed and well-supported 'Friends of St Mary's' group who organise a variety of social and fund raising events to provide additional resources to benefit children. There are good links with local primary and secondary schools and other Catholic schools. Links with the Loughborough development group and a sports partnership provide an effective staff support network and sports opportunities for pupils. The strong links between the school and the Catholic parish add an important dimension to the school's ethos and contribute positively to pupils' moral and spiritual development. Links with industry have improved recently and now include a local firm conducting a science workshop and pupils visiting a firm that makes bread. These links support the curriculum and benefit pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership and management of the school are **unsatisfactory**, including that of the headteacher and other key staff. Governance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and key staff have not taken adequate action to halt the decline in pupils' attainment, particularly at the end of Year 2.
- Monitoring of teaching and the curriculum and their contribution to pupils' learning is ineffective.
- Financial management is good.
- Key issues from the last inspection have not been fully addressed, particularly those linked to management and assessment.

Commentary

40. The headteacher is caring, hardworking and dedicated to the pupils and staff in her school. However, since the last inspection, insufficient progress has been made in developing the roles of the headteacher, the deputy and other key staff. Overall leadership is unsatisfactory,

as is management. The school has focused on producing high test results at the end of Year 6 but not enough strategies are in place to ensure that all pupils achieve well consistently throughout their time in the school and that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. As a result, pupils are not doing well enough in English and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 and there is inadequate challenge for the school's most capable pupils. Weaknesses from the last inspection have not been rectified and these continue to have an adverse effect on pupils' learning.

41. Following the last inspection, a senior management team was formed to assist the headteacher and deputy in their leadership and management of the school. While this team meets weekly to discuss diary items, individual pupils and some whole-school issues, the team does not monitor the overall quality of education rigorously enough. For example, the senior management team decided to take guided reading sessions out of the literacy hour in order to give greater focus to the teaching of reading. However this initiative has not been monitored in detail by either the senior management team or the literacy co-ordinator, to see whether it has been effective in raising standards. Weaknesses in how well reading skills are taught in Years 1 and 2, for instance, have not been noted. The senior management team is made up of the headteacher and teachers in Years 4 to 6. There is no representative from the Reception Year or Years 1 and 2 to contribute a wider view, and thus ensure greater consistency in provision across the school. There is no regular planned release time for the deputy to fulfil his role, which is still mainly pastoral, supportive or as acting head when necessary. Hence, the deputy is not used well enough to lead initiatives or important aspects of the provision in terms of teaching and the curriculum.
42. The leadership and management of provision in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The management of English, mathematics, science, history, design and technology, ICT and assessment are unsatisfactory because co-ordinators do not have the opportunity to monitor effectively. As a result, weaknesses in provision have not been identified and addressed. The headteacher has looked at results of standardised tests and national trends but the analysis of this information and its implications for developing provision are unsatisfactory. She reports her findings to her senior management team and the rest of the staff but co-ordinators do not have a clear view of standards across the school in their subjects. Nor do they recognise what needs to be done to improve the achievement of all pupils, particularly those who are more capable. For example, provision for ICT improved immediately after the last inspection and pupils now attain in line with those in schools nationally. But since that inspection, the subject has not developed any further in order to ensure higher achievement. The school's self-evaluation and monitoring of performance data have not been rigorous enough.
43. Since the last inspection, there has been some improvement in the management of special educational needs, but it remains unsatisfactory, particularly in the aspect of monitoring. For example, records of entry into and exit from this category are unclear and there is no evaluation of how successful the specialist support provided is in helping pupils to progress. The co-ordinator is insufficiently involved in compiling and monitoring individual education plans, which results in these being of inconsistent value and usefulness in order to review provision or to inform parents accurately. In addition, gifted and talented children are not identified or provided for and no records are kept of the qualifications and training undertaken by support assistants.
44. The governing body carries out its duties satisfactorily. Except for some very minor omissions in the information required for parents in the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents, all statutory requirements are met. They are keen to be involved in the life of the school and make regular visits to monitor provision in the school. They receive regular reports from the headteacher and subject co-ordinators, and use the information provided for them to make decisions, about spending, for example, and supporting senior managers. They have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths but are not aware of some of the weaknesses within the school.

45. Whilst the procedures for performance management for teaching and non-teaching staff are in place, they are unsatisfactory in that they have not identified weaknesses in the leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff. The arrangements are therefore not effective in bringing about improvements to raise achievement. Opportunities for professional development and induction procedures for new members of staff are satisfactory.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	477,211
Total expenditure	468,038
Expenditure per pupil	2,062

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-14,665
Balance carried forward to the next year	-5,492

46. Financial management is good. The headteacher and office manager work together closely and manage the day-to-day finances effectively. The governing body's finance committee ensures that all monies are spent in the best interest of the pupils and that value for money is obtained in purchasing. It carefully monitors regular financial reports. The fall in numbers of pupils in the school a few years ago caused a deficit budget that has been rectified successfully. However, this strict budget management has had a negative effect on resources, which are unsatisfactory in some areas of the curriculum. Value for money is satisfactory.
47. A number of key issues have been addressed since the last inspection but some major issues, notably assessment and management, have not been effectively tackled. Minor issues such as links with industry, improving pupils' awareness of the rich diversity of cultures in British society and increasing the number of parents who help in school have also not been addressed. Although the school cares for its pupils' wellbeing effectively and provides a satisfactory level of education for them, the serious weaknesses in the leadership and management of the school mean that currently the school is not well placed to improve without the input of external support.

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

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

48. The majority of children enter school with expected levels of attainment in all six areas of learning¹. They make satisfactory progress and at the end of the Reception Year, most attain the early learning goals, and a few exceed these. Their overall achievement is satisfactory, as are teaching and learning. Nevertheless, there is not enough variation in the challenge set for children of differing capability. In particular, there is insufficient challenge for the more capable children to achieve even more. Of the four children identified as being from a minority ethnic background, only one child is at an early stage of English acquisition and they all achieve as well as the rest of the class. Children with special educational needs are identified early and given good individual support in order to achieve as well as others. There has been no significant improvement in provision since the last inspection other than better access to the outside area for children in the Reception class.
49. There are currently 23 children in the Reception class and a further five in a class with Year 1 pupils. The two classrooms are a distance apart, and as these two classes do not plan or work together, there is an inequality of access to the Reception Year curriculum. For example, those children in the mixed age group class have little or no access to the outdoor activities provided.
50. Leadership and management are satisfactory, although there is no named Foundation Stage co-ordinator; the Reception class teacher, assisted by the effective nursery nurse, has assumed the role. Children arrive from a variety of pre-school settings. There is no direct contact with these pre-school groups as the school offers a pre-school home visit to each family. When parents offer help in the Reception class, they are directed away from the Reception class to help in other parts of the school if they wish, and this limits children's experiences in working with a wider range of adults.
51. The spacious internal accommodation is used well and resources are satisfactory. Outdoor resources are unsatisfactory. The outside environment is cramped, with no secure enclosure and no form of all-weather protection. There is no outdoor provision to develop climbing and stretching skills and outside play equipment is in short supply for the number of children using it.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are familiar with their well-established classroom routines.
- Children interact well together and behaviour is good.
- Relationships are good and children enjoy their time in school.

Commentary

52. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in some lessons. Children make satisfactory gains in their personal development and most reach the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year. Children are well settled into the day-to-day routines. They work confidently and interact well whilst playing and learning. They work well collaboratively and sometimes choose to work alone. They have positive attitudes to their learning, and learn

¹ Early Learning Goals are a set of standards, which, it is expected most children will reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They are set out into six different areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development.

to share resources and show care for one another. They are encouraged to tidy away and develop a sense of responsibility for their environment. Relationships are good between staff and children and between children. This promotes a friendly environment where each child's needs are considered satisfactorily.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Plenty of opportunities are given for speaking and listening.
- Good use is made of the role-play area to develop language and literacy skills.
- More capable children are not always provided with sufficient challenge.

Commentary

53. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and in some lessons, good. The majority of children reach and a few exceed the early learning goals by the end of their Reception year and their overall achievement is satisfactory. A wide range of planned activities ensures that there are many opportunities for promoting children's speaking and listening skills. Everyone is encouraged to participate and those less confident are supported sensitively. In one lesson, for example, children made decisions as to what they needed to pack into a suitcase to go on holiday and what weather conditions they might have to deal with. One child defined a holiday as "the time taken off school or work," and another defined a holiday list as a "column of words." Higher ability children use their knowledge of phonics to build less familiar words and write in full sentences using a capital letter at the beginning, for example, in their postcards and letters home, but challenge for them is not always high enough to work independently. Most children read simple sentences by the end of the year and enjoy looking at books independently. Children enjoy the role-play area, currently the seaside, and it is changed regularly in line with the current work topic.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children have a good understanding of mathematical language.
- Emphasis on number skills is good.
- Higher attaining children are not challenged.
- Occasionally, direct teaching sessions are too long for a few to sustain interest.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed to use computers more independently.

Commentary

54. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, as is children's overall achievement. Most children achieve the early learning goals by the end of their Reception year. Staff provide children with many opportunities to develop their number skills, for example, to count to 20 and beyond and many children add single and double-digit numbers up to 20 confidently. In one lesson, for example, a small group of children counted accurately to 20 as they matched dots to numerals in a fishing game and in this way learnt how to carry out tasks systematically to complete a puzzle. Children learn to handle money as they purchase items from the shop and exchange coins for goods. During one lesson, children accurately distinguished between 'shorter', 'greater' and 'smaller', and a few grasped this so well that they did not have to measure, as they could estimate just by looking. A few used the comparative language correctly but, as all abilities were given the same tasks, challenge for the higher ability children was lacking in order to develop their understanding further. Occasionally when direct teaching sessions are

too long, a few children find it hard to sustain interest and concentration and their learning slows down, as they become restless and inattentive. There are missed opportunities to use the computer in order for children to explore their numeracy skills independently.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children use computers to explore and develop their knowledge and understanding well.
- The outside area needs further development.

Commentary

55. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, as is overall achievement. Most children attain the early learning goals by the end of their Reception year. Children are provided with a variety of experiences to increase their understanding of the world. During a lesson on keeping cool, children sorted clothes into those suitable for hot and cold weather and this helped them gain a sound understanding of how to take care of their bodies in adverse weather conditions. Children use the mouse on the computer and enjoy taking turns to work through the lively program requiring them to drag and drop items to dress a teddy on screen. One child used a paint program independently to draw herself and another child helped to print her work. Opportunities to explore and experiment in their own time help children make sense of the everyday things around them. In one lesson, groups of children went outside to look at their shadows and effectively described how it felt to be in the sun and the shade. Reception children in the mixed age class enjoyed baking “bear” biscuits, learning to follow instructions and do things in the correct sequence. The immediate outside environment is small and has no developed natural areas to extend children’s learning in this aspect of the curriculum.

Physical development

56. Provision in physical development was sampled and no judgement is made on the overall provision. Children develop their fine co-ordination skills through a range of creative activities, including moulding dough and cutting shapes as well as building with small bricks and doing jigsaws. Staff provide a wide range of appropriate activities to develop children’s practical abilities and most sustain interest and attention well as they concentrate on their tasks. Children use the necessary tools to carry out their tasks competently in activities such as gluing and sticking. Outdoor resources to develop large movements and control and balance are unsatisfactory.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy the opportunities to work with a variety of media.
- They work well independently and receive good guidance when appropriate.
- Occasionally teaching sessions are too long to hold children’s interest fully.

Commentary

57. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, as is their overall achievement. Most children reach the expected standard, with some exceeding it by the end of the Reception year. Children have plenty of opportunities to work with a variety of different materials for creative activities. They use clay to model fish and learn the techniques of joining one piece to another, being shown the art of working slowly and patiently to create the best effects. They are keen to learn

and do things well, so most watch and listen attentively unless the teaching sessions become overlong. They have painted their own teddy bears, made string puppets with arm and leg joints, and successfully used different materials to make colourful collages of the four seasons in the year. They enjoy playing percussion instruments, beginning to appreciate different sounds and rhythms as they learn a variety of songs that support their number skills as well as their ability to move to music.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

English

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement at the end of Year 2 is unsatisfactory and standards are not high enough.
- Basic skills are taught well in Years 3 to 6 so that overall achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 6.
- There is insufficient challenge for pupils of higher ability in writing throughout Years 1 to 6 and in Years 1 to 2 in reading as well.
- Pupils have good opportunities for discussions and reading in Years 3 to 6.
- Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and marking is poor.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

58. Standards of the work seen during the inspection are below the expected at the end of Year 2 and in line with expected levels at the end of Year 6. This is a significant decline since the last inspection. Many pupils make insufficient progress during Years 1 and 2 and their overall achievement is unsatisfactory. Achievement is satisfactory overall by the end of Year 6 because basic skills are taught well. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as a new language make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment because of the additional support they receive. When given specialist guidance from visiting staff, their achievement is often good. Pupils of higher ability are not always sufficiently challenged to attain the higher standards of which they are capable. As a result, these pupils underachieve throughout Years 1 to 6.
59. Standards in speaking and listening are in line with the expected levels throughout the school and pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to answer questions and listen carefully to each other in a range of situations, responding eagerly whenever asked to contribute. For example, in a class of pupils from Years 1 and 2, pupils joined in discussions about the features of information books enthusiastically. By the end of Year 6, pupils talk and listen with confidence. For example, pupils in Year 6 express their opinions about books written by Michael Morpurgo, giving clear explanations of why they like particular books. Pupils of all abilities enjoy discussions and join in confidently, with gentle persuasion from support staff where necessary.
60. Reading skills are below the expected levels in Year 2. Achievement in reading by the end of Year 2 is unsatisfactory, particularly for the higher ability pupils. Pupils in Year 2 read simple texts and predict what they think might happen in a story satisfactorily. Teachers provide them with the basic skills to decode unfamiliar words, but too few pupils read a wide range of reading material with fluency and expression. At the end of Year 6, reading skills are in line with those expected at this age. Most pupils listen attentively to material that is read to them and learn about expression and fluency from the good modelling by teachers. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as a new language achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment.

61. Writing skills are below the levels expected at the end of Year 2. There are too few opportunities for pupils to write unaided and there is an over-reliance on worksheets that provide little challenge and require only short amounts of writing. As a result, pupils' ability to write freely is restricted and overall achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards are broadly at the expected levels at the end of Year 6. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall as pupils have more opportunities, than those in Years 1 and 2, to extend their skills. The most capable pupils do not do well enough because much of the work is pitched at the average levels. Teachers provide pupils with satisfactory experience in writing for a range of purposes and formats but opportunities for writing creatively for a sustained period for a range of purposes are limited. Although pupils have regular formal lessons to develop handwriting skills, pupils are not reminded to apply these in their everyday work. Consequently, handwriting and presentation in lessons other than English are unsatisfactory across the school.
62. Teaching and learning, in Years 1 and 2, are unsatisfactory. Although lessons observed during the inspection were satisfactory overall, pupils' completed work shows that they do not make enough progress over time. Teachers spend too much time on providing pupils with booklets of worksheets, which they require pupils to complete, and this does not allow pupils the freedom to explore and experiment with what they know and learn at the rate appropriate for their abilities. There is very little evidence that work is planned to meet the needs of all abilities. This is particularly the case for the more capable who are not challenged by the work they have to do. Nevertheless, there are some good features. In a lesson, in the Year 1 and 2 class, the teacher used a range of strategies such as discussion in pairs to develop pupils' self-esteem and confidence in speaking and listening and all pupils were suitably challenged.
63. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Generally lessons are appropriately planned for the majority of the pupils, and there are good levels of challenge to ensure pupils' basic literacy skills are developed securely. Learning support assistants work well with those who need additional help, although there is little evidence in planning of how the needs of the more capable pupils are met, other than that they complete more work and do it more accurately. Throughout the school, teachers manage behaviour well and use praise effectively to support pupils' learning.
64. Assessment procedures are not rigorous enough and teachers do not have sufficient knowledge of the levels at which pupils are working in relation to the National Curriculum attainment targets. They make predictions at the start of the year and judge individual pupils' attainment at the end of each year but do not check that pupils are on track to achieve their targets successfully or that the targets are challenging enough. In Year 6, regular revision work, in preparation for the national tests, provides the teacher with some idea of how well pupils might do in the standardised tests. This does not, however, ensure that pupils are achieving as well as they can in their application of skills from day to day. Marking is generally unsatisfactory across the school. Pupils' work is marked with ticks and, sometimes, positive comments, but pupils do not always know whether they have achieved what was required of them, or how to improve their work.
65. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The subject has not been monitored with any rigour to help the co-ordinator recognise what needs to be done to improve provision and raise standards. As a result, the school has not taken the necessary action to bring about improvement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

66. Language and literacy skills are used satisfactorily across the curriculum but the over-reliance on undemanding worksheets in some subjects inhibits use of these skills. The school is presently introducing planned opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills in order to raise attainment in this area and develop these skills across the wider curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement at the end of Year 2 is unsatisfactory because of weaknesses in teaching in Years 1 and 2.
- In Years 3 to 6, some good investigative work captures pupils' interest and challenges their thinking.
- Assessment does not inform planning sufficiently and pupils' knowledge of their achievement and what they need to do to improve is unsatisfactory.
- There is insufficient challenge for more capable pupils.

Commentary

67. Since the last inspection, there has been a downward trend in standards. Standards of the work seen at the end of Year 2 are below the levels expected of pupils at this age. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2 because teaching is unsatisfactory, particularly with regard to the level of challenge teachers provide to higher ability pupils. At the end of Year 6, standards are in line with national expectations and most pupils achieve satisfactorily, although there is insufficient challenge for some of the more capable pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as a new language make satisfactory gains in their learning, particularly so when they receive additional support.
68. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory, but there are weaknesses. Teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and apply the National Numeracy Strategy well, particularly with regard to the development of pupils' number skills and 'mental maths', which pupils enjoy. Planning is generally satisfactory, although the intentions of individual lessons are not always clearly shared with pupils to help them to understand what they are aiming to achieve. In many lessons, the higher ability pupils often follow the same tasks as others before they move on to any harder work and their overall achievement is restricted by this lack of challenge. Pupils are not given sufficient feedback, including through marking, about what they have learned and what they need to do to improve. Overall assessment procedures are not applied consistently to match work to the needs of pupils of all abilities.
69. Many lessons are too long, with too much time spent by pupils on the carpet doing routine number work, even though this reinforces pupils' competence in number skills. But such lengthy sessions adversely affect the behaviour of a minority who find it difficult to sustain interest and concentration. There are times, in Years 1 and 2, when teachers do not always select the best resources to support learning and this slows down pupils' progress. When work is set that engages pupils' interest and encourages them to think, they respond well. For example, in a lesson in Year 6, pupils used an 'alphabet-to-number' code to work out the value of words. They were challenged to find out if the word 'million' was worth 1,000,000 and they set to with gusto to investigate this and to find a word with that value. However, in lessons where this level of challenge is missing, pupils struggle to remain involved and interested.
70. Pupils generally behave well in lessons. They settle quickly, pay attention and do as they are told. When they are kept for too long sitting on the carpet, discomfort causes them to fidget and interfere with others. Also, when the whole class is held together on tasks that are too easy for higher ability pupils, some pupils' behaviour and performance deteriorates.
71. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The two co-ordinators have introduced some helpful guidance, for example, on the use of pencil and paper methods of working out calculations and the effective use of number lines. They look at teachers' plans and test results and are developing strategies to improve assessment. However, they do not analyse

any information they gather nor monitor teaching, learning and assessment in sufficient detail to have any impact on raising achievement or improving overall provision.

Mathematics across the curriculum

72. Pupils have a satisfactory range of opportunities to use and develop mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, in design and technology they draw plans and make measurements. In ICT, they represent information in block graphs, line graphs and pie diagrams and in history they develop an understanding of chronology and how to calculate the passage of time.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good emphasis is given to developing pupils' investigation and enquiry skills in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils enjoy the practical activities and collaborate well with each other.
- Higher ability pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in order to achieve well.
- Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and do not inform planning and subject improvement.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

73. In the national tests and assessments in 2004, standards were above the levels expected nationally for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards of the work seen during the inspection are lower than this, being broadly in line with national expectations. While overall achievement for most pupils is satisfactory, the achievement of higher ability pupils is unsatisfactory throughout the school. The more capable pupils underachieve because many lessons are taught to the average levels and do not challenge this group of pupils well enough. Improvement has been unsatisfactory since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as a new language generally receive satisfactory and sometimes good classroom support in order to achieve at least as well as their classmates.
74. Pupils enjoy participating in practical tasks. They carry out investigations enthusiastically and work well with others. In Years 1 and 2, opportunities for investigative work have recently improved and are now often good. However, in Years 3 to 6, opportunities for independent investigative work, whilst satisfactory, are limited. In these classes, teachers tend to direct learning too much through their instructions or through over-use of worksheets that allow pupils little independence as learners. In many lessons, pupils of all abilities are given the same level of guidance and instruction and therefore there is insufficient challenge for the higher ability pupils. In particular, this restricts the development of these pupils' competence in designing their own investigations and testing their predictions and hypotheses.
75. Pupils enjoy learning new information and teachers place a high emphasis on ensuring the required information is taught well through pupils copying from worksheets or from the board. Often all pupils record the same work and rarely are pupils expected to try to answer questions teachers pose about what they are being taught independently, and few attempt to extend their thinking by asking questions. Their understanding of key skills such as predictions and fair tests develops steadily as they progress through the school, but the use of correct scientific vocabulary and opportunities for writing independently are limited. Throughout the school, recorded work is of an average standard at best and much of it, particularly for lower attaining pupils, is incomplete and occasionally very untidy.

76. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Pupils are managed well and most have positive attitudes to learning. They listen attentively and eagerly explore any practical activities. For example, pupils in Year 4 made some good observations about the nature of solid materials but because of the classroom layout, opportunities to share these observations in front of the whole class were lost. As a result, pupils were unable to reflect on each other's findings and thus learn from each other. Accommodation is an issue when organising practical activities and lack of space limits investigations. In Year 6, but in other classes to a lesser extent, extensive time is given to test pupils' knowledge and practice for national assessments. This helps many pupils to attain high standards in their end-of-year tests but their understanding is not always as secure as the results would suggest. Assessment information is beginning to be used to guide teachers' planning but practice is not consistent in every class to ensure higher achievement. This inconsistency also applies to the quality of teachers' marking, which is often very cursory and does not help pupils see what they have done well and what they could do to improve their work further.
77. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. While overall teaching is satisfactory, the co-ordinator recognises that insufficient emphasis is placed on investigation work in some classes. Through monitoring of teaching and some work sampling, she identified gaps in teachers' knowledge, but nothing has been done to address this. Pupils' progress is not monitored adequately in order to set targets that provide capable pupils with greater challenge. The information gathered from tests and assessments is not analysed in sufficient detail to support effective subject development in order to raise achievement. Improvement has been unsatisfactory since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision for information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy using ICT, gaining competence and confidence as they progress through the school.
- Teachers have received good training to develop ICT since the last inspection.
- Teachers make insufficient use of the computers to support pupils' learning on a daily basis.
- Leadership is satisfactory but management is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

78. Provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection. The improvements have resulted in maintaining standards at the nationally expected levels at the end of Year 2 and raising them to these levels at the end of Year 6. Staff expertise is better and pupils have more access to using computers, although there are still many missed opportunities to maximise their usage. Far too often the computers are not in use at all. The arrangement of the computers in various corners around the school is not helpful because there is insufficient room for an entire class to work at them together. Points that could be taught to the whole class have to be repeated several times. Tasks in ICT are now satisfactorily matched to work in other subjects and ICT is used in subjects across the curriculum satisfactorily. Overall achievement is satisfactory although there is scope to ensure more capable pupils work at higher levels and for all pupils to practice their skills more regularly.
79. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Although no discrete lessons were seen in ICT, the evidence gathered shows pupils' skills develop satisfactorily. For example, in data handling, pupils in Year 2 create block graphs; pupils in Year 4 draw up branching databases and those in Year 6 compile spreadsheets. In word processing and computer art, skills are developed step by step and pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the uses and applications of ICT. For example, pupils in Year 2 successfully identify technological gadgets in the home and pupils in Year 6 describe how heat, pressure and light sensitive devices work.

80. Leadership is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and encourages and supports other members of staff well. Following the last inspection, immediate improvements were made to ensure pupils achieved satisfactorily. However, this initial good improvement has not been maintained and the school is beginning to fall behind provision now seen in schools nationally. Management is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator takes in plans and looks at pupils' work, but she does not monitor whether the planned work is actually done and whether the challenge in the work is appropriate for the age and ability of the pupils. Class teachers assess pupils' work, but neither they, nor the co-ordinator, analyse the information gained to identify areas of strength and weakness in teaching and learning in order to develop the subject and raise standards further.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

81. The use of ICT in subjects across the curriculum is satisfactory. For example, pupils use computers for Internet research in history, investigation of perimeters and volumes in mathematics, word-processing such things as party invitations and poems in English and using graphics for design work. However, teachers miss opportunities to use ICT more often in order to give pupils sufficient practice to raise achievement further.

HUMANITIES

82. No lessons were seen in **geography** and there is insufficient evidence to make judgements on overall provision. The evidence gathered indicates that pupils are provided with a satisfactory range of learning opportunities and work at the level expected for their age. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 follow the travels of Barnaby Bear and record key features of different places in the world and have some sense of journeys and distances. In Year 3, pupils explore their local environment and sketch buildings as part of an art project. They look at aspects of life in a village in India and contrast this with their own environment. The oldest pupils study rivers and the water cycle and recognise key physical features of different landscapes and climates.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching does not meet pupils' needs well enough and as a result they underachieve.
- Good use is made of visits to support teaching and learning.
- There is an over-reliance on undemanding worksheets in many classes.
- There is a shortage of resources to support learning.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT for pupils to research their class work.

Commentary

83. Standards are below the expected levels in Years 2 and 6 and pupils' overall achievement is unsatisfactory. The vast majority of work sampled across the school is on photocopied worksheets and work copied from the board and is of a lower level than normally found. This approach contributes little to furthering pupils' history or their literacy skills. Higher ability pupils are not challenged as they invariably complete the same tasks as the rest of their class. Often the tasks are more to do with filling in answers or colouring rather than developing thinking and reflective skills.
84. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. In the two lessons in Years 4 and 5, where standards were judged satisfactory, pupils looked at books and photographic evidence to explore how the Ancient Egyptians lived, and considered old and new photographs of the local area to identify changes. Pupils enjoyed their learning and were keen to talk about their observations and considered developments over time rationally. However, in these lessons

and the poor lesson seen in Year 3, no challenge was planned for higher ability pupils, opportunities to use computers for wider research were missed, and resources were limited.

85. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 but younger pupils study the 'Great Fire of London' and 'Homes of the Past' to a satisfactory depth. The work sampled shows standards are below average because, as elsewhere in the school, opportunities for independent writing are limited for pupils to develop their skills in considering the impact of the past on the present and explaining their ideas and views. Pupils' work is marked with a tick and there is little evidence of comments as to how they might improve it or what they have been successful at. Work is not assessed in order to ensure pupils work to their full capability.
86. Visits to places of interest enrich pupils' experiences well. Older pupils make visits to Beau Manor Hall to experience life during World War II and Victorian times. A similar visit to Haddon Hall is made to experience life in Tudor times. Pupils talk of these visits with enthusiasm and whenever they have access to good quality resources, learning is enhanced. Opportunities to make effective use of ICT to supplement the resources are very limited. The use of computers does not feature often in most teachers' planning, nor are pupils encouraged to carry out research independently on a more regular basis.
87. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator agrees that there is an over-reliance on worksheets, particularly for the younger pupils, suggesting that this is due to the lack of resources. The subject is under-resourced. The issue was raised over a year ago but nothing has been done to address this. Although teachers' planning is monitored, the same work is given to all pupils in the class irrespective of their differing abilities and there is inadequate monitoring of teaching, learning, standards and achievement across the school.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Only one lesson was seen in music and one in art and design. Therefore no judgements are made regarding overall provision in these subjects. Other evidence was gathered by looking at pupils' work in art and design and scrutinising teachers' planning.

88. The work seen in **art and design** was of an average standard, although some examples of good sculpture were seen in a lesson in the Year 1 and 2 class. This good lesson followed on from a fruitful visit to a sculpture park and pupils explored their ideas using clay, natural materials and foil to express their observations. Pupils' artwork is displayed throughout the school and shows that they have satisfactory opportunities to work with a variety of materials. They have good opportunities to work individually and also work in groups on larger pieces. For example, the 'Rainbow Fish' on one of the walls, shows how pupils had worked, carefully using a range of techniques and tools to produce fine details on their clay tiles and create an attractive feature.
89. Pupils study the work of acknowledged artists satisfactorily. Older pupils have clearly enjoyed imitating Andy Warhol's 'pop art' by demonstrating good manipulation of digital images and paint to create interesting self-portraits. Pupils learn how to observe detail and represent it using shading and hatching techniques. Skills of colour mixing and the use of line and texture are developed appropriately. Pupils use computer programs satisfactorily to extend their art and design skills, and produce effective patterns and illustrations linked, for example, to work in mathematics or literacy.
90. The one lesson seen in **music** was very good and pupils in the Year 3 class enjoyed singing the songs related to their history topic. Pupils sing tunefully and with pleasure, following the techniques of breathing and standing appropriately for best effect. The curriculum is satisfactorily planned. Pupils have good opportunities to sing in a choir or join the recorder club and nearly 20 pupils are learning to play clarinets, flutes, keyboards and cornets taught by visiting teachers. Musicians visit the school, for example, a brass ensemble and a musician who has a large collection of unusual instruments. Pupils give at least three performances

each year and these combine singing, dancing and instrument-playing with drama. The school has a good facility in its music studio where pupils have their individual instrument lessons and some pupils take the opportunity to use this space for practice.

Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There were some well-finished products.
- Skills of designing, making and evaluating are developed step by step.
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

91. Provision for design and technology has improved since the last inspection. Staff expertise and opportunities for pupils to plan, make and evaluate products have been increased and this has secured standards that are at expected levels at the end of Years 2 and 6. Overall achievement is satisfactory for pupils of all abilities.
92. The curriculum is now covered fully. Pupils develop ideas, plan, make and evaluate products. Designing is sufficiently detailed; younger pupils draw and label diagrams and older pupils identify materials to be used and show measurements. Skills in making develop progressively, for example, in joining materials together younger pupils use glue, tape and pipe cleaners and older pupils use split pins, stitching and staples. Pupils' understanding of the design process grows steadily. Younger pupils talk about their ideas, what they like and what they would change and older pupils recognise that the quality of products is dependent on the materials and techniques being used, although there is insufficient focus on developing pupils' awareness of how well products meet their intended purpose.
93. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers often plan work that is linked to other subjects; for example, pupils made headgear linked to Christmas festival work, they evaluated food during wartime in a history topic and they made illustrations with moveable parts after looking at some interesting examples of these in books. Planning from year to year is not evaluated sufficiently and this results in some repetition of work without appropriate increase in challenge, for example, repeated work on making puppets and shelters. Some useful assessment takes place, but this practice is inconsistent and most assessment does not inform planning sufficiently, or help pupils to know how they can improve.
94. Leadership is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and encourages and supports other members of staff well. She takes in plans and looks at pupils' work. However, management is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning to check whether the work planned is actually carried out and whether the challenge in the work is appropriate for the age and ability of the pupils. There is no analysis of information from assessments to check that pupils are making sufficient progress, and that the more capable pupils are working at their best.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well supported by a range of clubs and extra activities.
- Pupils enjoy learning and behave well in lessons.
- The subject encourages pupils to keep fit and healthy.
- Other classes are disturbed when pupils walk through them to go for lessons in the hall.

- Assessment procedures are not used consistently to promote higher achievement.

Commentary

95. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with those normally expected, as they were at the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as a new language, achieve satisfactorily.
96. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and as a result pupils achieve satisfactorily. By the end of Year 2, pupils confidently move around a space showing an appropriate awareness of each other. Teachers promote awareness of health and safety and keeping fit through physical exercise well. Pupils skip, use a climbing frame, balance on a beam and perform forward rolls to a satisfactory standard. Younger pupils develop skills using small equipment such as hoops, balls and beanbags satisfactorily and willingly share resources and work in partnership with others sensibly. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate the achievements of others in their class and pick up on ideas to improve their performance. Through the orienteering unit of work, pupils in Year 6 develop their problem-solving skills appropriately. This links to work started on a recent school residential visit, an experience that supports pupils' personal development well.
97. Good features of teaching include management of behaviour and use of praise. As a result, pupils behave well in lessons and enjoy taking part in different activities. Learning is satisfactory overall. Lessons are appropriately planned and resources are well organised to ensure that lessons run smoothly and no time is wasted. However, the open-plan structure of the building often means that other classes are disturbed when pupils have to walk through other classrooms to go to the hall for their lessons. There are no consistent procedures in place to assess pupils' progress and promote higher achievement.
98. A good range of extra-curricular activities supports the physical education curriculum effectively. Pupils participate in netball, football, badminton and swimming competitions with other schools. The school has access to a field near the school and also to the sports facilities at the local high school. Leadership and management are satisfactory, but there are too few opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor standards and provision effectively. Recent purchases of new equipment have improved resources, which are satisfactory overall.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHCE)

Only one lesson was seen in this area of the school's work and so no judgements are made about overall provision. Work in other subjects contributes satisfactorily to the provision for PSHCE.

99. The school's caring ethos supports pupils' personal development well. The school follows the Diocese's recommended programme and supplements this satisfactorily with activities, including work on healthy eating, health awareness, sex and relationships education, drugs awareness, bullying and personal safety. Through work in science and physical education, pupils are shown how to take care of their bodies and develop a healthy lifestyle. The emphasis on healthy eating is reinforced through initiatives such as the 'fruit' and 'milk' schemes for the younger pupils. Teachers make satisfactory use of discussions through, for example, 'circle time', when pupils sit together in a circle to discuss matters of importance to them, to help pupils learn to share their feelings and gain confidence.
100. Visitors are invited in to extend pupils' experiences of working with and relating to others. For example, visitors from the public services help promote pupils' awareness of the work they do and how pupils can take responsibility in looking after themselves and others. Pupils are encouraged to consider the needs of others and participate in fundraising for charities. The choir sings to people in homes for the elderly and older pupils take on responsibilities around the school to support the smooth running of daily activities. The lack of a school council means that pupils have no formal way of making suggestions regarding improvements they would wish to see in the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	5
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	5
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	5
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	5
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	5

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