

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST PETER'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Shoreham-by-Sea

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 126041

Headteacher: Mrs C Walker

Lead inspector: Peter Howlett

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> April 2005

Inspection number: 267926

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: 203  
School address: Sullington Way  
Shoreham-by-Sea  
West Sussex  
Postcode: BN43 6PJ  
Telephone number: (01273) 454 066  
Fax number: (01273) 440 257  
Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of Mrs N Stevens  
governors:  
Date of previous February 1999  
inspection:

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St. Peter's is a one-form entry Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school for boys and girls aged 4 to 11. The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school with 203 on roll. There is considerable gender imbalance, with boys outnumbering girls significantly in most year groups. The school admits children full-time in the term in which they are five. These children are taught in the Reception class. Many children attend the privately-run nursery on site before joining Reception.

The school is located in an urban area on the south coast. It serves the local area but draws pupils from a wide area, attracting pupils from other parishes in outlying areas. Pupils come from a broad spread of family backgrounds and employment. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (approximately three per cent) is low compared to the national average. Of those pupils where information is provided on their ethnic background, most are of white UK background. No other ethnic group is represented in any significant proportions. Four pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. This is below the level of the national average. Children generally enter the school with levels of attainment similar to those typically found nationally. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs (about ten per cent) is below the national average. Two pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need.

There has been significant turnover of teaching staff in recent years. A new headteacher was appointed from September 2004 and a new deputy headteacher from April 2005.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23744	Peter Howlett	Lead inspector	Mathematics Geography Physical education English as an additional language
9519	Sue Pritchard	Lay inspector	
30976	K Henry	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science History Music Special educational needs
22990	C Furniss	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

St Peter's is a **sound school with many strong features but with some important areas for development**. The school is well led and managed, and under the leadership of the new headteacher, is improving rapidly. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils' personal development flourishes because of the very positive and supportive ethos underpinned by Catholic values and beliefs. Standards of attainment are broadly in line with those found nationally, but there is scope to raise pupils' achievement further. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher shows excellent leadership in initiating and managing change and innovation.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below national expectations.
- Boys' results in the English, mathematics and science national tests in Year 6 are significantly lower than those of girls.
- The school promotes pupils' personal development very well and pupils' relationships and behaviour are very good.
- There are effective assessment procedures in English and mathematics, but not in other subjects.
- The curriculum is not planned well enough and this holds back pupils' achievement.
- The school provides a very good, caring and supportive environment for its pupils.
- Links with parents and the community are very good.

There has been **insufficient improvement since the last inspection**. Staffing difficulties have hindered the school's development over the last few years, and the school has not tackled successfully the main key issues identified in the last inspection report. Pupils do not achieve as well as they did at the time of the last inspection, and as a result, standards are not as high. However, the many measures introduced by the new headteacher are leading to rapid improvement and are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. This academic year, the school has been successful in its recruitment of teaching staff and now has a good capacity for further improvement.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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' achievement is just satisfactory but improving.** Results in the Year 6 national tests are inconsistent over time and boys in particular do not do as well as they should. Achievement in English is satisfactory and in mathematics and science just satisfactory.

Standards in these subjects are in line with national expectations by Years 2 and 6. Achievement in ICT is unsatisfactory and standards are below national expectations in Years 2 and 6. Achievement is good in art and design and standards are above national expectations. From the evidence seen in other subjects, standards are as expected nationally in history and design and technology in Years 2 and 6, in geography and physical education by Year 2 and in music by Year 6. Reception children achieve well and are in line to achieve or exceed the expected standards in all the recommended areas of learning. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. As a result of improved teaching, pupils now make good progress in most lessons.

**Pupils' personal development is very good** as a result of the school's very good provision for their social and moral development and good provision for their spiritual and cultural development. Their behaviour and relationships are very good and their attitudes good. Their attendance is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides a **satisfactory education** for its pupils. **The quality of teaching and learning is good**, but shortcomings in how the curriculum is planned and in assessment procedures are barriers to higher achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics. Teachers' relationships with their pupils are very good and they promote a very positive ethos for learning. They plan lessons well and use a good range of teaching methods and resources. Systems for tracking pupils' progress and setting targets for improvement are good in English and mathematics but not in other subjects. Pupils are very well cared for, and there is good support for their personal progress. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, sufficient to meet the needs of the pupils, but the curriculum organisation in many subjects is inadequate. The curriculum is enhanced by very good provision for extra-curricular activities. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and curricular provision for the under-fives is good. The links with parents and the community are very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management of the school are good.** The headteacher's high aspirations, clarity of vision, accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses, clearly focused improvement planning and ability to manage change have had a significant impact on the work of the school. The headteacher is well supported by an effective deputy headteacher and committed staff. There is a good sense of teamwork and shared purpose, but many staff are new to their subject management responsibilities. The governing body provides sound support and challenge and all statutory requirements are met. The school has a very positive ethos, and commitment to inclusion is very good. Finances are managed prudently.

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

Parents hold the school in high regard. They have a very good opinion of nearly all aspects of the school and have full confidence in the headteacher. Pupils' views are also very positive. They feel very well supported and know that the school takes very good account of their views.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Maintain efforts to raise standards in English and mathematics, in particular by improving the achievement of boys.
- Improve standards and achievement in ICT.
- Improve the organisation and planning of the curriculum.
- Extend the improvements in assessment procedures, in English and mathematics, to other subjects.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils' overall achievement is broadly satisfactory. Recent improvements have begun to have an impact on the progress that pupils make, but there is scope for the school to add further value to their achievement. Standards generally match national expectations, except in ICT and art and design.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in ICT are below national expectations in Years 2 and 6.
- Boys' results in the national tests in Year 6 are much lower than those of girls.
- Standards in art and design are above national expectations across the school.
- Children in the Reception class achieve well.
- Recent improvements are having a positive impact on the progress that pupils make in lessons.
- In many subjects, shortcomings in the curriculum and assessment are barriers to higher achievement.

#### Commentary

1. When children join the Reception class, standards are broadly in line with those typically found nationally, as they were at the time of the last inspection. In the current Reception class, there is a wide spread of attainment, but overall standards are similar to those found nationally. Children achieve well and most are on course to achieve the early learning goals in all areas of learning and many, particularly the older children, are on course to exceed them in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and creative development by the end of Reception.
2. By Year 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards overall are in line with those found nationally, as they were at the time of the last inspection. However, as the table below shows, there is a lack of consistency in pupils' results in the Year 2 national tests. In the 2003 tests, results in reading and mathematics were below the national average and those in writing well below average, whilst in the 2004 tests, results were well above average in reading, very high in writing and average in mathematics. The overall average for the past three years is slightly better than the national average in reading, below in writing and close to average in mathematics. Excluding the results in 2004, results in the national tests indicate that standards have broadly been maintained since the last inspection.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.1 (14.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	17.3 (12.4)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.6 (15.5)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. By Year 6, standards overall are in line with those expected nationally. However, pupils' achievement, although broadly satisfactory, is not as good and standards are

not as high as at the last inspection, when they were judged to be above nationally-expected levels. The table below shows that results, in the 2004 tests for Year 6 pupils, were in line with national averages in English and science and below the national average in mathematics. Overall results, over the last three years, were above the national average in English, below average in mathematics and close to the national average in science. Whilst care needs to be taken when considering national test results, the fluctuation in test results in the Year 6 national tests, from year to year, is more than might be expected. Overall results were average in 2004, well above in 2003, below average in 2002 and above in 2001. The performance of the school, in the national tests in Year 6, in comparison to that of similar schools<sup>1</sup>, is also quite mixed. For example, results in the most recent tests in mathematics were below those of similar schools, whilst in English, results were as expected and in science, better than expected.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.8 (29.5)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.3 (27.0)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.3 (30.2)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 24 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. The school recognises that standards are not as high as they could be, and it has taken effective steps to remedy this by making pupils' achievement in English and mathematics key priorities. As a result of improvements undertaken in the current academic year, pupils' achievement since then has been at least satisfactory and often good. Changes in staffing, improvements in teaching and learning following the introduction of rigorous systems for monitoring teaching and learning, development of effective systems for tracking pupils' progress and setting targets for improvement have enabled the school to address successfully the legacy of past underachievement. For example, pupils were judged to have made good progress in seven out every ten lessons observed.
5. In English, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. However, there is clear evidence of good improvement in achievement in the current year. This is because good teaching has resulted in pupils making good progress in lessons and rising standards since the beginning of this academic year. By Years 2 and 6, standards in speaking and listening are above those found nationally and standards in reading and writing are as expected nationally. In mathematics, recent improvements have also had a positive impact on the progress that pupils make in lessons and their achievement is broadly satisfactory. Standards in numeracy, and other aspects of mathematics, are as expected by Years 2 and 6. In science, standards are as expected nationally in Years 2 and 6 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. However, the impact of the good teaching is weakened by shortcomings in curriculum planning and assessment procedures. Achievement in ICT is unsatisfactory. Standards are below national expectations in Years 2 and 6. Pupils' underachievement is primarily the result of insufficient improvements in provision since the last inspection and weaknesses in curriculum planning.
6. In other subjects, standards generally meet national expectations but pupil achievement, although satisfactory, is not helped by shortcomings in the curriculum

<sup>1</sup> Schools whose pupils attained similarly in the national tests at the end of Year 2.

and in assessment procedures. The exception is art and design, in which pupils achieve well and standards are above nationally-expected levels in Years 2 and 6. In history and design and technology, standards are as expected nationally in Years 2 and 6. Standards are as expected nationally in geography and physical education by Year 2 and in music by Year 6. There is insufficient evidence to make judgements in music by Year 2 and geography and physical education by Year 6.

7. The overall achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. They make good progress when judged against their individual learning targets in their educational plans. In lessons, they receive support on an individual or small group basis and make good progress, achieving well in English and satisfactorily in mathematics. More-able pupils make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics but not in ICT. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to their peers. There was no evidence of any significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls in lessons seen but there are substantial differences in their Year 6 national tests. Girls have done much better than boys in the national tests in English, mathematics and science over the past three years. Although the school now has effective systems in English and mathematics that can monitor the performance of different groups, these have not been in place long enough to enable the school or the inspection team to draw any conclusions on the differences in progress of boys and girls over time.

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

The very good provision for developing pupils' personal qualities makes a significant contribution to the quality of education provided for pupils. Pupils' behaviour and relationships are very good and their attitudes to learning are good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have very good relationships with one another and with adults in the school.
- Pupils have responsible attitudes to learning and behave very well in lessons.
- The school's very positive ethos promotes pupils' self-confidence and willingness to take on responsibilities.
- The school's provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is very good.

### **Commentary**

8. Pupils show good attitudes to school work. The school's strong ethos permeates all areas of school life, and as a result, pupils enjoy coming to school. There is a quiet working atmosphere in the classrooms, reflecting a high level of involvement in tasks and activities. At the beginning of the day, pupils come into the classroom and get on with work independently. During lessons there is enthusiastic participation, high levels of interest and good concentration.
9. Relationships throughout the school are very good. The commitment to promoting a sense of belonging is evident in the pupils' wider involvement in the life of the school and in their attitudes to one another. Throughout the school, pupils work together very well, showing high levels of co-operation and mutual respect. The enthusiasm displayed by teachers, combined with high expectations of behaviour, increase

motivation and contribute to pupils' positive attitudes. No incidences of bullying or racial intolerance were observed.

**Ethnic background of pupils**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – other mixed background
Asian
Black African
Information not obtained

**Exclusions in the last school year**

Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed-period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
89	2	0
5	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
5	0	0
4	0	0
2	0	0
52	0	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

10. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. The school is rightly concerned about the negative impact holidays during term time have on pupils' achievement. Stickers, awards and headlines in newsletters extol the virtues of attending school regularly and arriving on time. It is to the school's credit that most pupils now do so. Parents cite the pre-school clubs as being another reason why their children are keener to get to school than they were. However, not enough use is made of the annual reports to emphasise, to the parents concerned, the particular problems their children have encountered by not attending school as often as they should.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.8	School data	0.2
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

11. Provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good. The very positive example set by all the adults in the school, and the value placed on every pupil's contribution in the classroom, promotes pupils' self-esteem and sends a clear message about the importance of listening to the views of others. The recent introduction of a house system has encouraged teamwork and provided a way to regularly celebrate individual achievements. Many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities and show initiative have been introduced this year. Every class has two elected members who serve on the School Council. Year 6 pupils can apply for the position of prefect by letters of application that state why they would be good at the job. The 'lunchtime squad' take on various tasks to ensure that this part of the day runs smoothly and everyone is happy. Pupils' sense of right and wrong is developed well from the time they first come into Reception. Each classroom displays a set of agreed rules and good behaviour is rewarded. In the Reception classroom, children who have shown particular kindness at playtime have their name displayed on a special board.
12. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted well. School assemblies give suitable opportunities for reflection during prayers. Some thoughtful displays around the school encourage reflection by presenting a range of ideas and posing questions. In the Year

2 classroom, a colourful display asks pupils 'What is peace?' Their responses describe what it may feel or look like. All classrooms have a quiet corner where pupils are invited to spend time thinking and reflecting. Opportunities for pupils to empathise and reflect on their work are often built into lessons. For example, Year 5 pupils considered the fears and emotions experienced by Shackleton and his friends as they ventured into the awesome landscape of the Antarctic. Year 6 pupils describe their personal responses to some contrasting pieces of music and come to appreciate how powerful music is in creating particular moods and feelings.

13. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good and has improved since the last inspection. Pupils learn to value their own cultural heritage and that of others. They go to places of educational interest in the locality. The curriculum for literacy, art, music and history makes a significant contribution to pupils' wider cultural development. Knowledge of different cultures is developed as part of the school's religious education programme. There is a multi-faith week each term when one of the main world religions is considered in depth. A large display in the school hall is successful in bringing together the key beliefs and traditions of the Hindu religion in a very accessible way. The school has increased the number of multicultural books and artefacts in school to promote pupils' development in this area.

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

The school provides a sound education for its pupils. The quality of teaching and learning is good but there are shortcomings in how the curriculum is planned and in assessment procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics. Pupils are very well cared for and links with parents and the community are very good.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Assessment in English and mathematics is good but weaknesses in assessment procedures in other subjects hinder pupils' achievement.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good, particularly in Reception and at the end of both the infant and junior stages.
- Teaching in English and science is good.
- Teachers' relationships with their pupils are very good, fostering a very positive ethos for learning.
- Systems for tracking pupils' progress and setting targets for improvement are good in English and mathematics but not in other subjects.
- Not all staff feel confident in their ICT skills.

### **Commentary**

14. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. This is because the school has been successful in recruiting good quality teaching staff and has put in place effective monitoring and professional support procedures. This good teaching has helped towards remedying the legacy of pupil underachievement. Parents have good confidence in the teaching of their children. In all lessons seen, teaching and learning were at least satisfactory and in seven out of ten lessons at least good. Although the proportion of very good lessons was relatively small, the overall statistics on lesson observations compare favourably with those of the last inspection. The good teaching

was spread across most National Curriculum subjects observed and in most classes, but particularly in classes in Reception and in Years 2, 5 and 6. Teaching in English and science is good and in mathematics and ICT satisfactory.

15. All teachers work well together, and despite the staff changes, there is good consistency in practice across the school. There are many strengths in teaching that contribute well to pupils' learning. These include teachers' high expectations of pupils' behaviour, their very good relationships with them, the very positive environment for learning and the encouragement of pupils to work in different ways. In addition, teachers prepare lessons well, use a good variety of methods to meet the individual learning needs of pupils and make effective use of homework to support pupils' learning.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	5 (13%)	21 (57%)	11 (30%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

16. Teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach is generally good, except for ICT as not all staff are confident in their ICT skills. Lessons are generally well planned and prepared. Teachers use a common planning framework which promotes good consistency in the structure and organisation of pupils' learning. Teachers are consistent in making learning intentions of lessons clear to pupils so that pupils know what they are expected to learn. However, they are not consistent in using them with pupils as a basis for checking the success of the lesson.
17. Teachers know their pupils well and generally appropriate account is taken of the different learning needs of pupils. Lessons are planned carefully for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils receive sound support on an individual or small group basis, depending on the focus of the lesson. However, a weakness in some otherwise satisfactory lessons occurs when work is not well matched to the capabilities of the more able pupils.
18. There is a very positive ethos for learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, foster very good relationships with their pupils and manage them very well. They are very positive in their approach, readily recognising good work and effort. Pupils in turn respond very well to their teachers. Teachers encourage pupils to work independently and in groups. In lessons, there is a productive working atmosphere and pupils apply themselves well to their tasks. Boys generally seem as well motivated as girls, but when the pace of lessons sometimes falters, they are more easily distracted from their tasks.
19. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods, engaging the interest and enthusiasm of pupils and promoting good learning. They show a good range of teaching skills with effective questioning, clear exposition and effective use of resources. A well thought-out approach to homework supports pupils' learning from Reception to Year 6. Teachers work closely with their assistants to support pupils well, although at times, particularly during whole-class discussion sessions, assistants are not effectively used. There is generally a good balance in the use of time in lessons between input from teachers and opportunities for pupils to complete tasks. Occasionally, teachers get this balance wrong with introductions to lessons that are

too long and limiting the time that pupils have to undertake tasks. In addition, a shortcoming in a few lessons is the slow pace at which they proceed.

20. Teachers use appropriate strategies to assess pupils' gains in learning during lessons. For example, they use questioning well to check if pupils have grasped the lesson's learning intentions and to get pupils to reflect on what they have learnt. The concluding part of lessons is used effectively by some, but not all, teachers to check pupils' understanding, helping them plan the next lessons. Teachers set learning targets for pupils which are useful in helping them focus on areas they need to improve upon. However, although teachers are conscientious in marking pupils' work, they miss opportunities to provide additional guidance on how pupils could improve their work.
21. A key priority, identified by the new headteacher, is the development of effective assessment procedures. Prior to this academic year, the school undertook a range of assessments in English, mathematics and science. However, these arrangements were not effective as a means of raising standards because little use was made of the information gained. For example, the school did not have adequate systems for recording and monitoring pupils' progress against National Curriculum benchmarks. Much has been done so far to address these weaknesses and the school has now in place effective assessment systems in English and mathematics. In these subjects, the procedures for checking and tracking individual pupils' progress over time are now good. The systems enable the school to respond well to pupils' individual learning needs: the school identifies those pupils in need of additional support and teachers set appropriate targets for improvement.
22. In science and ICT, there are agreed procedures for monitoring and recording the performance of pupils, with teachers undertaking regular assessments. However, teachers do not assess pupils' achievement against National Curriculum expectations so the school is unable to give a clear view of how well their pupils are doing compared with standards expected nationally. Appropriate assessment arrangements in other subjects are not yet in place.
23. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is good. Effective systems monitor pupils' achievement and are informed by termly assessments in writing, reading and mathematics and samples of work selected to demonstrate the progress made by pupils. In lessons, teaching assistants work closely with teachers to record and monitor pupils' progress in special liaison books. Appropriate records track pupils' progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.

### **The curriculum**

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. It is broad and sufficient to meet the needs of the pupils, but it is not well planned. Curricular provision for the under-fives is good. Opportunities for enrichment are very good through effective use of visits and visitors and a very broad range of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall and are well used.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good provision of extra-curricular activities and well planned use of visits and visitors enrich the curriculum very well.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is very good.

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Curriculum provision for English and art and design is good but the inadequate design of the curriculum in many subjects hampers pupils' achievement.
- Provision for children under five is good but the outdoor facilities are inadequate.
- Although much improved and just adequate, the accommodation for ICT is cramped and not conducive to learning.

## Commentary

24. The school provides a good curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. Planning in Reception is good and provides children with a broad range of learning experiences in all areas of learning that helps children achieve well. The school's curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. The school provides a broad curriculum that meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum, including sex education and drugs education. There is very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship. This is reflected in the very positive ethos in the school and the very good relationships and behaviour of pupils. Provision for English and art and design is good.
25. There are weaknesses in how the curriculum is planned and organised, and in many subjects, the development of pupils' understanding and their ability to apply skills is hampered by the current inadequate design of the curriculum. Traditionally the school has organised much of pupils' learning experiences around broad-based topics. Whilst this helps to make learning purposeful and relevant to pupils, and enables teachers make some sound links between subjects, it results in a curriculum that is broad but not well balanced in the time given and the way some subjects are organised. This means that subjects, such as ICT, science, geography and history, have patchy coverage and some skills are not as effectively taught as they might be. This has been recognised by the school and a date for reviewing the curriculum and how it is planned has already been set. The teaching of mathematics through the school's topic-based approach has already been discarded and mathematics is now taught as a discrete subject, with planning based directly on the National Numeracy Strategy.
26. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs, who are well provided for and supported. Teachers use a range of strategies and activities to ensure that all pupils are included and supported and plan activities that meet their learning needs. Their progress is monitored effectively. There is appropriate provision for those pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school is taking steps to improve opportunities for its gifted and talented pupils. For example, book and mathematics clubs for able pupils were started this year.
27. The headteacher has promoted extra-curricular activities very effectively. There is now a very good range of clubs, involving all teachers and many teaching assistants as well as parents. These are very well supported by pupils and include art, textiles, drama, dance, French, computers, recorders, singing, orchestra, running, rugby, football and netball. There is also a breakfast club. Visitors include policemen, nurses, parents, artists and musicians and there are well-planned trips to further enrich the curriculum and broaden pupils' experiences. Residential visits have been introduced for both Year 5 and Year 6 pupils and Years 3 and 4 pupils have 'away' days. These contribute very effectively to the personal and social education programme.
28. The school is well staffed and the match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is good. Resources to meet the demands of the curriculum are satisfactory.

Although not spacious, the accommodation is adequate. It is well maintained and enhanced as a learning environment by colourful and lively displays. There have been very recent improvements in ICT facilities now that there is a separate computer area. However, this is cramped and barely adequate because it has only eight computers and is located in part of a corridor, and therefore a thoroughfare, which is not very conducive to learning. The outside area of the school is attractive and the pond area is a valuable educational resource. However, the small and poorly resourced outdoor play area limits the physical development of children in the Foundation Stage.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school promotes a very good level of care for all its pupils. Pupils have very good access to well-informed support and advice and very good account is taken of their views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are very good procedures to monitor and promote pupils' personal development.
- Pupils are sensible and responsible because of the very good support and guidance they receive.
- The pupils' involvement in risk assessments is very good and very well planned.
- Staff are very knowledgeable about the arrangements for dealing with child protection issues.

### **Commentary**

29. Pupils trust the staff and know there is always someone to whom they can turn and also someone ready and willing to praise them when they have done well. All staff show patience, tolerance and a high degree of professionalism in their dealings with pupils and parents. Parents and pupils readily acknowledge that staff are easy to approach and to talk to. The distinctive '*I can do*' celebration baseball caps single out the pupils whose work or good deeds are worthy of special praise. The system is very effective in helping raise pupils' self-esteem. Pupils' personal achievements are tracked through the school so that teachers can acknowledge and support those who do not necessarily achieve as much as they could academically, but nevertheless are successful in other areas. It also helps raise awareness of the pupils who are well motivated but somehow miss out on positions of responsibility. Although these systems are relatively new, they are already proving effective in helping teachers gauge the right level of support and encouragement for the individual child. All teachers spend time at the beginning of a lesson helping pupils understand the purpose of it and again at the end, encouraging them to evaluate what they have gained from it. Pupils often use the 'thumbs up/thumbs down' system of sharing feelings about their work with their teachers.
30. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support through well-focused individual education plans and careful allocation of funds. They are encouraged to develop an awareness of their own areas of difficulty, to take a positive attitude to learning and to celebrate their own achievements. The school has its own 'School Alert' form which helps to monitor pupils who are giving some cause for concern. Good liaison is maintained with parents of children with specific medical needs so that these pupils take a full part in all activities in school. All staff are very aware of the duty they have towards children at risk. They are alert to any unusual patterns of behaviour or conduct. Professional counselling is arranged for pupils who need a more focused

level of personal support than the staff are able to give. Effective liaison is maintained with the relevant outside agencies for these groups and also for pupils who have problems with their attendance.

31. All the routine health and safety checks are carried out in school to an agreed schedule. The risk assessments made on trips out of school are exceptionally well planned and executed. Digital photographs are taken of the venue to allow the pupils to identify any potential areas of risk prior to the visit taking place, while still in the safety of the classroom. Due consideration has been given to making the school accessible to people with disabilities. Staff are properly trained to deal with minor accidents and injuries and know exactly what to do in an emergency situation. The written policies and procedures that guide the school's arrangements for the pupils' care and welfare are clear, comprehensive and detailed and, as such, provide very good reference material for the staff to use.
32. Members of the newly formed school council felt moved to tell the inspectors how impressed they were with changes made in school in recent months. They are looking forward to publishing a school council newsletter and developing a school council logo. Pupils value the opportunity of being able to raise issues and concerns for themselves in a structured and inclusive way. The school council has made great strides in the short time it has been operating.

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

Links with parents and the community are very good. Links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are impressed by the recent improvements in school and see the headteacher's strong and determined style of leadership as being the key to its success.
- Very good links with the community enhance the curriculum.
- A good number of parents show a willingness to support the school in a variety of ways.

### **Commentary**

33. Parents appreciate the commitment the headteacher has shown to helping their children achieve. They described the changes since September as being "*beyond belief*". At the pre-inspection meeting one parent summed up the prevailing view by saying "*It's the children's school now*". Parents view St. Peter's as a rapidly improving school where pupils are happy and secure. Inspectors agree.
34. The school regards the parents as key members of the school community with a vital part to play in the education of their children. Responding enthusiastically to this approach, parents have come forward with around 30 different skills that they are willing to share with the school. The school is now considering how to make the best use of a magician, basketball coach, Irish musician, IT technician and ballet tutor amongst a host of other skills and talents offered. A newly formed parent/teacher association raised an unexpected £1,600 from its first social event and, as a result, was able to fund the purchase of new playground equipment. These act as examples of the commitment and generosity of parents to the future success of the school.

35. Reporting to parents on pupils' achievements is good. Parents are happy with the content and style of the annual reports and are well versed in the systems that allow them to discuss their children's progress with teachers. The school plans to publish information on attendance figures in a more meaningful way. Currently, the reports do not always make crystal clear the negative effect absence has on pupils' achievements. Newsletters to parents are upbeat and positive, with headlines heralding recent success stories. Information about the curriculum is good. Parents make good use of it to work with their children at home. For example, one set of parents purposefully took their children on a train ride after spotting that the Reception class would be looking at stories on this theme. With two relatively minor omissions, the very attractively presented prospectus and the governors' report contain all the information parents, must by law, receive from the school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are given good opportunities to be involved in the process of writing individual education plans. Copies are sent home to parents in October inviting their thoughts and comments. Following the mid-year review, new individual education plans are discussed fully with parents at parents' evening. A programme of pre-school visits helps smooth the transition from home or nursery setting. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting had no concerns about the way children were introduced to the school.
36. The headteacher seizes all opportunities to bring in people from the community who will inspire, support and motivate pupils, parents and staff. Of particular note are the rugby players who offer low-cost breakfast-time coaching sessions to boys and girls, the community Police officer who supports the school's citizenship programme by talking to pupils about drugs and safety issues, and the school nurse who helps deliver the sex and relationships programme and holds lunchtime health clinics for pupils and parents. In offering these types of facilities, and more, the school has taken the first steps to becoming what is known as an 'extended school'.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is supported by an effective deputy headteacher and committed staff. Governance is sound.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has excellent educational vision for the school which she shares fully with her staff and governing body.
- Development priorities accurately identify what the school needs to do to improve.
- Teamwork is good, with all staff working well together for the benefit of the pupils.
- The headteacher has introduced effective procedures to monitor its work but subject leaders are at an early stage of involvement in checking how well the school is doing.
- The school has a very positive ethos and shows a clear commitment to inclusion.

### **Commentary**

37. There have been significant changes in staffing in recent years, which have had an adverse effect on the school's development. Governors feel the problems inherited by the new headteacher can be traced back to a number of staffing issues faced by the school over an 18-month period. Staff absences and illnesses, low staff morale, high staff turnover and difficulties in recruiting and retaining senior managers resulted in 'a very traumatic period of time'. In addition, the school had not tackled successfully the

main key issues identified in the last inspection or always kept pace with national developments. Consequently, prior to this academic year the school had not progressed well, and a number of management shortcomings awaited the attention of the new headteacher. Also, inconsistencies in pupils' achievement in the national tests indicated that the school had failed to maintain its academic standards.

38. The headteacher has made a significant impact in her short time at the school. She has high aspirations for pupils in terms of both their personal and academic development and her high expectations are a significant factor in promoting the very positive ethos of the school. Parents and pupils appreciate the family atmosphere, the warm and harmonious relationships and the wealth of opportunities provided to make the school an exciting place for pupils. The school is very inclusive. All pupils are equally valued and there is clear commitment to supporting and promoting the wellbeing of all, identifying and supporting pupils' different learning needs and ensuring that the more vulnerable are well looked after.
39. The headteacher's excellent leadership qualities, clarity of vision and secure grasp of strategic principles, combined with her undoubted energy and management skills, have quickly put the school on a sure management footing. Her evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is very accurate and has led to the introduction of a wide range of measures to revitalize the school, develop staff expertise and improve achievement, while building on the existing good personal qualities of the pupils. She has introduced and managed initiatives very effectively with the full support of staff, governors and parents. Consequently, there is a good sense of teamwork and a common sense of purpose and commitment. The newly appointed deputy headteacher is an experienced and effective manager, for example, providing good support as the English subject leader. The subject leader for mathematics provides good leadership. However, other staff are at an early stage in developing their subject management expertise and, consequently, the development of the curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics has lagged behind that of other areas. The school has identified the shortcomings in curriculum planning as one of its next areas for development. Leadership and management of special educational needs are good. The co-ordinator meets regularly with teachers to give support and guidance and continually reviews provision to ensure its effectiveness.
40. The school has a very clear agenda for improvement. Having quickly identified the main issues, the headteacher has put in place a well-constructed action plan to address the most urgent areas. The action plan is an effective tool for improvement. It reflects the range of improvements needed and gives the school a clear set of priorities and proposed actions. On these, the school has made very good progress over the last two terms, although it is too early for their full impact on pupils' academic achievement to be felt. The school has made good strides in developing and implementing self-evaluation and self-improvement measures. Effective procedures, for checking teaching and learning to identify specific areas for development and ensure consistency in approach, are now fully in place. These form part of the school's effective performance management and staff development programmes. A range of available but previously unused assessment data has been collated and entered into systems that can now track effectively individual pupil progress in English and mathematics. These enable management to set targets, monitor individual achievement, and to identify pupils in need of additional support. The school plans to monitor the performances of groups, for example, by ethnic background and gender. A priority identified by the headteacher is the development of the subject leader's role. Subject leaders have begun to undertake some appropriate monitoring activities but

their effectiveness in contributing to evaluating standards and provision is at an early stage of development.

41. Governance is satisfactory and improving. Governors are keen and supportive of the school. However, until recently the governing body has had insufficient impact on the work of the school. It found it difficult to play a strategic part in shaping its direction because of the lack of an effective school development plan. In addition, governors did not have a clear overview of standards because there was no analysis of performance data. Governors are now developing their roles satisfactorily because there is a very good partnership with the new headteacher, who keeps them well informed. The governing body is involved appropriately in planning and decision-making. For example, they have focused on resolving the staffing issue, with an emphasis on recruiting the right staff. They have agreed to a one-year action plan and are developing their monitoring role; for example, a core group of governors work with the headteacher to make sure the action plan is being completed. Each governor is linked to a specific curriculum area and observes different aspects of school life; for example, a governor is attached to the school council.
  
42. Financial management is satisfactory. The governing body oversees financial matters appropriately and takes an appropriate role in financial decisions. These decisions are well informed by the school's priorities. For example, the school has funded many improvements to the accommodation. Day-to-day financial administration is efficient and the school keeps a careful check on finances. However, the school has not considered how Best Value principles can be applied to school procedures and there is no formal statement to guide practice and ensure that these principles are an integral part of management.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	465,806
Total expenditure	478,494
Expenditure per pupil	2,518

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	56,483
Balance carried forward to the next year	43,795

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

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

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. There are good arrangements for introducing children to school because of the good liaison with the privately-run Nursery on the school site that most children attend before joining the school. Children attend the Reception class full-time from the term in which are five years old, and part-time in the term beforehand. Currently there are 30 children in Reception. Analysis of assessments made on entry and the findings of the inspection show that whilst children have a wide range of skills, they enter school broadly in line with standards expected for children of this age.

Good teaching and provision promote good achievement and children make good progress in many areas of learning. Most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in all areas of learning and many children, particularly the older ones, are on course to exceed them in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and creative development by the end of the year. Children with special educational needs are well supported within the class and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.

Leadership and management are good. The staff work as an effective team and have a good understanding of how children learn and closely monitor their progress. Lesson planning is good, clearly identifying what children are expected to learn. The curriculum is good and children have a broad range of learning experiences in all areas of learning. The teacher has identified child-initiated learning as an area that needs developing. There are

good links with parents. For example, a home-link book goes home each week, indicating how parents can support their child in the development of their literacy skills.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above nationally-expected levels.
- Very good relationships exist between adults and children.
- Children have good opportunities to be responsible but have insufficient opportunities to initiate activities.

### **Commentary**

43. Children achieve well in this area of learning and standards are above nationally-expected levels. This can be attributed to good teaching. The adults provide very good role models; they value children's achievements and allow time for them to reflect on their actions and ideas. This has a positive impact on learning. Children's good personal, social and emotional development is evident in the confidence they show when sharing ideas and asking questions. The classroom is a happy place in which they are expected to be responsible, but they are not always given sufficient opportunities to initiate activities themselves. Negotiated rules are clearly on display and children are frequently praised for being good listeners. Children share and co-operate when working in groups and work as a team to tidy away equipment quickly at the end of a session. Their behaviour is good in the classroom, when moving around the school, during assembly and in the playground. Children develop an understanding of right and wrong by discussing the actions of characters in familiar stories such as 'Red Riding Hood'. This area of understanding is already well developed in a great number of the children.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well and standards are above nationally-expected levels.
- Children benefit from a good range of experiences that develop effectively their literacy skills.

### **Commentary**

44. Good teaching, careful planning of learning experiences and a good focus on developing children's listening skills all contribute to their good achievement in this area of learning. Children exceed expectations for their age. The teacher plans well prepared group activities that are matched to the developmental stage of particular groups of children. The emphasis on discussion and sharing of ideas contribute well to children's good standards of speaking and listening. Good role-play scenarios encourage children to extend their ideas and develop their language. The story of 'Little Red Riding Hood' was supported by the creation of Grandmother's cottage in

the role-play area, a wolf's den in the reading area and the woodcutter's cottage, complete with extensive tool kit in the outside area. This approach to learning demonstrates the teacher's very good understanding of how to motivate and excite children. There are good opportunities for the children to develop their writing skills. A well equipped writing area, which displays examples of various activities, gives the children the freedom to develop confidence in their writing skills. More-able children write independently, retelling simple stories. They use their knowledge of the letter sounds to make plausible attempts at spelling longer words. Books are taken home on a regular basis and parents write their comments about their children's progress in the home-school record. Parents are also invited to contribute to their children's learning by encouraging them to draw pictures and write in a range of ways about the stories they have read. The teacher keeps detailed records of the children's progress in all aspects of literacy, supported well by the teaching assistants who observe and record children's progress towards intended learning objectives.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is good emphasis on developing key mathematical language.
- Mathematical activities are well planned but there is too much emphasis on pupils recording their work.

### **Commentary**

45. Standards are as expected nationally. Most children are achieving well and are in line to reach or exceed the early learning goals in this area of learning by the end of the Reception Year. Teaching is good and the teacher provides children with a wide range of experiences to develop their mathematical understanding. There is a good emphasis on the development of mathematical language, including comparative language related to measures, such as longer than and heavier than. Most children count to ten and recognise the numerals that represent these numbers. The more able children count to twenty and beyond and understand more or less than a given number. Whilst activities to support children's mathematical development are well designed to excite and involve the children, there is too great an emphasis on following them up with tasks that require them to record work. A significant number of children find this difficult and do not understand the relationship between their learning and what they are being required to record in their books.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teacher plans a good range of learning experiences so children achieve well.

### **Commentary**

46. Teaching is good and children achieve well as a result. The teacher's good questioning, requiring the children to draw on their experiences, combined with her

skill at creating opportunities for them to make discoveries for themselves, contribute to most children being on course to achieve or, in the case of a small number, exceed the early learning goals in this area. The stimulating environment in the classroom has a positive impact on children's learning. A well organised display on flowering plants and growth supports the development of children's observational skills. With the support of adults, children explore the world around them and raise questions. For example, groups of children were taken out into the school environment to take photographs of features they might see on a journey through the woods. They could discuss the pictures they had taken and describe how the digital camera was used. This linked well to the story of Red Riding Hood and consideration of what she might have encountered on her journey to see her grandmother.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The small and poorly resourced outdoor play area limits children's physical development.
- Whole-class lessons are well planned to ensure that pupils' skills are built upon successfully.

### **Commentary**

47. Teaching and children's achievement are satisfactory. Most children are in line to achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning by the end of the Reception Year. The children gain good manipulative skills by handling small tools and a range of writing and drawing resources. They use scissors competently and are able to use Sellotape, glue and string independently when making models and masks. They have a good awareness of their own space and that of others. They have opportunities to develop other skills, such as throwing and catching, through planned whole-class activities and in these areas they achieve well. However, the provision for physical development is limited by the very small outdoor play area which is poorly resourced and by the lack of sufficient wheeled toys. The school is aware of this and it has been identified as an area which needs developing.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Children have very good opportunities to experience imaginative play.

### **Commentary**

48. The good teaching and learning in this area of learning lead to children's good achievement. Many children are in line to exceed expectations in this area of learning.

The children work in a colourful and stimulating environment in which they have many opportunities to experiment with ideas in response to a range of stimuli. The teacher's skilful integration of ideas ensures that the children gain the maximum from the experiences they encounter. When investigating colour mixing, the children were introduced to prints by the artist Andy Warhol and had the opportunity to design their own prints and present them in a similar style. In the role-play area the children have access to high quality resources to support the development of their imaginative play.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Good teaching, effective support and recently implemented strategies are helping to improve pupils' achievement and raise standards.
- Boys' results in the Year 6 national tests are significantly lower than those of girls.
- The subject leader leads and manages well and has a very clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses in provision.
- Very good use of individual and group targets helps both staff and pupils identify areas of weakness and improve pupils' learning.

#### **Commentary**

49. Standards by Year 6 are as expected nationally but are not as high as those at the time of the last inspection. Results, in the most recent national tests for Year 6 pupils, were in line with the national average and also average for similar schools. Overall results in the national tests over the last three years were above the national average. However, over the same period girls have performed significantly better than boys.
50. Standards by Year 2 are as expected nationally, as they were at the time of the last inspection. In the most recent national tests, Year 2 pupils' results were well above the national average for reading and very high for writing. However, the results over the last four years have been inconsistent. The overall average, for the past three years, was below the national average in writing and slightly above in reading.
51. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, but there is clear evidence of good improvement in pupils' achievement and of rising standards since the beginning of this academic year. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress and achieve well in lessons. More-able pupils make satisfactory progress. There was no evidence of any significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls in lessons seen. The time span, over which the school has gathered assessment information to track the performance of individual pupils, is too short to enable an analysis of trends in performance by gender.
52. Most pupils enter the school with standards in speaking and listening skills broadly in line with those typically found nationally. These skills are being developed well by the school. Teachers encourage pupils to listen well and use a range of learning experiences to build up their vocabulary and confidence in speaking. Group discussions, reporting back, talking with partners, 'hot-seating' and drama were all

observed being successfully and enjoyably used by pupils across the school. By the end of Year 2, pupils have better-than-expected skills and most Year 6 pupils are confident speakers and express themselves well in a range of situations.

53. Standards in both reading and writing are in line with those expected nationally in both Years 2 and 6. The school has implemented new initiatives to raise standards in reading, for example, more focused guided reading sessions in each class every day. Parents are positively involved in encouraging their children's reading. For example, pupils have useful reading records and parents are encouraged to write comments in these records when they have heard them read. Pupils have very positive attitudes to reading and they read regularly both at home and at school. Teachers use a variety of strategies regularly to help pupils to develop their reading skills, for example, teaching young pupils how to use different clues to read words and sentences. Most Year 2 pupils can tackle new material confidently and can explain how to use a contents page and an index to help them find out information. Older pupils regularly write book reviews and books are used effectively to support learning, with books and the Internet being used well for research. By Year 6, many pupils read in a mature, expressive way.
54. The school has identified standards in writing as an area needing improvement and again several useful strategies have been put into place in recent months to raise achievement. The handwriting policy has been reviewed and new spelling units have been introduced. The use of targets both for groups and for individual pupils is proving very effective in identifying what pupils need to do to improve. In talking to pupils, it is clear that they are finding these very helpful and teachers are consistently following them up. Although only in place a short time, there is evidence that they are improving standards. Pupils regularly draft and edit their work and are beginning to evaluate their own and each other's work. This helps them to gain a better awareness of their own learning and also helps them to move on. Pupils take pride in their work and presentation is generally good.
55. The quality of teaching and learning is good, with several very good lessons observed during the inspection. Lesson planning and preparation are thorough, with clear learning objectives shared with pupils so that they know what is expected of them. Teachers plan work suited to the differing levels of ability so that most pupils are challenged at their own level, though there are occasions where the tasks set for more able pupils could be more demanding. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and develop relationships very well, making very effective use of encouragement and rewards systems. Assessment information is generally used well. Teachers know the pupils well, and effective systems for tracking how well pupils are doing are now in place, so that teachers can ensure that they make the progress they should and put support programmes into place where needed. Teaching assistants work closely with the teachers and support pupils well, though there are times when some of them could be more closely involved with supporting pupils in whole-class discussion sessions instead of sitting at the side and merely listening.
56. Leadership and management are good. In recent months, the role of subject leader has been more effectively developed within the school. Monitoring activities, including monitoring classroom practice, are developing well. Consequently, the subject leader has a very clear overview of the subject and vision for the future. A complete audit of resources and needs has been carried out, the handwriting policy reviewed, targets introduced and a report on the present state of the subject and analysis of future needs prepared. The priorities, such as raising standards, especially of boys,

improving writing, and reviewing the long-term curriculum map, have been correctly identified and there is a clear and detailed action plan. When judged by standards obtained in national tests in Year 6, there has been unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection. However, there have been a lot of changes in the school and there is clear evidence of marked improvements in provision during the last few months and provision is now good. There is a strong feeling of team commitment to improving standards of literacy and a real capacity to do so.

## **LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

57. This is good. Literacy is developed well in other subjects. Good examples of extended writing and recording were seen in a range of subjects, including physical education, design and technology, art, religious education, history, geography and science. Effective use is made of ICT to support literacy.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievement is broadly satisfactory, but there is scope for the school to add further value to their achievement.
- Systems for tracking pupils' progress and setting targets for improvement are good.
- There is good teaching at the end of both the junior and infant phases.
- Teachers make good use of ICT to support pupils' learning but miss opportunities to develop their learning in other subjects.
- The co-ordinator shows clear vision and good leadership.

### **Commentary**

58. Standards, by Year 6, are as expected nationally but are not as high as those found at the time of the last inspection. The results, in the most recent national tests for Year 6 pupils, were below the national average and the average for similar schools as the proportion of pupils attaining above the expected Level 4 was well below that found nationally. Overall results for the last three years were below the national average because the performance of boys was below that of boys nationally. Inspection evidence indicates that this downward trend has been halted. For example, the proportion of pupils in line to achieve the higher Level 5 in this year's national assessments is likely to be much higher than in most recent tests. Year 6 pupils use a variety of mental and written strategies to solve problems and use appropriate mathematical language to explain their methods. They are confident with number operations and have a secure grasp of decimals, fractions and percentages. Pupils show a sound understanding of the properties of shape and competence in using measures and data handling skills.
59. Standards in Year 2 are as expected nationally. In the 2004 tests, results were in line with the national average. The three-year average was close to the national picture and indicates that standards have improved in line with national picture. Nearly all the pupils in Year 2 are working at least within the expected range for their ages. Most pupils have a sound understanding of place value and operations with numbers to 100. A good proportion of the year group are on course to exceed the nationally-expected level by the end of the year.

60. Pupils' achievement is broadly satisfactory. It has improved in the current academic year as a result of a number of new initiatives. Changes in staffing, including the recruitment of a new co-ordinator, improvements in teaching and assessment and changes in how the curriculum is planned have enabled the school to address effectively the legacy of past underachievement. An analysis of pupils' work shows that pupils have made clear progress over this year, albeit from levels of attainment not always commensurate with their capabilities. This is reflected in lesson observations. In all lessons seen pupils, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds, made at least satisfactory and often good gains in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs are generally supported well in lessons, either by their teachers or classroom assistants. Higher-attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Boys generally seem as well motivated as girls, but sometimes are more easily distracted. The assessment data, so far collected, is insufficient as yet to analyse trends in performance by gender.
61. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but good at the end of both key stages. In lessons seen, teaching was always at least satisfactory and often good. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils, have high expectations of behaviour and promote a positive ethos for learning. Pupils respond positively to their teachers, mostly applying themselves diligently to set tasks. There is a clear focus to pupils' learning and pupils are clear on what they are expected to learn. Lessons are carefully planned and activities are generally matched appropriately to the different learning needs of pupils. There is good emphasis on the developing different number strategies and on the use of correct mathematical vocabulary. Teachers make good use of homework, but their use of assistants to support pupils' learning is inconsistent. Teachers do not make sufficient use of the concluding parts of lessons to assess pupils' progress and plan next steps in learning. In the best lessons, teaching is brisk and work set challenges the most and least able appropriately. However, this does not always happen and sometimes the pace of learning is somewhat slow or there is insufficient planning of work for more-able pupils.
62. Assessment arrangements are good. Teachers undertake regular assessments to ensure that pupils have acquired the key objectives for the units of study. They also set learning targets for pupils which are useful in helping them focus on areas they need to improve upon. In addition, they make and record assessments of pupils' progress in relation to National Curriculum levels. Marking is satisfactory, although teachers could do more to indicate to pupils how they might further improve.
63. Leadership of the subject is good. The new co-ordinator shows clear vision and has identified appropriate priorities and has taken effective actions. For example, her evaluation that the teaching of mathematics through the school's topic-based approach was a factor in holding back pupils' achievement has led to teaching it as a discrete subject. Teachers now plan directly from the National Numeracy Strategy, making consistent use of a common planning framework. The decision by the school to change the format of pupils' workbooks has led to an improvement in standards of presentation. Management is satisfactory. Although the co-ordinator has undertaken some monitoring activities, her analysis and use of assessment data are at an early stage of development. Despite recent developments, improvement since the last inspection remains insufficient because pupils do not achieve as well as they did and standards are not as high.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

64. This is an area for development. Although teachers make good use of ICT to support pupils' learning, opportunities to develop their skills in other subjects are not sufficiently well planned for.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- There is good emphasis in lessons on the development of pupils' investigative skills.
- The support for lower-achieving pupils is good.
- Weaknesses in curriculum planning and assessment procedures slow pupils' achievement.

### Commentary

65. Standards in Year 6 are as expected nationally, but are not as high as those at the time of the last inspection. Results, in the most recent national tests for Year 6 pupils, were in line with the national average. Overall results, in the national tests for the last three years, have been close to the national average, although the performance of boys was below that of boys nationally. Year 6 pupils have sound scientific knowledge and understanding, and pupils work co-operatively to set up a fair test to investigate how the amount of sugar used affects the time it takes to dissolve. Standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations. This was the finding of the last inspection. Year 2 pupils can conduct experiments to investigate the importance of light, water and soil on germination and growth. They make accurate measurements and observations of the progress of the plants in different conditions and more-able pupils can offer explanations for what happened.
66. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory by Years 2 and 6, and inspection evidence did not find any difference in achievement between boys and girls. Throughout the school, there is a good emphasis on the development of pupils' investigative skills and opportunities for them to gain first-hand experiences. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, often make good progress in lessons. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, activities were well planned to match the different learning needs of pupils. In an activity which investigated the contents of several lunchboxes to determine if they were healthy or not, the teacher's high expectations and her careful framing of questions to challenge pupils' thinking resulted in good achievement for all the groups within the class. However, whilst progress in lessons was found to be good, the development of pupils' understanding and their ability to apply skills is hampered by the current inadequate design of the curriculum. For example, in Year 5, pupils have no science lessons at all during one term and pupils generally do not have a clear understanding of targets to work towards.
67. Teaching and learning are good overall. Most lessons seen were good. Detailed plans identify clearly the learning objectives for each lesson. These are revisited at the end of the session and pupils are asked to reflect on their learning. Teachers' questioning requires pupils to reflect on prior knowledge and understanding and to use their scientific vocabulary. Good teaching in Year 6 was successful in helping pupils appreciate the need for rigour and careful recording and contributed to pupils' good scientific approach to the task. Well organised and exciting practical work in Year 4 sustained pupils' interest and led to good learning. They carried out investigations into thermal conductivity and thermal insulation. They then matched the outcomes against their initial predictions and evaluated the results. Where teaching was satisfactory

rather than good, there was insufficient challenge for some pupils and little or no evaluation of pupils' learning.

68. There are shortcomings in the school's assessment procedures. Although whole-school assessments take place each half term, the procedures that are currently in place serve as a record of work covered rather than a system for monitoring progress or as a basis for determining the next stages in pupils' learning. In addition, the practice of recording science work in general topic books makes it difficult for teachers to track progress over time.
69. The subject is well led and soundly managed. The subject leader is newly in post. She has conducted a full audit of resources and monitored planning throughout the school. She acknowledges the difficulties presented by the use of topic books and is taking steps to change this. She has a good understanding of what needs to be done to improve assessment and curriculum planning. Nevertheless, there has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Recent improvements are raising pupils' achievement but standards are still below nationally-expected levels across the school.
- The curriculum is broad but some aspects such as control technology are not covered well.
- ICT is used effectively to support pupils' learning in other subjects.
- There are no effective procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress.
- Not all teachers feel confident in their ICT skills.

## **COMMENTARY**

70. Standards are below nationally-expected levels in Year 2, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Although pupils are accessing and using programs, for example, involving word processing and adding pictures and clipart, and have begun to search databases, there is a general lack of familiarity and competence. Almost a quarter of the pupils need help in performing quite basic tasks, such as locating, logging on and logging off a program.
71. Standards by Year 6 are also below those expected nationally and are not as high as those at the last inspection. The same lack of comfortable competence is found; the effect of lack of 'hands-on' experience. Several pupils, for example, still need help in combining text and graphics to make a presentation slide. Although all elements of the ICT curriculum are covered, the curriculum is not well balanced. Some aspects, such as control technology and use of databases, are not covered as effectively as they should be and standards in these aspects are below those typically found nationally.
72. Pupils' underachievement is primarily the result of insufficient improvements since the last inspection. The school has not kept up with national developments in the subject and its facilities in the past have been inadequate. Accommodation and resources have improved but are barely adequate. From the beginning of this academic year, the school has had an ICT area, comprising eight computers and a projector for demonstration purposes as well as classroom computers. This has led to some

improvement in standards, as pupils have more opportunities to practice their skills. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language, have made satisfactory progress this year, albeit from below expected levels. In some year groups, where the teaching is good, there is evidence of pupils making good progress. However, the legacy of past underachievement remains because overall provision remains unsatisfactory. More-able pupils in particular are not reaching appropriate standards for their capabilities.

73. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons seen were at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Planning is sound, with lessons being well prepared. Staff manage pupils well and have high expectations of behaviour, which is particularly important given the fairly cramped conditions of the ICT area and the extra movement that the limited accommodation causes. Teachers plan appropriate tasks that are relevant to pupils' work in other subjects, but these do not always develop their ICT skills sufficiently because assessment is inadequate. Teachers use sets of tick sheets to record what pupils know and can do but there are no effective procedures for assessing, recording and tracking how well pupils are doing over time. This means that some pupils, especially the more able, are not being as consistently challenged and extended as they should. Although there has been staff training in ICT, staff competence is variable and not all staff feel confident in their ICT skills. Training for both teachers and teaching assistants is an area that has already been identified by the subject leader.
74. The subject is soundly led and managed. The subject leader is competent and has a clear view of the subject and what needs to be done to raise standards. However, she has other major managerial roles in the school and only a limited amount of time available to develop the subject. Although the ICT area has improved the overall level of resources, its position just off a main corridor is not conducive to good learning. It is rather cramped and only half a class can be accommodated at a time. This limits the amount of 'hands-on' opportunities for pupils and is a barrier to higher achievement. Despite its limitations, this unit is a good improvement and makes it possible to teach skills much more effectively than before. Other improvements are planned; for example, four interactive white boards are on order and these should make it easier for staff to demonstrate and for pupils to have more hands-on experience across a range of subjects.

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

75. This is good. ICT is used well to support learning in other subject areas. Year 1 pupils, for instance, use a paint program to produce repeated patterns in art. Year 3 produce newspaper headings and pages to support their literacy work. Year 6 pupils used computers to generate graphs and charts in a project supporting physical education, literacy, mathematics and science as they researched, reported and presented data relating to exercise and the human body.

## **HUMANITIES**

A total of two lessons were observed in this curriculum area: one each in history and geography and none in religious education. History and geography were sampled. Religious education is covered in a Section 23 report.

### **Geography**

76. Standards of work seen in Years 5 and 2 are as expected. Pupils' mapping skills are sound in both year groups. There is insufficient evidence to judge standards in Year 6 because the main part of their geography work is planned for the latter part of the summer term. The geography curriculum is inadequately planned. The subject is normally taught in blocks of time. Although pupils cover a sound range of topics and themes, the curriculum framework is poorly constructed and does not provide pupils with a balanced range of learning opportunities. The timing of the areas of study has not been planned in a coherent manner, and opportunities for pupils to develop their geographical knowledge and skills are spasmodic. For example, in some year groups pupils do not have any geography lessons until near the end of the academic year. Consequently, it is difficult to ensure that pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in a way that gets progressively harder. Prior to this year, the subject leader has not had many opportunities to lead developments. However, in the current year she has begun to develop her role appropriately and has identified the need to revise guidance on curriculum planning. However, the evaluation of standards and provision is at an early stage of development and appropriate assessment procedures are not in place.

### **History**

77. Standards are as expected nationally in both Years 2 and 6. Year 2 pupils' work shows that they can make comparisons between household items used long ago and their present-day equivalent and identify similarities and differences between them. They can use ICT appropriately to research the lives of famous people in history, such as Louis Braille and Helen Keller. Year 6 pupils' work shows that they have good factual knowledge about Ancient Greece and that they can use this to write in a comparative style about the merits of ancient Sparta and Athens as places to live in. History has quite a high profile in the school and a sound range of history topics is covered. For example, a large timeline in the Year 6 classroom identifies the key events of the twentieth century and makes reference to their historical significance. The accompanying display has a large number of artefacts from the first half of the last century, which have captured the interest of pupils and prompted much discussion. However, the subject co-ordinator acknowledges that the overall planning framework needs to be revised to ensure that pupils receive a more coherent and balanced curriculum. The subject leader is beginning to develop her role satisfactorily in line with the school's priorities but appropriate procedures for assessment and for evaluation of standards and provision are not yet in place.

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

A total of nine lessons were observed in this curriculum area: four in art and design and in music, one in physical education and none in design and technology. Physical education and design and technology were sampled.

#### **Art and design**

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils produce consistently good work and standards are above those expected nationally.
- Three-dimensional work is not as well developed as two-dimensional work.
- Pupils' work is highly valued by the school.
- There are no whole-school procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress.

## **Commentary**

78. Standards are above those typically found nationally in Years 2 and 6. The quality and range of pupils' two-dimensional work are good throughout the school, and better than their three-dimensional work. Pupils' achievement is good because their work is highly valued by the school and promoted well. They develop their skills and techniques, using a wide range of materials.
79. Teaching and learning are good. The quality of teaching and learning in observed lessons varied between good and very good. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. They and the teaching assistants are effective in supporting pupils in their learning of techniques and in developing their knowledge and understanding. Year 6 pupils use art pencils, watercolours, ceramic paints and ceramics, working in the style of Clarice Cliff. Discussions with pupils showed good understanding and some were drawing comparisons and contrasts with what they had previously studied about aboriginal art. Teachers manage pupils well and have high expectations of behaviour. They develop very good relationships with their pupils, using praise and encouragement very well to promote pupils' good attitudes to learning. Lessons are well planned and prepared and pupils are taught skills effectively. For example, skills of observational drawing were well developed in Year 5, combining texture, line, shape, form and space well.
80. The recent art exhibition organised by the school is a good example of how the school values pupils' work. Set up and mounted as a real exhibition, with work properly framed, numbered, catalogued and cross-referenced, it demonstrated the high quality of art that is produced through the school. Very many parents attended the exhibition. All pupils visited the exhibition at set times and it was clear to see the impact of the school's celebration of their work on their self-esteem.
81. The subject is well led and soundly managed. The subject leader is relatively new to the position. She is knowledgeable and already has a clear view of future priorities, having completed an audit and review of provision. She is aware that opportunities for three-dimensional art are not as well developed as they could be and has identified this as an area for development. Teachers know the pupils well but there are no whole-school procedures to enable teachers to record pupils' progress and development over time. Nevertheless, the school has maintained the good provision since the last inspection.

## **Design and technology**

82. The inspectors' review of work previously completed by the pupils indicates that standards are in line with national expectations in Years 2 and 6. There are examples of good standards of work being produced, such as Year 5 pupils' work on fairgrounds. Teachers' planning indicates that all elements of the National Curriculum are covered. However, the school has identified the need to undertake a review of its

curriculum framework and planning guidance to improve how pupils' skills are built upon as they move through the school. There are no whole-school procedures in place for assessing and recording how well pupils are developing their skills through the school.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good opportunities created for pupils to perform as members of a group.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning.

### **Commentary**

83. The lessons observed during the inspection were in Years 3 to 6. In these lessons, pupils' achievement was satisfactory and standards were similar to those typically found nationally. By Year 6, standards are in line with national expectations. Year 6 pupils recognise that music is composed as a result of a variety of stimuli. They listen carefully to a selection of contrasting pieces of music and are able to reflect on their personal response to each piece. They identify the feelings and moods that are common to many of the pupils and investigate the elements of the music that contribute to this.
84. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. All teachers teach music and are secure in their subject knowledge. Lessons are well planned and give pupils sound opportunities to take part in a variety of activities. For example, in Year 4 pupils learn about the length of notes and how these are represented and attempt to produce the rhythm of well-known songs. The high level of co-operation and the sense of fun in the lesson sustain pupils' interest and encourage them to persevere until they are successful. In all the lessons observed, pupils showed a high level of interest in what they were learning. The school choir and orchestra are well supported and enhance the provision for older pupils.
85. The subject is soundly led and managed. It is managed by a committed musician who also takes responsibility for the choir and the orchestra. She has completed an audit of provision and resources in the school and monitored teachers' planning but not standards. She feels music is gaining a higher profile, helped by the growing number of individual music lessons and a number of county-led initiatives to promote music in schools. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

## **Physical education**

86. Standards in the Year 2 lesson seen were similar to those typically found nationally. There is insufficient evidence to judge the standards reached by junior pupils. The school provides a broad curriculum and provision is enhanced by sound opportunities for pupils to be involved in swimming, extra-curricular activities and competitive matches and by coaching from outside specialists. However, there is inadequate guidance to help teachers plan lessons, and the schemes of work do not provide a sound basis for ensuring the progressive development of pupils' skills. Prior to this year the subject leader has not had many opportunities to fulfil her management role. However, she is keen to develop her role and has taken the first steps in improving

provision. For example, she has produced a curriculum overview that helps to ensure a broad curriculum. However, there are no whole-school procedures for assessing and recording how well pupils are developing their skills through the school.

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

87. No lessons were seen, but it is clear that under the direction of the new headteacher, provision in this area of the curriculum has been greatly enhanced. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' personal and social development and prepares pupils well for citizenship. Staff provide very good role models for the pupils and encourage them to think about rights and wrongs of school life in a positive way. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and positive values are strongly promoted through the school's programme for personal and social education. Recent innovations, that are built into this programme, include the Years 5 and 6 residential trips and the Years 3 and 4 away trips, which are designed to develop independence and self-reliance as well as foster community relationships. Pupils are encouraged to develop responsible attitudes in a range of roles introduced by the headteacher, as School Council members, prefects, librarians, playground Friends and members of the Lunchtime Squad. Pupils take these responsibilities seriously and sensibly. The school organises Junior Citizenship days, involving the local police and nurses. Circle time<sup>2</sup>, a well-structured set of certificates and rewards, frequent involvement of pupils and seeking and valuing their views and opinions are all a part of the very successful personal and social development of pupils. For example, having expressed concern over some of the toilets, Year 6 pupils have been asked to re-design them. The positive and caring ethos of the school and the consistent approach of all staff to making the pupils feel valued and respected are an integral part of the way that pupils' personal and social skills are promoted and developed.

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<sup>2</sup> During circle time, pupils sit in a circle and discuss personal feelings and thoughts.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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