

INSPECTION REPORT

ST WINEFRIDE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Neston

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111313

Headteacher: Mrs A P Brocklehurst

Lead inspector: Mr D S Roberts

Dates of inspection: 14 – 16 June 2005

Inspection number: 267969

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed primary
School category: Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils: 4 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 157

School address: Mellock Lane
Little Neston
Neston
Cheshire
Postcode: CH64 9RW

Telephone number: 0151 336 2468
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of Mr B Phelan
governors:
Date of previous 30 November 1998
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Winefride's is a little smaller than the average-sized primary school. It currently provides full-time education for 157 pupils from four to 11 years of age. There has recently been a significant increase in the number on roll due to the closure of another local school and the transfer of many of its pupils to this school. The proportion known to receive free school meals is currently below the national average, but there are strong indications that some families do not claim their entitlement. Less than one per cent of pupils are from families belonging to ethnic minority groups, none of whom are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is currently similar to the national average. On entry to the school, the intake of pupils represents a wide range of ability, but overall attainment levels are broadly similar to those found nationally. The school achieved the Activemark Gold Award and the Schools Achievement Award in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1743	D S Roberts	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language
19669	F Kennedy	Lay inspector	
17767	S Power	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage
14459	G Owen	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school. It takes very good care of its pupils and is highly successful in promoting their personal and social development. High quality teaching, particularly in English, mathematics and science, promotes high achievement by the pupils. The school is highly inclusive and works very effectively to provide a caring and supportive community where the Catholic ethos is strongly emphasised. It is very well regarded by its pupils, their parents and the local community, and provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- It gives children at the Foundation Stage (Reception) a very good start to their formal education.
- It enables pupils throughout the school to achieve highly, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well above average.
- The teaching is of high quality, particularly in the core subjects.
- The pupils' attitudes to learning are very good, and often excellent in classes for older pupils.
- The curriculum is of high quality and includes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The overall quality of leadership and management is of a high calibre, and outstanding leadership is provided by the headteacher.
- Although pupils achieve well in ICT as a subject, insufficient opportunities are created for them to make use of ICT as an integral part of learning in other subjects.

The school has built effectively on the good picture apparent at the time of the last inspection, and the weaknesses identified in the previous report have been addressed successfully. Taken over the last four years, the school's Year 6 National Curriculum test results indicate an improvement trend that is above that found nationally.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Throughout the school, pupils achieve very well in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainment. Children make very good progress at the Foundation Stage (Reception). By the time they enter Year 1, the great majority of them achieve the appropriate learning goals in all areas of learning, and many exceed them in communication, language and literacy, and in their mathematical and personal, social and emotional development. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are well above average in all aspects of English and in mathematics. Standards in science are above average by the end of Year 2, and well above average by the end of Year 6. The inspection

findings for Year 6 are consistent with National Curriculum Test results for the last three years. The inspection picture for the end of Year 2 is considerably better than the 2004 results, but consistent with the results of the most recent national tests (2005), although comparative information is not yet available. The improvement in pupils' performance in Year 2 is partly due to ability levels within the class, but also to the success of action taken by the school to bring about improvements during the past year. Throughout the school, pupils, at all levels of attainment, achieve well in information and communication technology (ICT), where overall standards are above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well in most other subjects, and particularly well in art and design and history, where standards for age are above average. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans.

Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are generally very good, and excellent in classes for older pupils. Pupils are highly enthusiastic and demonstrate a strong appetite for learning. **Their moral, social and cultural development is promoted very successfully, and provision for and pupils' progress in their spiritual development is outstanding.** The school works effectively to promote good attendance rates, which are usually above average. The attendance rates for the most recent academic year fell below those found nationally because a particularly high proportion of pupils were affected by illness.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a high quality of education. It makes very good curricular provision and provides a very good programme of extra-curricular activities. All aspects of the curriculum are generally covered very effectively, although there is scope for increasing opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning in other subjects. Very good provision is made for the pupils' personal, social and health education, and the school is highly effective in ensuring that all pupils have equality of access and opportunity in all aspects of provision. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very effectively, enabling them to achieve very well in relation to their ability. **Teaching is generally very good**, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and very effective teaching in art and design and history enables pupils to achieve above average standards for their age. The strong emphasis placed on promoting literacy and numeracy skills in work across the curriculum contributes significantly towards high standards in these key areas of learning. Good teaching also provides pupils with a good grasp of key skills in ICT. Very good teaching at the Foundation Stage enables children to settle quickly and achieve very well in all areas of learning. Throughout the school, teaching assistants and voluntary helpers work very effectively with class teachers to meet the needs of all pupils. The highly effective use of assessment to help pupils to improve is a very strong feature in the teaching, contributing significantly towards the pupils' high achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is of a high calibre. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is strongly supported by a very capable deputy headteacher and highly effective governing body.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is very well regarded by parents and pupils. Parents feel that the school is well led and managed. They are of the opinion that their children make good progress due to good teaching and the requirement to work hard. They appreciate strongly the good range of learning activities outside the classroom. They are of the view that their children are treated fairly, and are comfortable in approaching the school when problems arise. Parents

of children starting school feel that good arrangements are in place to help their child to settle. Pupils appreciate the help that their teachers give them to improve and particularly enjoy finding out new things in lessons. They feel that teachers listen to their ideas and trust them to do things on their own. They feel that they have to work hard, but acknowledge the help they get when difficulties arise. A minority feel that some lessons could be more interesting.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- Ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to use ICT to support and enhance their learning in other subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve **very well** throughout the school and, by the time they reach the end of Year 6, standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are well above those found nationally. The school has built effectively on the good picture apparent at the time of the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children at the Foundation Stage (Reception), achieve very well.
- In Years 1 to 6, pupils achieve highly in English, mathematics and science, where standards by the end of Year 6 are well above average.
- Pupils develop very good literacy and numeracy skills, and achieve well in ICT.
- Standards in art and design and in history are above average.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.

Commentary

- 1 Very good teaching in Reception enables children to achieve very well. By the time they enter Year 1, overall standards are above average for the children's age. Most achieve the appropriate early learning goals in all areas of learning, and many achieve above the levels expected of them in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and in their personal, social and emotional development.
- 2 In Years 1 to 6, pupils achieve highly, in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainment, in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science. By the end of Year 2, standards for age are above average in science, and well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This is a much better picture than that presented by the 2004 National Curriculum test results, but consistent with the results of the most recent national tests taken in 2005. These results indicate a significant increase in the proportion of pupils exceeding national levels for their age, with 55% achieving Level 3 in reading, 34% in writing and 48% in mathematics. The improvements are due partly to higher ability levels of pupils within the year group, but also to the effectiveness of action taken by the school to raise standards following the publication of the 2004 Year 2 national test results.
- 3 By the end of Year 6, standards are well above the average found nationally in English, mathematics and science. The inspection findings are consistent with the results of Year 6 National Curriculum tests for the last three years, which showed the pupils' performance in all three subjects to be very high compared with the national average. Taken over four years, the combined National Curriculum test results for English, mathematics and science, at the end of Year 6, indicate a rate of improvement which is above the national trend. The same results indicate no significant variations in pupils' performance in terms of gender.
- 4 In information and communication technology (ICT), pupils at both key stages achieve well. Standards for age are average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well in other subjects, and particularly well in art and design

and history, where standards exceed the average for pupils' ages. The highly successful way in which literacy and numeracy skills are promoted during work in other subjects is a very strong feature in the school, which contributes considerably to the pupils' very good grasp of key skills in these areas.

- 5 Very effective co-operation between class teachers, teaching assistants and voluntary helpers enables the school to meet the needs of all pupils, in terms of gender, background and levels of attainment. This enables pupils, including those who are particularly gifted, to achieve very well in relation to their capabilities. The very effective way in which learning difficulties are quickly identified and appropriate programmes put in place to address them, enables pupils with special educational needs to achieve highly and make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.0 (18.2)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	14.4 (16.8)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	15.3 (18.4)	16.2 (16.3)

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

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.1 (30.8)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	29.9 (30.3)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	30.7 (30.8)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 21 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils show **very good** attitudes to the school, and behave very well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very successfully. Relationships throughout the school are very good. There were no exclusions in the past year.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and keen to participate in lessons.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- Behaviour is very good.
- The pupils' spiritual development is excellent, and their moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Punctuality is very good.

Commentary

- 6 As at the time of the last inspection, this aspect of the school is very strong. The pupils approach their work and play with real enthusiasm. Their attitudes to learning are very good overall and outstanding in Years 4, 5 and 6, reflecting the positive influences experienced during their time in the school. Behaviour in lessons is of a

high standard. Pupils work with sustained concentration and participate enthusiastically in class discussion. The very good relationships within the school community create a warm and friendly atmosphere in which the pupils trust and care for one another. Pupils work well independently and co-operate very effectively when working with a partner or as part of a small group. All the adults working in the school provide very good role models for the pupils.

- 7 Children at the Foundation Stage are on course to exceed the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development by the time they enter Year 1. They are developing a good level of independence and are learning to work and play co-operatively with one another. They understand the need to be kind to the other children, and are proud to put a shell into a pot when the staff notice an act of kindness. Year 6 pupils set an excellent example for reception children; for instance, older individuals accompany a younger partner into the hall, and sit with them for assembly.
- 8 Older pupils also support the Year 1 and Year 2 pupils in the playground by organising games and generally supporting play activities. Behaviour during outdoor play is of a high standard throughout the school. The pupils very much enjoy play times, which are enhanced by a wide range of play equipment, very colourful playground markings, zoned areas for specific activities and a large field for use in fine weather.
- 9 The school makes excellent provision for the pupils' spiritual development. In a whole school assembly based on 'symbols', the pupils were skilfully led into the theme of Holy Communion, and those pupils who were soon to make their first Holy Communion were presented to the rest of the school. A very moving sense of spirituality was engendered by the pupils' response, their excellent behaviour, their reverence during prayer and the quality and tone of their singing.
- 10 The school makes very good provision for the pupils' cultural development. As part of the programme of study for religious education the school organises a "faith week" on two occasions each year, when pupils celebrate major world religions, with visiting speakers, special assemblies and many other related activities. This year, the pupils studied Judaism and Islam. In the week devoted to Jewish studies, the pupils made unleavened bread for a whole-school Seder meal. During the Islamic week, the pupils made a presentation during assembly, which was enhanced by relevant artefacts. The pupils' cultural development is also promoted very successfully through the work in English, art and design, design and technology, history, geography and music. It is further enhanced by external expertise such as that provided by a visiting Indian dancer, who explained the significance of aspects of some of the dances and demonstrated the wearing of the sari.
- 11 The school makes very good provision for the pupils' moral and social development. In accordance with its Mission Statement, the school seeks to: "Inspire children to become witnesses of God's loving care within their homes, school, parish and beyond". Christian values are reinforced in all aspects of school life. Pupils are aware of other children's difficulties and willing to help in any way they can. They are keen to help their teachers with day- to-day tasks in the classroom and, in the case of older pupils, to take responsibility for whole school duties such as distributing class registers, organising the library, operating the overhead projector and serving at the altar in the weekly Mass which is held in school. The pupils reach out to the wider community through fund raising for a range of local, national and international

charities. Participation in various activities related to 'Fair Trade', for example a school breakfast at which Fair Trade products were served, help to extend the pupils' understanding of global citizenship.

- 12 Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Attendance for the last reporting year fell below the national median on account of severe medical problems suffered by a number of the pupils. However, the current attendance rate is satisfactory and the rate of unauthorised absence is low, and in line with the national average for primary schools. Punctuality is very good. The pupils arrive on time in the mornings and lessons start promptly.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.6	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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is **very good**. The school provides a high quality curriculum for its pupils and works very successfully to promote their academic and all-round development.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are of a **very good** quality, and arrangements for assessing pupils' progress are very effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High quality teaching at the Foundation Stage, in Reception, gives children a very good start to their formal education.
- Teaching in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is very effective.
- Good teaching in ICT enables pupils to achieve well.
- Very good teaching in art and design and history contributes to above average standards in the subjects.
- Very effective co-operation between class teachers and teacher assistants enables pupils at all levels of attainment to achieve very well.

Commentary

- 13 High quality teaching in Reception helps children to make a very good start to their formal education. The strong emphasis placed on promoting children's personal, social and emotional development contributes significantly towards their increasing confidence, and enables them to make rapid progress in all areas of learning. They work happily with other children and develop an increasing sense of independence. The teaching achieves a good balance between providing information and guidance and creating opportunities for pupils to learn through a variety of well thought out learning activities. The valuable learning which takes place at this stage contributes considerably towards the high achievement of pupils at a later stage in their primary education, particularly in English and mathematics.

- 14 In Years 1 to 6, very effective teaching in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science enables pupils to achieve highly, and good teaching in ICT enables pupils to achieve well. This means that pupils generally acquire a very good grasp of the key skills of learning by the time they reach the end of Year 6. In English, mathematics and science, teachers show very good levels of knowledge and understanding and draw effectively on national curricular guidance, which is adapted appropriately to meet the pupils' needs. In ICT, the high level of commitment to developing personal expertise, shown by teachers and support staff, is of considerable benefit to the pupils. The very effective use made of interactive whiteboards, to introduce lessons and new learning, is a good example of this. In literacy lessons, for example, the introductory text can now be presented in a highly stimulating manner, with print which is clearly visible to all pupils, and opportunities for pupils to participate increased significantly. In other subjects, the teaching is usually of at least good quality. Teaching in art and design and in history is very good, and this is reflected in pupils' high achievement and above average standards for age.
- 15 Very effective assessment arrangements, and the constructive use of assessment information to set appropriately challenging work, are strong features in the teaching, particularly in English and mathematics. In these two subjects, assessment information is used carefully to set individual and group targets for improvement, which are shared with the pupils and their parents. These targets give pupils a good understanding of their own learning, and enable teachers to measure the pupils' progress with greater accuracy. The very effective use of homework contributes significantly to pupils' progress. Parents are informed of areas to be covered in various subjects during the term ahead, enabling them to play a part in their children's learning.
- 16 Throughout the school, teachers and support staff work very hard. They co-operate very effectively to meet the needs of pupils, in terms of gender, race, background and prior attainment. They take care to value pupils' efforts and to provide encouragement when difficulties arise. This approach increases pupils' confidence and helps them to develop positive attitudes to learning. Pupils with special educational needs are helped to make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans, and the increasing emphasis placed on supporting particularly gifted and talented pupils is reflected in their very good progress.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	19 (56%)	12 (35%)	2 (6%)	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.

The curriculum

The school provides a **very good** curriculum. It provides a wide range of learning activities that meet the needs of all pupils. There are very good opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom and enrich pupils' experiences. Resources are generally good, and the accommodation is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision is made for children at the Foundation Stage.
- The curriculum is fully inclusive and provides equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' personal and social development is promoted very effectively.
- Pupils are prepared very well for the next the next stage of their education.
- A very good range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, is provided.
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to use ICT in work across the curriculum.

Commentary

- 17 There are clear policies in place for all subjects, providing teachers with useful guidance. All statutory requirements are met. The curriculum at the Foundation Stage is very good. The strong emphasis placed on promoting the children's personal, social and emotional development helps them to settle quickly and work confidently in all areas of learning. The highly successful provision made for communication, language and literacy and children's mathematical development at this early stage of learning makes a considerable contribution towards their progress throughout the school.
- 18 Throughout the school, the curriculum is well planned and structured, and very good use is made of assessment information to set individual targets for improvement for pupils in English and mathematics. The curriculum for these two subjects is based securely on the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Very good use is made of national guidance which is often adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. Each subject is given an appropriate amount of time, and teachers and support staff work together very effectively to enhance learning opportunities for all pupils. Teachers make very good use of interactive whiteboards to support learning in many subjects. In general, however, insufficient opportunities are created for pupils to use ICT to support aspects of their work across the curriculum.
- 19 The highly inclusive nature of the curriculum results in very good provision for all pupils, taking care to meet their particular requirements in terms of gender, race, background and prior attainment. Provision for personal and social development is very good. The 'Here I Am' programme, promotes consideration for everyone, as well as promoting their understanding of relationships. Honesty and respect for others are consistently reinforced and good behaviour is encouraged on a daily basis by all staff.
- 20 Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Learning difficulties and individual needs are quickly identified and an appropriate programme of work put in place to bring about improvements. Very good quality individual education plans include well thought out targets that are specific, realistic and measurable. Parents and pupils are appropriately involved in the process.
- 21 Pupils are prepared very well for the next stage in their education and teachers work closely with staff in the receiving schools, in order to ensure a smooth transition at age eleven. Curricular provision is considerably enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities, which is recognised by the prestigious Activemark Gold award. Participation in inter-school matches and competitions contributes significantly to pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- 22 The accommodation is generally satisfactory, and staff work hard and successfully to overcome difficulties caused by space restriction and lack of storage. A rich, stimulating learning environment has been created in classrooms and corridors, and outdoor facilities are good with easy access to a good size playing field. Resources for learning are generally good and very good in some subjects.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a **very good** level care for its pupils. It gives them excellent support, advice and guidance, based on highly effective arrangements for monitoring their academic and all-round development. Procedures for seeking and acting upon pupils' views are very good. Induction arrangements for pupils are very effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides its pupils with a safe and healthy learning environment.
- Pupils are provided with excellent support, advice and guidance.
- The school makes very good arrangements for seeking and acting upon pupils' views.
- Induction arrangements for pupils are very good.

Commentary

- 23 The school has built successfully on the many strengths identified in the last inspection report, and the level of care provided for the pupils is high. Child protection procedures are very good, adhering to guidelines provided by the local education authority, and all staff receive appropriate training in child protection matters. The school building and grounds are well maintained, fire procedures are displayed clearly and any accidents to pupils are recorded carefully. Regular health and safety inspections of the building are carried out and potential hazards are dealt with effectively.
- 24 Very good induction procedures help the youngest children to settle quickly and happily into the reception class and ensure that children joining the school at other times are very well supported by the staff and the pupils. For example, the pupils who joined the school when another local school closed, received a warm welcome from the church, the parent body and everyone connected with the school and were integrated very successfully in a short space of time.
- 25 The Catholic ethos is paramount in all of the school's work. All members of the school community are valued, in accordance with the Mission Statement, resulting in a very happy, supportive community in which pupils and adults alike are treated with a high level of respect. This aspect of the school was praised by parents during the inspection. Behaviour and relationships throughout the school are very good. The whole school behaviour policy is implemented consistently by teaching and support staff., who work together in harmony and provide very good role models for the pupils. The pupils themselves draw up the classroom rules and have a good understanding of why rules are needed inside school and in society. The whole-school 'golden rules' are few in number and well thought out. Pupils are rewarded, in assembly, for working hard, achieving their personal best and being fair, kind, helpful and sportsmanlike.
- 26 The school is very inclusive and works hard and successfully to ensure that all pupils are treated fairly and included and involved in all aspects of school life. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Individual education plans (IEPs) are in place, in accordance with the Code of Practice for special educational needs. The IEPs are very detailed and recognise the pupils' strengths as well as their difficulties.

- 27 Provision for the pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is excellent. Through lessons in many areas of the curriculum, in particular science and physical education, the pupils are taught how to care for their own health and well being. The carefully planned programmes of study include nutrition, sun awareness, dental care, aspects of personal safety, the importance of regular exercise and personal hygiene and the dangers associated with smoking and alcohol and drug misuse. A wide range of visiting specialists, including the school nurse and police and fire officers, contribute very effectively to this aspect of the school's work. The Year 6 pupils visit the Countess of Chester hospital for instruction in basic first aid. Last year's Year 6 also visited the council chamber in Ellesmere Port and gained a good insight into how local government operates.
- 28 The pupils are taught how important it is to care for the natural world. Their environmental awareness is heightened by helping to tend the school's vegetable garden. Each year, pupils in Year 1 choose which vegetables they would like to grow and, at harvest time, they enjoy a meal made from the harvested crop. This initiative also reinforces the school's healthy eating policy.
- 29 The school makes very good arrangements for seeking and acting upon the pupils' views. A school council is well established and has influenced a number of school improvements. A school council suggestion box is situated in a prominent place, enabling pupils to put forward their ideas and make known their concerns. Classes from Year 2 to Year 6 are represented on the council. The minutes of the school council meetings, which are held fortnightly, are distributed to all the classes. Circle time takes place throughout the school, giving the pupils valuable opportunities to discuss important issues, contribute to school improvement and share their feelings, their joys and their problems.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established a **very good** partnership with parents, and very strong links with the church, the local community and other local schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school keeps parents very well informed about the life and work of the school and about their children's standards and progress.
- Parents make an excellent contribution to their children's learning at school and at home.
- Procedures to ensure parental satisfaction and to deal with any concerns and complaints are excellent.
- Links with the church and the local community are very strong.
- The school works in close partnership with other local schools.

Commentary

- 30 The quality of the information provided for parents is very good. The school prospectus and the governing body's annual report to parents now comply fully with statutory requirements. As at the time of the last inspection, the home-school agreement, which is completed for every child entering the school, emphasises the importance of the home-school partnership in seeking to establish a happy, caring environment inside school and in achieving high standards of work, behaviour,

attendance and punctuality. Parents are asked to avoid taking holidays during term time. The curriculum overview, given to parents at the beginning of every term, encourages and equips parents to support their children's learning. Formal and informal meetings with parents, open days, newsletters and notice boards help to keep parents fully informed about the life and work of the school and about their children's standards and progress. Pupils' annual written reports are helpful and informative and now report consistently on all subjects of the National Curriculum. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.

- 31 The school makes excellent arrangements for ensuring parental satisfaction. Before and during the inspection the parents praised the school highly for the approachability of the headteacher and the staff and for the way in which the school makes them feel welcome, listens and responds to their concerns and helps them to support their children's learning.
- 32 Parents make an excellent contribution to their children's education. They give very strong support to the home-school reading scheme and to the homework policy in general. Parents find their children's homework and reading diaries very helpful in this respect and as an aid to home-school communications generally. Parents and other volunteers give freely of their time to assist in lessons, listen to readers, accompany staff and pupils on educational visits and help with after-school clubs. They also come into school, on a rota basis, to mount the pupils' work for display, paste work into pupils' books and assist with a variety of administration tasks. Parents support the religious life of the school by joining in assemblies and the weekly Mass which is held inside school.
- 33 The parents' association is very active in arranging social and fund raising events for the pupils and their families and does much to foster good relationships between the parents, the school and the church. Members of the association also tend the school garden and help with painting and general maintenance of the school building. The money generously donated to the school by the parents' association greatly enhances teaching and learning opportunities for the staff and the pupils.
- 34 The school has established very good links with the church and the local community. The parish priest conducts a Mass in school every week to which parents and parishioners are invited. He organises an after-school football club for the pupils and takes an enthusiastic interest in all aspects of school life. The sacramental programmes of Forgiveness and Holy Communion are prepared in school, and children from other schools also attend. The parish catechist, the parish priest and the year group teacher organise a 6-week course for parents of children preparing for the sacraments. Parish and community events, such as the annual Christmas Fair, are well supported by the school. The school has also established links with the 'Friends' group of a local park and contributed to initiatives to renovate the park.
- 35 Very good links have been established with other local schools. Year 6 pupils take part in an annual retreat day with pupils from other Catholic schools in the area. 'Gifted and Talented' days are organised with other local schools and staff meet regularly with teachers from other primary schools for in-service training and to plan musical and sporting events. Very good links with local secondary schools, particularly Chester Catholic High School, facilitate a smooth transfer, for the Year 6 pupils, to the next stage of their education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is **very good**. The headteacher provides excellent leadership, and is strongly supported by a very effective deputy headteacher and hard working staff. The knowledgeable and highly effective governing body co-operates very successfully with the headteacher to ensure that all statutory requirements are met and to provide an equitable and inclusive school where every child matters.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership.
- The highly committed and well-informed governing body makes a considerable contribution to the school's success.
- The deputy headteacher and co-ordinators for subjects and aspects of the curriculum provide very effective leadership.
- Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and the quality of provision throughout the school are very effective.
- Strong emphasis is placed on self-evaluation and the professional development of staff.

Commentary

- 36 The excellent leadership provided by the headteacher is a major factor in this school's success. She provides inspirational leadership through her high quality teaching, very hard work as a subject and aspect co-ordinator, clear vision, excellent knowledge of the pupils and unstinting determination to make the best possible provision for them. She is supported very effectively by the deputy headteacher, who contributes significantly towards the very positive ethos of the school.
- 37 The highly committed and well-informed governing body achieves a good balance between providing support and promoting high expectation. Its members are very aware of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. The governing body works very successfully with the headteacher to meet all statutory requirements, ensure that the school provides equality of opportunity for all of its pupils, and to create a very supportive community where the Catholic ethos is strongly emphasised.
- 38 Well-established procedures are in place for communicating with and consulting staff, governors, parents and pupils. The views of all are taken account of when identifying priorities for inclusion in the school improvement plan. Targets for improvements are expressed clearly and include resource, cost and time implications, as well as appropriate criteria for measuring success. The headteacher and governing body, together with the highly efficient school administration, provide effective financial management of all resources. This enables the best use to be made of money to address the most relevant educational priorities. The school is constantly seeking ways of improving provision for the pupils. Self-evaluation procedures are well established and very effective, and strong emphasis is placed on staff training and development. Teachers and support staff benefit from opportunities to attend training designed to enhance their skills in various areas of the curriculum. All of these procedures and arrangements contribute towards the very good provision made for the pupils and their high achievement.
- 39 Co-ordinators for subjects and aspects of provision provide very effective leadership and management in their areas of responsibilities. They work closely with the headteacher and governing body to monitor all aspects of provision and ensure that

pupils are provided with a high quality curriculum. Since the last inspection, very good progress has been made in strengthening the arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, which are now highly effective. In addition, the pupils' progress is tracked and monitored very carefully, from an early stage, contributing significantly towards their high achievement.

- 40 The management of all resources, including staff and accommodation, is very effective, and learning resources are generally of good quality. The limitations of the accommodation, particularly space restriction and lack of storage, are successfully overcome through the hard work of staff, ensuring that curricular opportunities for the pupils are not restricted. The governing body is fully aware of accommodation deficiencies and is working hard to improve the situation. All areas of the school are clean and well maintained by a highly efficient caretaker and cleaning staff. The quality of the learning environment is considerably enhanced by displays of pupils' work, which are used effectively to support pupils' learning, celebrate their achievement and encourage further enquiry.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	431,295
Total expenditure	456,746
Expenditure per pupil	2,909

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	34,741
Balance carried forward to the next	9,290

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage (Reception) is **very good**. This indicates continuing improvements since the last inspection, particularly in the development of children's communication, language and literacy and in their creative development. When children start school, their attainment levels are broadly average. Very good teaching enables them to make rapid good progress and generally achieve standards which are above average by the time they enter Year 1.

Very good arrangements are in place for introducing children to full time education. Most children attend the adjoining pre-school group and so transition to full time school is managed smoothly and sensitively. The accommodation for the Foundation Stage is bright and spacious and enhanced by colourful and stimulating displays of children's work. The recently enhanced outdoor play area provides very good facilities for children to develop their physical skills within a safe and well-designed area.

The class teacher and the classroom assistant co-operate very effectively to implement the Foundation Stage curriculum. High quality teamwork is a central factor in the very good achievement of children in most areas of learning. Assessment procedures are very good. Staff know the children very well and are able to plan very effectively to meet the learning needs of children of all abilities.

The Foundation Stage is led and managed very effectively. A very good curriculum is provided, which is particularly successful in promoting children's writing skills, mathematical development and their personal, social and emotional development. A strong feature is the very good balance that is achieved between adult led activities and child initiated activity within a central theme. Children's interest and imagination is stimulated very well in play contexts such as the 'Rainforest' play area and in 'hunting for minibeasts' in sand and water activities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults are very effective in promoting confidence and self esteem.
- Carefully structured routines and consistently applied rules help children to feel secure.
- Children's independence and capacity for social interaction are promoted very well.

Commentary

41 Teaching in this area of learning is very good and enables children to achieve very well in developing good relationships with adults and with other children. Most children display high levels of confidence and self-esteem. They converse fluently and confidently with adults and each other in formal and informal situations and cooperate very well in play situations, showing concern and empathy with the feelings of others. The carefully structured routines are very effective in promoting independence and group cooperation. Children register their presence at the start of

the day, using the interactive whiteboard with great confidence, dress and undress themselves independently for physical activity, organise themselves very well in independent play activity and tidy up at the end of the session. They understand the class rules and cooperate very well with the established systems. They know how many children can be engaged in activities, don aprons independently in the wet area and take turns in speaking in formal situations. The standards achieved by the time children enter Year 1 are generally above the goals expected for this area of learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Writing skills are taught very well.
- Children develop very good speaking and listening skills.
- Interest in books and reading is promoted very effectively.

Commentary

- 42 Highly effective teaching promotes very good achievement by children and results in above average skills in reading, writing and speaking and listening. Children enter school with average language skills and achieve very well, making rapid progress in their independent reading and writing skills during their time in Reception. By the time they enter Year 1, most children achieve and many exceed the expected goals for this area of learning.
- 43 Very good opportunities are provided for children to develop their speaking. They are encouraged to answer questions, give explanations, make comments and voice opinions in many formal and informal situations and become very articulate as a result.
- 44 Reading skills are taught very well through a carefully structured phonics programme that is very effective in developing children's knowledge of letters and sounds. A love of books is fostered very well, and opportunities for promoting children's literacy skills are taken very effectively throughout the curriculum. Children are encouraged to join in with the reading of text by the teacher, anticipating what might come next, and recognising rhyme and pattern within the text. All of this work contributes significantly towards their very good progress in reading. Big books are used very effectively to promote interest in non-fiction texts, such as in finding out about minibeasts in a science-based session. Books are shared regularly with adults at home and in school, enabling children to maintain a very good rate of progress.
- 45 Writing skills are taught very well, and children rapidly become confident in expressing themselves in writing within a wide range of contexts. Systematic teaching of key writing skills, such as letter formation, punctuation and the phonetic structure of language, enables children to make very good progress in writing. They write freely and confidently, producing recognisable words and sentences in writing for different purposes in formal and informal situations. Consequently their writing skills are above average by the time they enter Year1.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Numeracy skills are taught very well.
- Children achieve very well in counting and calculating.

Commentary

46 Very good teaching enables children to achieve very well, and develop counting and calculating skills that are above average. Children develop good strategies for counting and calculating. Many already recognise number bonds to 10 and can count accurately to twenty and well beyond. Skilled teaching makes learning interesting and enjoyable; in a very good lesson, children took great delight in correcting the 'Muddled Monkey' puppet when he made mistakes. Many recognised patterns in a 100 number square, and were able to count in 10s to 100. Children capable of higher attainment were challenged very well and showed that they could double numbers as large as 20 and 40. By the end of the session, higher attaining children could make up number sentences using the correct symbols, and could explain why $3 + 2$ was the same as $2 + 3$. No direct teaching on shape, space and measures was observed, but play activities gave good opportunities for children to compare size and match pattern and shape. By the time they enter Year 1, the great majority have reached the expected goals for this area and many are already well beyond this level.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Computing skills are developed effectively.
- Children's environmental awareness is promoted successfully.
- Teaching provides children with very good opportunities for learning about themselves and their place in the world.

Commentary

47 Teaching is good, enabling children to achieve well in developing their understanding of the world around them. Frequent opportunities for children to use the computer and interactive whiteboard enable them to develop confidence and increasing skills in their use of computer technology. Children also make good progress in learning about themselves and how to be healthy. The provision of stimulating and exciting learning contexts is a strong feature in this area of learning. A particularly good example of this was seen when children were able to observe chicks hatching at first hand, and to play a part in caring for them in the classroom. During the inspection, children collected minibeasts from the school environment and showed great delight in learning about their characteristics through observing them at close quarters. Experience of construction toys and opportunities to build imaginative structures using box modelling techniques enable children to learn successfully about

construction and joining methods. As a result of these wide ranging opportunities, most children achieve the goals expected by the time they enter Year 1.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision is made for children to develop their manipulative skills.
- Children enjoy physical activity and behave very well in lessons.

Commentary

48 Teaching and learning are very good and children achieve very well. Children make very good progress in developing their manual dexterity and in exploring their own potential for movement through a very carefully planned programme of activities. By the time they enter Year 1, the great majority of children have reached, and many have exceeded, the expected goals for this area of learning. Very good provision for developing manual skills is a strong feature of the provision. An example of this was when children used a carefully chosen range of implements to 'fish' for mini beasts in the water tray. The effectiveness of their learning is evident in the great dexterity and control they show in threading beads, holding pencils and paintbrushes and in shaping dough to create caterpillars. In a very good session in the hall, children showed good spatial awareness and physical coordination in creating a dance, portraying the life cycle of a caterpillar.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for creative expression are an integral part of daily activities.
- In some instances, imaginative play would benefit from more intervention by adults.

Commentary

49 Teaching is good, and enables children to achieve well in developing their creativity. The great majority reach the expected goals for creative development by the time they enter Year 1. Teachers' planning for imaginative, musical and artistically expressive opportunities is a good feature of the provision. All possible opportunities are exploited for children to sing and listen to music. As a result, they sing a very good range of songs tunefully and with expression. Movement to music is taught well and provides good opportunities for children to realise the expressive potential in body movements. Children make good progress in their drawing and painting skills due to regular experience with a good range of drawing media. Close observational drawings and paintings of feathers and fruit indicate good learning and achievement in this area. Imaginative role-play situations, such as a rain forest campsite, are planned well to link with the main teaching themes. Some of the activities would benefit from more intervention by adults in order to maximise the learning potential created by these experiences.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Highly effective planning and very good assessment procedures contribute significantly towards the pupils' high achievement.
- Pupils' literacy skills are well above average.
- Throughout the school, the teaching is of high quality.
- The pupils' speaking and listening, reading and writing skills are developed very effectively.
- By Year 6, the quality of extended writing is excellent.
- Highly effective co-operation between teachers, teacher assistants and voluntary helpers ensures that the needs of all pupils are met fully.
- The subject co-ordinator provides very effective leadership and management.
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to use ICT to support their work in the subject.

Commentary

- 50 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve highly in all aspects of English. By the end of Year 2, standards for age are well above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. The inspection picture is considerably better than the 2004 National Curriculum test results, but consistent with the results of the most recent National Curriculum tests taken in 2005. These results indicate that 55% of the pupils achieved Level 3 in reading and 34% achieved the same level in writing. The improvement in pupils' performance is due partly to differences in the ability levels of various year groups and, more significantly, to the success of action taken by the school to raise standards following the publication of the 2004 results.
- 51 Pupils also achieve highly in Years 3 to 6, and by the end of Year 6, standards for age are well above average, and consistent with national test results for the last three years. These results showed the pupils' performance to be very high compared with the national average and also with that of pupils in similar schools. The school has built successfully on the very good picture apparent at the time of the last inspection, when standards at the end of Year 6 were judged to be well above average.
- 52 Speaking and listening skills are developed very effectively throughout the school. The strong emphasis placed on role-play activities in the early stages of learning helps pupils to develop confidence in expressing themselves. The interactive approach taken in many subjects, creates numerous opportunities for pupils to contribute by answering questions and through discussion. By Year 6, the pupils show well developed skills in varying expression and vocabulary to engage the listener, and are able to use their skills confidently to express views and ask questions. The development of reading skills is promoted very successfully in work across the curriculum and at home, as well as in English lessons. The very good grasp of phonic skills acquired by younger pupils gives them a good knowledge and understanding of the sounds that make up words and contributes significantly towards their rapid progress. By the end of their time in the

school, pupils read accurately and fluently with very good expression, and derive great enjoyment from their reading. They talk confidently about their preferences, in terms of authors and types of books, and explain enthusiastically why they like particular characters in the various stories they have read.

- 53 The high levels of competence shown by pupils in speaking and listening and reading contribute enormously to the excellent progress which they make in developing writing skills. By the end of Year 6, the quality of pupils' extended writing is outstanding. The pupils benefit greatly from opportunities to write about a wide range of topics and for a variety of different purposes. Evidence of work produced during the year included some splendid book reviews, showing a high level of sophistication and excellent vocabulary, and very well written autobiographies, recounting events chronologically in a most stimulating manner. By the end of Year 6, most pupils' writing is lively and thoughtful, makes correct use of punctuation and demonstrates well developed handwriting that is neat and legible. The writing of a substantial proportion of higher attaining pupils is rich and varied, and is highly successful in engaging and sustaining the reader's interest.
- 54 The high quality of teaching is the most important factor in pupils' rapid progress. Very effective co-operation between class teachers and support staff helps them to meet successfully the particular needs of individuals and groups of pupils. Highly effective planning and very careful assessment of pupils' progress and needs contribute significantly to pupils' high achievement in relation to their capabilities and prior learning. All staff take careful account of the pupils' race, gender and ability, and give close attention to monitoring pupils' performance in order to ensure that they work to their potential. The very successful use of work completed at home to extend learning is also a strong feature in the provision. Teachers and support staff are highly successful in ensuring that all pupils are included and involved appropriately in all aspects of the subject. Very good provision is made for those with special educational needs, who make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The success of the emphasis placed on helping gifted and talented pupils to make progress is reflected in their increasingly very good achievement.
- 55 Very effective subject leadership and management is a key factor in the high quality provision made in the subject. Very good curricular planning and highly effective procedures for monitoring pupils' progress, ensure that pupils, at all levels of attainment, work to their potential.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 56 Very good use is made of opportunities for promoting pupils' literacy skills during work in other subjects, contributing to their well above average literacy skills. This is particularly apparent in history, geography and religious education, where pupils regularly write at length about aspects of their investigations and studies. ICT is used very effectively by teachers, to introduce lessons and new learning. The very good use of interactive whiteboards to capture pupils' attention and facilitate a high level of participation during the introductory elements of literacy lessons, for example, makes a significant contribution to pupils' achievement. Although there are some good examples of pupils using ICT to enhance their learning in English, this is not a consistent feature throughout the school and there is scope for a more systematic approach to ensure that ICT opportunities are identified as an integral part of planning in the subject.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in mathematics are high throughout the school.
- All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress.
- Consistently high quality teaching ensures pupils' very good progress.
- Regular monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work has a positive impact on standards.
- A systematic approach to assessment and rigorous analysis of test results help teachers to identify accurately the aspects of the subject that need to be improved.
- Teaching promotes very positive attitudes by pupils towards learning in mathematics.
- A good balance is achieved between the different aspects of mathematics.
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to use ICT to support and enhance their work in mathematics.

Commentary

- 57 Pupils achieve very well throughout the school, and standards in Years 2 and 6 are well above average for the pupils' age. The school has maintained the high standards seen during the previous inspection. Basic skills are taught very effectively. During their time in the school, pupils develop a highly effective recall of number facts, a very good mathematical vocabulary and a capacity to select appropriate strategies to solve challenging problems. The performance of pupils in the current Year 2 is considerably better than the picture presented by the 2004 National Curriculum test results, but consistent with the results of national tests taken this year, although comparative information is not yet available. These results indicate that 48% of Year 2 pupils achieved Level 3 in mathematics. Throughout the school, work is matched closely to the needs of pupils, contributing to their rapid progress. The success of the school's work to ensure that higher attainers are challenged effectively is reflected in the substantial proportion of pupils achieving higher levels than those expected for their age.
- 58 Pupils requiring additional support make very good progress. Class teachers are aware of their needs and provide work that is well matched to their abilities. Much care is taken to vary the difficulty of the questions asked in oral session, and

teaching assistants make an effective contribution to the high achievement of these pupils.

- 59 The overall quality of teaching is very good. Lessons are characterised by lively introductions that capture pupils' interest and imagination. A rapid pace is maintained throughout, and teachers ask appropriately challenging questions that extend pupils' learning. Work is carefully prepared and is well matched to the abilities of the pupils. The time at the beginning and at the end of lessons is very well used by teachers. They often make excellent use of interactive white boards to both capture pupils' interest and to extend their understanding of mathematics generally. Work is regularly checked and progress is monitored carefully, in order to identify areas for further improvements. Good coverage of all areas of mathematics is achieved, and pupils are often provided with challenging opportunities to use and apply their mathematical understanding in everyday situations. For example, the task set for Year 6 pupils to provide accurate holiday proposals for several different families, taking account of numerous factors, was both challenging and stimulating and created a valuable opportunity for pupils to apply their rapidly increasing mathematical knowledge in a realistic everyday context.
- 60 The very good use made of interactive whiteboards by teachers is a strong feature in the provision. Although there are some good examples of pupils using ICT to enhance their learning in mathematics, this is not yet a consistently strong feature throughout the school, and there is scope for increasing the use of computers as an integral part of learning in mathematics.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 61 Pupils' numeracy skills are well above average. They extend their mathematics knowledge, understanding and skills significantly in work across the curriculum. Numerous opportunities are created in science, for example, where investigative and experimental work often requires accurate measuring and monitoring, as well as the use of appropriate graphs to record findings.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is predominantly good and consistently of high quality in Years 4, 5 and 6.
- All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well in relation to their abilities.
- Pupils' very good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning are significant factors in their very good achievement.
- There is scope for making more consistent use of ICT to support pupils' learning in science lessons.

Commentary

- 62 Throughout the school, pupils achieve very well in relation to their capabilities and prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress, due to the very good provision made for them in lessons. Overall standards for the

pupils' age are above average by the end of Year 2, and well above average by the end of Year 6. The inspection findings are consistent with National Curriculum test results. The school has been very successful in maintaining the high quality provision found at the time of the last inspection, and recent work to improve provision for scientific enquiry is having a positive effect on the standards in this aspect of science.

- 63 Teaching is good overall, and is consistently of high quality in Years 4, 5 and 6. Teachers' planning is very effective in providing for all ability groups and is a significant factor in the pupils' very good achievement. Teachers are effective in promoting pupils' learning in all areas of the subject through interesting and stimulating work set in practical contexts; this helps to capture the pupils' attention and contributes significantly towards their very good behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils have very good opportunities to explore scientific concepts at first hand and develop good investigational skills as they move through the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils are confident in scientific enquiry and have a very good understanding of the investigational process, due to very high expectations of what they can do and achieve. In a very good lesson in Year 6, for example, high level demands on pupils' independent thinking skills enabled them to achieve great success in carrying out an interesting investigation into the habitat preferences of woodlice. During the course of their investigations, the pupils were able to plan and carry out a fair test with great confidence and displayed very good scientific reasoning skills in interpreting their findings.
- 64 Leadership and management of science are good. The subject manager is well qualified to give confident leadership to her colleagues and manages the subject well. Thorough subject evaluation and close monitoring of teaching are instrumental in maintaining the high profile of the subject. The recent emphasis on improving pupils' scientific enquiry skills has achieved considerable success but more opportunities are needed for data collection and interpretation. Assessment information is used very effectively in provide for pupils of different abilities. Although the school has made recent improvements in the use of ICT to support pupils' learning in science, this aspect of provision has not yet been established as a consistent feature throughout the school. Resources for teaching science are managed very effectively and are of good quality.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching enables pupils to achieve well.
- The successful use of interactive whiteboards is a very good feature in the provision.
- The subject is led and managed very effectively.
- Insufficient opportunities are created for pupils to use ICT to enhance their learning in other subjects.

Commentary

- 65 Pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities and prior attainment. Standards for age are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6.

This represents significant improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is generally good and sometimes very good, and contributes significantly to pupils' good achievement. National Curriculum requirements are generally met effectively, but there is scope for greater consistency in the use of ICT by pupils to enhance their learning in other subjects.

- 66 Pupils in Year 1 and 2 make good progress in the communication and handling elements of the subject. They use the keyboard and mouse confidently to produce text and to access various tools. Higher attainers are able to incorporate illustrations to complement text. Pupils extend their skills in handling information, using ICT generated graphs to represent the findings of class surveys. Pupils in Year 1, for example, produced a pictogram to show their favourite fruits. They confidently tapped the interactive whiteboard to enter their information, and some of the higher attainers showed very good skills in responding to perceptive questions from their teacher to test their growing interpretation of simple graphs. During the course of the year, younger pupils also gain a good early appreciation of control technology, and are able to enter a set of instructions to make a floor robot travel various distances and change direction.
- 67 Older pupils build effectively on this good start. By Year 6, they show a good ability to use and present ICT information in different forms and styles to meet particular requirements and different audiences. This was very apparent, for example, when a group of Year 5 pupils made a multimedia presentation to Year 6 on aspects of life in India. They used a variety of styles and well-selected illustrations very effectively to capture the audience's attention. Pupils also extend their knowledge and understanding of control technology. In Year 4, for example, pupils entered a sequence of instructions accurately to instruct a screen image to create some quite complex geometrical shapes. Work produced by pupils before the inspection, indicates that pupils develop a good awareness of modern communication systems, such as the internet and e-mail facilities. Year 6 pupils know how to use spreadsheets, with higher attainers making accurate use of formulae to change variables.
- 68 The quality of teaching is generally good and sometimes very good, such as in the Year 1 lesson referred to earlier. All aspects of ICT are accessible to all pupils, and teachers and support staff take good care to check that boys and girls enjoy the same opportunities. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very carefully and make very good progress. Work in ICT is led and managed very effectively by the subject co-ordinator. Since the last inspection, improved resources and access to a computer suite have enabled the school to keep pace with the rapid developments in ICT. The availability of interactive whiteboards in classrooms is of considerable benefit to staff and pupils. The school has identified the need to replace some of its computers, which have become outdated, as a priority for attention.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 69 The highly successful use of interactive whiteboards by teachers, in order to introduce lessons and new learning, is a very strong feature in the provision in ICT, contributing to pupils' above average skills in the subject by Year 6. However, opportunities for pupils to make their own use of ICT to support their learning in other subjects is more limited. Although there are some good examples, this aspect of provision has yet to be firmly established as consistent feature throughout the school and across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

Geography

- 70 The timing of the inspection and school's timetabling arrangements meant that insufficient lessons were observed to make a reliable judgement about overall provision in the subject. However, evidence from the one lesson observed, and examination of pupils' previous work, as well as examination of teachers' planning, indicate that standards in geography are generally appropriate for the pupils' ages at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils' achievement in relation to their capabilities is at least satisfactory throughout the school. This is a similar picture to that found at the time of the last inspection. In the only lesson observed, teaching was good and gave suitable emphasis to geographical vocabulary and skills. Pupils used secondary sources effectively and could recognise aspects and sites in their own locality.
- 71 The planned programme generally meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Work on the localities is taught well, giving pupils a good knowledge of their area as well as providing good opportunities to make comparisons to different environments. Inspection evidence indicates that geographical enquiry and study skills are developed less effectively. Insufficient emphasis is placed on developing pupils' skills in asking relevant questions, collecting and recording evidence, and suggesting explanations following investigative work. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and an effective system for assessing progress has been developed and is about to be implemented.

History

- 72 Insufficient lessons were observed to make an overall judgement on provision in the subject. Judgements are, therefore, based on the examination of pupils' previous work, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and staff. The inspection evidence indicates that standards in the subject are above average by the time pupils reach the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils achieve well.
- 73 In a very good lesson in Year 4, pupils extended significantly their understanding of similarity and difference through their study of Bouddicca and Roman Britain. They made accurate use of historical language, and showed a good understanding of chronology. They critically interpreted different types of evidence and could make reasoned judgements about reliability. For example, they compared the reliability of a drawing of one of Bouddicca's battles with a picture of a Roman sword found in the Thames. They concluded that the sword provided the stronger evidence since it was unlikely that an artist would have been present at the battle. The lesson was taught very effectively in a lively, stimulating manner, which succeeded in capturing pupils' interest. Work in history is well-led and managed, and the programme of work is adapted appropriately to meet the needs of different pupils.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The work of other artists is used very well to develop pupils' creativity.

- Pupils experience a wide range of creative media as they move through the school.
- Work in art is very well integrated with other subjects.

Commentary

- 74 Pupils achieve very well in developing their artistic skills and expression as they progress through the school. By the time pupils reach the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are above average for the pupils' age. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and enables them to achieve very well in relation to their abilities.
- 75 Teaching is good overall, and is sometimes very good, particularly in Years 5 and 6. As pupils progress, they learn very effectively how to use a very good range of creative media, such as paint, charcoal, clay, fabric, collage and weaving as means of creative expression. Skills are taught very well and work is very well planned to link with other areas of the curriculum in order to provide relevance and interest for pupils. Very high quality bookmarks using a scraperboard technique were very evocative of Egyptian design, linking well to work in history. Indian paisley designs and embroidered effects using sequins gave relevance to work in geography. Study of the work of other artists has much improved since the last inspection and is now a strong feature of the provision. For example, pupils in Year 1 were very successful in imitating the designs of Clarice Cliff, while pupils in Year 2 looked at the work of other artists and sculptors in order to understand how found objects from the environment can be used to create interesting artistic effects and compositions. Teaching in art lessons is greatly enhanced by the competent use made by teachers of interactive whiteboards to show pupils the work of other artists. This was very evident in a lesson in Year 5/6 about the work of Marc Chagall. The use of technology was very effective in enabling pupils to evaluate a range of work by the artist, recognise the main characteristics of his style and make great strides in learning. In their own interpretations of the painting 'I and the Village', they were very successful in incorporating many of the features of Chagall's style and gained a very good understanding of his artistic motivation.
- 76 Very effective management and leadership by the subject co-ordinator has done much to improve the subject since the time of the last inspection. Visits to galleries, visiting artists and very good quality display throughout the school have had a very good impact on the quality of the subject. Work in art and design makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

Design and technology

- 77 Due to the timing of the inspection and the school's timetabling arrangements it was not possible to observe sufficient lessons to make an overall judgement on provision in this subject. Examination of pupils' past work and scrutiny of teachers' planning for design and technology indicate that the programme of work complies with National Curriculum requirements and standards are broadly similar to those found nationally. The recently appointed coordinator has carried out a thorough and accurate evaluation of provision in the subject. A revision of long term planning and implementation of an action plan are already beginning to have a beneficial impact on provision in the subject.

Music

- 78 Insufficient music lessons were seen to make an overall judgement about provision in the subject. The lessons observed and examination of curricular planning, indicate that provision has improved significantly since the last inspection, largely due to the appointment of a specialist teacher, whose expertise and skills have done much to raise the profile of music within the school. The increased emphasis placed on singing and on teaching the recorder to all pupils in Years 3 to 6 has been very effective in raising standards in appraising, composing and performing music. Pupils in Year 3, for example, demonstrated confidence and proficiency in playing percussion instruments to illustrate a poem, and the singing of pupils during a whole school assembly was clear and tuneful. Music is now central to the school ethos, as evident in the regular use of music to enhance other lessons within the school day. Opportunities for pupils to perform for an audience at special occasions, such as First Holy Communion, give the subject further prominence within the curriculum and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities.
- Teaching is generally good and sometimes very good.
- A wide range of sporting opportunities are created for pupils through the formal curriculum and extra-curricular activities.
- The hall is rather small, particularly for large classes of older pupils.

Commentary

- 79 Throughout the school, pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities. Most achieve appropriately for their age and some achieve above average standards in games and swimming. All pupils are included and involved in all aspects of the curriculum, regardless of gender, race and ability. The school makes good use of external expertise to enhance provision, and very good provision is made for extra-curricular activities, including opportunities for pupils to compete against individuals and teams from other local schools.
- 80 The teaching is of generally good, and sometimes very good quality. In a Year 6 games lesson focusing on cricket skills, for example, very good planning and organisation enabled the work to move and develop at a brisk pace, and make excellent use of the time available. Many pupils demonstrated above average skills in bowling and batting, before the lesson was brought to a sudden end by rain. In the other lessons observed, pupils engaged in appropriately challenging activities, and their progress was helped by good demonstration and guidance by teachers and support staff. During the course of the year, pupils' benefit from an appropriate curriculum, which includes gymnastics, dance and athletics. In addition, swimming is taught successfully and nearly all pupils learn to swim 25 metres unaided, and some achieve higher levels, before leaving the school at the end of Year 6.
- 81 The subject is led and managed effectively and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school makes full use of the available facilities, which include a good playing field. The hall used for indoor physical education is a little on

the small side, particularly for older pupils, and especially for aspects of the work such as gymnastics. However, careful organisation enables the school to overcome these restrictions and enable the pupils to receive their full entitlement in the subject.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

82 Due to the timing of the inspection and the school's timetabling arrangements it was only possible to observe a limited amount of direct teaching in these areas of the curriculum. However, the scrutiny of curriculum planning and school documentation, examination of pupils' work, completed before the inspection, and discussions with pupils, staff and parents, indicate that the school makes high quality provision for these aspects. Provision for the development of pupils' personal, social and health education is organised and co-ordinated very effectively, and includes discrete lessons on citizenship, nutrition, personal hygiene and the dangers associated with smoking, alcohol and drug misuse. The school council enables pupils to contribute their views and ideas about ways in which the school might improve. It also provides them with a growing insight into how democracy works, and contributes to their maturity and increasing sense of responsibility. The high quality provision made for extra-curricular activities, including an extensive programme of educational and residential visits, valuable contributions by visiting speakers, and a wide range of extra-curricular activities, contributes significantly to pupils' all-round development. Numerous fund raising activities for various charities, including those to assist people in other countries, helps pupils to develop caring attitudes and an awareness of what it means to be a world citizen.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
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	1
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	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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