

INSPECTION REPORT

THE ABBEY RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Erdington, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103422

Headteacher: Mr M Tierney

Lead inspector: Lois A Furness

Dates of inspection: 3rd - 6th May 2005

Inspection number: 268038

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:	402
School address:	Sutton Road Erdington Birmingham West Midlands
Postcode:	B23 6QL
Telephone number:	(0121) 373 1793
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Lane
Date of previous inspection:	21 st June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

With 402 pupils on roll (199 boys and 203 girls) The Abbey is a large two-form entry Roman Catholic primary school in Erdington, Birmingham, with fourteen single age classes catering for pupils aged 4 to 11. Although the majority of pupils are of white British origin, nine other ethnic origins are represented in the school. However, there are currently no pupils who are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The school serves a mixed area in relation to the social and economic backgrounds of the pupils and the proportion claiming school meals free of charge is around the national average. Twelve per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is below the national average. Five pupils have a statement of special educational need. Most of the children attend some form of pre-school education before starting at the school and, although there is a wide range of attainment on entry, the majority of children have skills that are mainly below those expected for their age. In 2004, the school received the Investors in People Review award and an 'Award for All' sports grant.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8245	L A Furness	Lead inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language Mathematics Personal, social and health education and citizenship
9798	V Ashworth	Lay inspector	
27677	D Davenport	Team inspector	Foundation Stage English Geography History
22990	C Furniss	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education
30781	W Stenton-Richardson	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The Abbey RC Primary School is an **effective** school. By Year 6, standards are above those expected for their age and pupils' achievement is good overall. The school is led very well by the headteacher, who has established a strong team with the deputy headteacher and other key members of staff. Together, they work very hard to provide a good quality of education for the pupils. Teaching and learning are good overall and pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal qualities are particular strengths. The school gives **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- By Year 6, pupils are attaining standards that are above those expected for their age in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, and music.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide very good leadership promoting a very good ethos based clearly upon the school's church foundation.
- The school evaluates its own performance very well.
- Pupils show very good attitudes to learning and benefit from the very good provision that is made for their personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- Links with parents, the community and other schools are very good.
- Although satisfactory, the opportunities for pupils to use their developing literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are not planned for systematically.
- Enabling pupils to be more aware of how they might evaluate the success of their own learning, and ensuring that targets set are appropriate to the differing needs of pupils is a developing aspect of the school's work.

The key issues from the previous inspection in 1999 have been tackled thoroughly. Standards in information and communication technology and design and technology have improved considerably and the accommodation in terms of the classrooms for Years 3 and 4 pupils has greatly improved. Provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved and is now satisfactory. The school has secure plans in place to improve this aspect of its work even further. The good standards identified in the last inspection have been maintained and overall school improvement is good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is good overall. In 2004, pupils' performance in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests was well above the national average in English and mathematics and matched the national average in science. In relation to similar schools, standards were well above average in mathematics, matched the average in English and were well below average in science.

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

Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average.

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

In response to these results, the school very carefully analysed its assessment data and put into place effective strategies to improve performance. This has resulted in the current Year 6 pupils attaining standards that are above those expected for their age in English, mathematics and

science. Writing standards have improved considerably, as have the number of pupils attaining at least the expected level in science. Reception-aged children achieve satisfactorily overall and the majority of them reach the nationally expected goals in each area of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils currently in Year 2 are attaining standards that are above those expected in reading, writing and mathematics. In science and information and communication technology, standards match those expected for their age. Achievement of pupils in Years 1 to 6 is good. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment because of the quality of support and the well-planned work that they receive in lessons. However, although satisfactory, the targets on individual education plans are not always in the small measurable steps needed to meet pupils' needs.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual moral and social development, are very good. Cultural development is good, which shows an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils behave very well and have very positive attitudes to learning. The school is very successful in its work to make its pupils friendly, polite and considerate children. They are very keen to come to school and, as a result, attendance is well above the national average. Punctuality is good with pupils arriving on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching is effective and leads to a good quality of learning overall. Teaching and learning in Year 6 are very good. In these classes, assessment information is used very effectively to ensure very good achievement. In Reception, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Staff throughout the school insist on high standards of behaviour and resources are used very well to ensure that pupils are very effectively engaged in their activities. Pupils throughout the school are not involved sufficiently in evaluating and improving their own learning. A good range of extra-curricular activities effectively enhances the curriculum and the community and other schools are used very well to improve learning opportunities. However, planned opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in other subjects are not maximised. The school cares for its pupils well. Support staff are used very effectively to ensure that the learning needs of pupils are considered carefully and equality of opportunity is consequently good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very well together and very effectively motivate all those connected with the school. **Management is good.** The analysis of performance data is a particular strength and, as a result, standards and achievement are rising. **Governance is good.** The governors have a good understanding of the strengths and development areas. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents greatly value the work the school does for their children and are pleased with the quality of education that their children receive. Pupils have very positive opinions of the school. They say that the teachers help them with their work and that their views are listened to.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

In order to improve even further the school should:

- Involve pupils more in assessing and evaluating their own learning and ensuring that targets set are appropriate for pupils' needs, including those with special educational needs.
- Maximise opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in other subjects.

All of these issues are identified in the school improvement plan.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good overall. By Year 6, pupils are attaining standards that are above those expected for their age in English, mathematics and science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of Reception children attain the early learning goals in all six areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1.
- Pupil performance in the 2004 National Curriculum tests was very good in English in Years 2 and 6 and in mathematics in Year 6.
- More able pupils are very well challenged in mathematics.
- By Year 6, standards are above those expected in information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, and music.

Commentary

1. The majority of Reception age children start school with levels of attainment below that expected for their age. The good emphasis placed on their personal, social and emotional development and good induction procedures mean that children settle well, feeling safe and happy, and are familiar with school routines. By the end of the year, the majority of Reception age children are on course to reach the early learning goals expected for their age in all six areas of learning and their achievement is satisfactory overall.
2. In 2004, Year 2 pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests was well above the national average in reading and writing and matched the national average in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, performance was well above the average in reading and writing and matched the average in mathematics. Although over time boys attain better than girls in all three subjects, no differences were noted during the inspection. Although pupil performance declined in 2004, this was a weaker cohort of pupils and assessment information shows that their achievement was good.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.3 (17.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.0 (17.1)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.5 (18.5)	16.2 (16.3)

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

3. In science in 2004, on the basis of teacher assessment, the number of pupils that attained the expected level for their age matched the national average. However, performance was well above the national average for attainment above the expected level. Pupils currently in Year 2 are attaining standards that are above those expected for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Achievement is good overall because the quality of teaching is consistently good.
4. In 2004, pupils' performance in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests was well above the national average in English and mathematics and matched the national average in science. In comparison with similar schools, standards were well above average in mathematics, matched the average in English and were well below average in science. The reason for the lower performance in science was, although the school challenged the more able pupils well,

too few pupils attained the expected level for their age. More able pupils were particularly well challenged in mathematics with pupil performance being in the top five per cent of similar schools. Although boys are attaining slightly better than girls in all three subjects, no differences were noted during the inspection.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.4 (27.0)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	29.6 (28.2)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.1 (28.7)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 55 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. Rigorous analysis of this performance data resulted in targeted action and pupils currently in Year 6 are attaining standards that are above those expected for their age in all aspects of English, mathematics and science. As in the previous year, more able pupils are challenged well in all three subjects because of good quality teaching. Achievement is good overall.
6. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. Teaching assistants and other adults provide very good support for these pupils, including those with behavioural difficulties, who sometimes also benefit from support from outside agencies. The activities presented to pupils are appropriately planned to meet their specific needs with particular emphasis being placed on developing their literacy and numeracy skills. However, the targets identified in their individual education plans are not specific enough to ensure that progress is maximised and therefore achievement is satisfactory.
7. In art and design, design and technology, and music, by Years 2 and 6, pupils attain standards that are above those expected for their age and achievement is good. In music, achievement is very good. This good and very good achievement is because of the high priority that the school gives to these subjects and because of the very good teaching of the specialist music teacher. Standards in design and technology have improved well from the previous inspection when they were judged to be below that expected for the pupils' age. In information and communication technology (ICT) and history, standards by Year 2 mainly match those expected for their age and achievement is satisfactory. By Year 6, standards are above those expected in ICT and match those expected in history. Achievement in both subjects is good. In geography and physical education, there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards or achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance, attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards school and they really enjoy their activities.
- The behaviour of pupils is very good.
- Relationships are very good throughout the school.
- Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development, are very good.

Commentary

8. Pupils' very good attitudes to school and to their work contribute very positively to the warm, harmonious and friendly atmosphere within the school as well as to their personal development and their overall attainment and achievement. The pupils greatly enjoy school;

they work hard and are enthusiastic about all school activities. These very positive attitudes are developed from the moment the children enter the school in Reception. The happy and secure learning environment that is created helps these young children to settle quickly into school routines showing very good attitudes to work and behaving very well. Behaviour overall is very good. School is a happy place to be and the pupils play well together. The school is racially harmonious and pupils and staff work to ensure that pupils are free from harassment. There are, however, a very small minority of pupils who at times display disruptive behaviour, resulting in eight fixed-term exclusions over the last year. Instances of bullying do occasionally occur but pupils confidently say that these instances are quickly and fairly dealt with.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White - British	365	7	0
White - Irish	6	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	12	1	0
Black or Black British – African	12	0	0

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

- The provision for social, moral and spiritual development is very good. The strong Catholic ethos is very important in the school. The Ascension Mass held in church was a particularly spiritual experience for everyone. Pupils are successfully encouraged to reflect on a broad range of issues and are very active in raising money for a wide variety of charities. The school has very clear behaviour guidelines, and the teachers have high expectations. The pupils are taught to have a very clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong, and they thrive on the encouragement and praise that they receive. All achievements are celebrated and the pupils show a developing confidence and improving self-esteem as they progress through the school. They are polite, friendly and well mannered when talking to adults, and respect the feelings and views of others. The pupils are very willing to take on small responsibilities from an early age and, because of these opportunities, they become very effectively involved in the life of the school. As they grow older, the pupils respond very well to the increasing responsibilities offered to them. The school council is particularly effective in fostering personal development and there are opportunities to be house captains and prefects in Year 6. Pupils' cultural development is good and this shows good improvement since the last inspection. The pupils are learning to appreciate their own and the cultures of others during lessons, from pupils within school with different faiths, outside visits and through the many visitors who come into school.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003-2004 (95.9%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.1	School data:	0.0
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

10. Attendance is well above the national average and is very good. The school and parents work very well together to achieve this. Nearly all pupils arrive promptly, and only a very small number of pupils find it difficult to arrive on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching is effective and leads to a good quality of learning. Assessment is good. Curricular provision is good and the care and support given to pupils are good. Links with the community and other schools are very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching and learning in the classes of Year 6 pupils and in music lessons throughout the school results in very good achievement.
- Teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and pupils' work.
- Pupils work very well, whether in a group or independently.
- Pupils are not provided with sufficient information to evaluate the success of their learning.
- Teaching assistants provide valuable support and are effective in what they do.
- Targets for pupils with special educational needs are too broad.

Commentary

11. The table below shows the quality of teaching observed during the inspection. It is good overall. All of the teaching seen was at least satisfactory and, in Years 1 and 2, and the classes of Years 3 to 6 pupils, teaching was consistently good with very good teaching evident in the Year 6 classes. The teaching of music was also very good. This shows improvement since the last inspection when a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was observed.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	9 (23%)	21 (54%)	9 (23%)	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.

12. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory with good features. The staff manage the children's behaviour very well, and their very good relationships with the children and clearly established classroom routines underpin the staff's approach. The way that staff frequently praise children's efforts and achievements fosters children's confidence and love of learning very well. Basic skills are taught satisfactorily and there are good assessment procedures for tracking children's progress which staff use satisfactorily to plan the next steps

in their learning. However, activities are sometimes too teacher directed and the children are sometimes required to sit for too long listening to the teacher.

13. Teachers throughout the school have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. They are confident in the pupils' level of responsibility and they know they can trust them to work efficiently unsupervised for prolonged periods. Pupils respond very well and, as a result, older pupils show good application and work productively for long periods of time, both in groups or independently. For example, in English, Year 6 pupils showed very good concentration as they discussed sensibly whether children should be allowed to vote and Year 5 pupils worked hard to prepare a 'PowerPoint' presentation for younger pupils. In music, the specialist teacher has very good subject knowledge which she uses very effectively to plan interesting and stimulating activities. This enables pupils throughout the school to really enjoy music and to achieve very well. Assessment procedures are good and all teachers use assessment information to plan appropriate activities for the pupils. At the start of lessons, pupils are informed what they are expected to learn and usually conclusions to lessons are used to ask pupils if they have been successful. However, very little information is given to them about the expected success criteria, and therefore pupils cannot accurately evaluate their own successes and development areas. This is an aspect of teaching that the school has identified as an area for improvement.
14. Teamwork among staff is a further strength. Teachers and support staff share their expertise and teaching assistants are effectively deployed and support pupils with special educational needs well. Although the work given to them in lessons is appropriate for their needs, their individual education plans are not as effective, as targets are often too broad to support the small steps necessary for these pupils. This means that achievement is satisfactory.

The curriculum

The curriculum provided by the school is **good**. There is **good** enrichment of the curriculum. Overall accommodation is **satisfactory** and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good.
- Curriculum enrichment is good.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to engage in sporting activities.
- Although satisfactory, planned opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects are underdeveloped.
- The quality and use of resources are good.

Commentary

15. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements, including sex education and drug and alcohol awareness. Pupils' personal, social and health education are very well developed and this is shown in the very positive attitudes and behaviour and the very good relationships, which are strengths of the school. The school has a positive commitment to inclusion and works hard to make sure that all pupils have equal access to all that the school has to offer. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils are supported effectively by teachers and teaching assistants in lessons but their individual educational plans are not always specific enough to address their needs. Curricular provision in the Foundation stage is satisfactory.
16. A range of well-planned visits, visitors and clubs enrich the curriculum well. Outings include trips to theatres and visits from theatre groups, visits to museums, art galleries and farms, and a range of musical activities. The school participates in the National Music Festival's 'Young Voices' concert each year, along with many other schools. Two residential visits are

arranged each year, one for Year 5 and one for Year 6, and these are integrated into the overall programme of personal and social development. There are close links with the church and with the local community and pupils are encouraged to think about others through working with a number of charities, local, national and international. Early this year, the appeal following the tsunami disaster raised over twelve hundred pounds and on a local level the school is working with the Blind Awareness Project. Year 1 and Year 5 pupils benefited greatly from working with an artist in residence and the high quality of the work produced is visible in the attractive displays. Clubs include computers, choir and chess, and there is a wide range of sporting activities, such as rounders, netball, football, swimming, tag rugby, volleyball and mini-golf. These sporting opportunities are very good and boys and girls regularly compete very successfully with pupils from other schools.

17. Although there is good provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, and pupils learn the skills well in lessons, there are insufficient planned opportunities to develop and use these skills in other subject areas. The school has also recognised the need to enrich the curriculum further by broadening the links between different subjects, in line with the 'Excellence and Enjoyment' Strategy. This is being addressed but planning is still in the early stages.
18. Accommodation overall is satisfactory and the weaknesses of the previous inspection have been rectified well. The recently-built Years 3 and 4 classrooms have greatly improved the learning environment for these pupils and there is an appropriate outdoor learning area for Foundation Stage children. Some of the classrooms are a little cramped, but very effective use is made of all the accommodation and the school is well maintained. The planned new library area will be a valuable new addition when it is in full use. Attractive displays brighten up the walls and make it an attractive learning environment, encouraging pupils to take a pride in their work and showing them that their work is valued. Resources generally are good and are well used. Resources for children under five are satisfactory. Teachers and teaching assistants are well-matched to the needs of the curriculum and work well together, having a strong commitment to the pupils. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes good care of its pupils and provides them with effective support, advice and guidance. The school makes very good arrangements for seeking and acting upon pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides its pupils with a safe and healthy learning environment.
- All pupils develop very effective and trusting relationships with the adults in school.
- Good data analysis and tracking systems are in place to check pupil progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs are given effective support and guidance in lessons but targets in individual plans are not always specific enough.
- Induction procedures are good.
- The school council plays an important part in the life of the school.

Commentary

19. The headteacher and his staff have created a caring atmosphere and pupils are well looked after. Child protection procedures are appropriate and the headteacher, governors and staff work together effectively to ensure that the school environment is safe and secure. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and all health and safety issues identified at the last inspection have been rectified. This shows good improvement, Pupils are proud of their school and parents are appreciative about the care their children receive. Some effective progress has been achieved towards the Healthy Schools Award in requesting only healthy snacks to be brought from home and permitting water bottles to be used in class.

20. The school is working hard to maintain detailed analyses of pupils' academic development so that they can monitor pupils' progress. Assessment systems are good and information is used well to plan future learning. There are good systems for ensuring that pupils with special educational needs are supported well in class. Support staff are deployed well so these pupils can achieve the learning objectives set for them. However, the targets in individual education plans do not always match the learning needs of the pupils sufficiently well. Consequently, individual education plans are not useful documents to guide future learning. Gifted and talented pupils are identified effectively and provision is being developed to ensure that they are sufficiently challenged.
21. The induction procedures for new starters are good and help to facilitate a smooth transition from home to school. Carefully planned lessons in personal, social and health education, science and literacy extend the pupils' understanding of how to keep safe and healthy, why rules are needed in school and in society, and how to be good citizens. There is a strong emphasis on taking responsibilities, for example, pupils have duties such as looking after younger children at break times, or carrying packed lunch crates to the hall.
22. The Christian ethos of the school is central to all of its work. Pupils are taught that they have a responsibility to treat everyone in the school community with respect, courtesy and fairness. All the adults working in the school provide very good models for the pupils. They treat the pupils fairly, listen to what they say and value their views and ideas. Through these activities, the staff seek the views of pupils and act upon them. Pupils are confident in asking and answering questions and in making decisions. The school council has representatives from each class and the pupils take their responsibilities seriously. They are pleased that their views are listened to, for example, providing extra footballs for the playground. Pupils' achievements are celebrated in displays, star assemblies and in the awarding of house-points. Pupils also take an active part in prayers, assemblies and Mass. All of these opportunities are effective in promoting pupils' personal and spiritual development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents, other schools and the community are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have high regard for the school.
- Very good links have been established with the community, including other local schools.
- Pupils' annual reports require further development.

Commentary

23. The parents who answered the parents' questionnaire, together with those who attended the pre-inspection meeting, have very positive views of the school. They like the open door policy, which is successful, and are appreciative of how well their children are cared for. A few parents do not feel that they are well informed about progress, although the great majority feel their children are making good progress. They consider they are listened to and that their children are taught well and achieve well. They appreciate the hard work of the staff, and their involvement in extra-curricular activities. Inspectors agree with the parents' comments, including those about pupil progress. Although there are good opportunities to discuss the progress of pupils with the teachers, the consultation meetings are held at the end of the school day, which is not always convenient for working parents. Also, although pupils' annual reports are satisfactory, the school is aware that more information on targets and areas for improvement would be helpful for parents.
24. All documents now meet statutory requirements and the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents provide very good helpful information. The home-school agreement has recently been updated and the website is now in place. Parents are kept well informed by

letters home, very regular newsletters and curriculum information. The parents' consultation evenings are very well attended and held each term. The Parent Teacher Association is well supported and organises regular activities for the children. It also raises funds for the benefit of the school and is assisting in providing resources for the new library.

25. Parents' views are sought formally, for example, about transport for outside visits. These formal consultations, the school finds very helpful in determining new strategies. The less formal feedback from parents is continuous and taken seriously. Parents are very involved in their children's learning, both at home and at school, and many volunteer to assist on school visits and support extra-curricular activities. As a result of the very close links with parents, concerns and complaints are all dealt with quickly and efficiently.
26. There are very good links with the two main feeder Catholic high schools. Regular visits from staff ease transition and events such as a taster day and a parents' evening including children, also help for smooth transfer arrangements. There are well-established links with the other feeder schools and close involvement with the Catholic Primary Partnership. The pupils are also involved in a variety of sporting activities with other schools. Students from several local secondary schools benefit from work experience in school and, through the very good links with local colleges, training and equipment have been provided. There are very strong links with the Abbey Church and the pupils are very involved with the local community, who strongly support the school. Business links have been formed with at least one parent, and a local builder, who prepared the foundation work for the new buildings without charge.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership provided by the headteacher and deputy headteacher is very good. Governance is good, as is the leadership and management of other key staff.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher is very good and has been highly effective in securing improvements.
- Governors support and challenge the school well.
- School improvement planning is good.
- A strong team approach is evident throughout the school.
- Financial management is very good.

Commentary

27. The headteacher provides very caring and purposeful leadership, which is effective in many areas because of his very clear vision, commitment and effective delegation. He has ensured there is a firm focus on raising standards, securing the commitment of all staff and pupils to this end, and has initiated strategies and approaches to make this happen. The deputy headteacher, who works very closely with the headteacher, is a very good practitioner and provides a very good role model for staff. A strong team has been established in which all feel valued and all strive to do their best. Self-evaluation is good and the staff have worked hard to recognise the strengths of the school and to improve areas identified for improvement.
28. The governing body has good procedures so that it fulfils its responsibilities well. It is firmly involved in forward planning, monitoring the budget, making key decisions about the school, as well as supporting and challenging the headteacher. The governors are kept well informed about how the school is performing and have the opportunity to question data and challenge decisions taken. The climate of dialogue, encouraged by the headteacher and governors, is one that has developed very well since the time of the last inspection.

29. School improvement planning provides a useful tool for development, with a clear, measurable agenda for improving achievement, teaching and learning. It is used well to determine the best use of funds available to the school to support the priorities for school improvement. It is closely linked to the planned provision of training of teachers and support staff, and the performance management arrangements, which are embedded in the school's work. For example, writing was identified as an area for improvement and, through training and targeted action, standards have been raised throughout the school. Improvement planning builds rigorously on a thorough audit of outcomes from the previous year's planning to ensure that developments are sustained to help raise standards. This includes the very good analysis of performance data.
30. Teamwork is a key feature in the school. Staff share important responsibilities well and key staff, such as the English, mathematics and science subject leaders, provide effective leadership. The leadership of the special educational needs co-ordinator and of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. All staff are strongly committed to doing the best for and including everyone in the school's provision. The induction procedures for new members of staff are very good and teachers who are newly qualified feel very well supported. The work of both the administrative staff and the caretaker is highly valued by all. Financial management is very good and adheres well to the principles of obtaining best value for money in order to achieve educational priorities. Although there appears to be a large carry forward, this money has been set aside appropriately for further building improvements.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,258,626
Total expenditure	1,158,927
Expenditure per pupil	2,841

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	103,814
Balance carried forward to the next year	99,699

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory** overall. Most children start school with levels of attainment that are below those expected for their age. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, as is the children's overall achievement in all areas of learning, except in personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world, where it is good. By the end of their Reception Year, the majority of children are likely to attain the goals expected for their age.

Children are taught in two Reception classes and the good induction procedures ensure that the children settle quickly. The staff work well together, forming very good relationships with the children and providing a safe and secure environment. Curricular planning is satisfactory, with a varied range of practical activities to develop the children's skills in all six areas of learning. However, these activities are sometimes too teacher directed and the children are sometimes required to sit for too long during whole class teaching sessions. The attractive environment contributes positively to the children's learning, as do visits and visitors to the school. Assessment procedures are good and the children's progress is effectively tracked and recorded. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. However, the outdoor area, an improvement since the last inspection, is not used well enough as a teaching and learning resource. Due to a recent spate of vandalism, the amount of large play and climbing equipment in this area is limited. Leadership and management are satisfactory and there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have very good attitudes to school and to learning.
- Very good relationships ensure that children work and play very well together.
- Children have good personal skills and readily take on little responsibilities.

Commentary

31. Children enjoy coming to school and the happy and secure learning environment created by the staff has helped them settle quickly into school routines. Adults form very good relationships with the children, who work and play happily with each other. This develops good personal skills as they take turns, share resources and handle equipment with care. Good opportunities are provided to develop children's confidence and independence as they get changed for physical activities and work independently during "choice" activities. Children readily take on small responsibilities and show an increasing awareness of their surroundings as they act as class leaders and monitors and tidy up after activities. The children enjoy learning and show very good attitudes to their work by listening attentively, following instructions carefully and concentrating well on tasks. They behave very well, despite often having to sit too long during whole class sessions. Teaching is good overall and this results in the children achieving well. The majority of children will have attained the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year with a significant number likely to exceed them.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Language skills are promoted well across all areas of learning.
- Activities are often too teacher directed.
- Teaching assistants are not always used effectively to support children's learning.

Commentary

32. Children are developing good speaking and listening skills as they eagerly answer questions and talk about their work and personal experiences. They enter wholeheartedly into imaginative play activities and communicate their ideas clearly, for example, when planning their own farm in the outdoor area. However, there are occasions when the children have to sit for too long listening to their teacher. The children enjoy listening to stories and rhymes, which they retell accurately, showing good understanding of the main characters and events. Most children have a satisfactory knowledge of letter sounds and key words, which they use appropriately in their own reading and writing activities. Handwriting skills are developing well and the children enjoy making individual books about different topics. However, language activities are often directed too much by adults and this limits the children's opportunities for independent learning. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively during the introduction to lessons. Children's achievement is satisfactory and the majority are on course to attain the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good attitudes to work.
- Children are not always involved well enough during planned activities.
- Teaching assistants contribute effectively to children's learning.

Commentary

33. Teachers plan an appropriate range of practical activities to cover all aspects of mathematical development and teaching assistants are used well to support the children's learning. Most children can recognise, order and count numbers to 20, although they are less secure when counting back. More able children can count beyond 20. Children use this secure understanding of number to record simple problems such as adding two digits together to total 10. Number rhymes and counting during registration and snack time effectively re-enforce learning and develop the children's understanding of concepts such as "more than" and "less than". Appropriate emphasis is placed on the development of mathematical language as the children measure and compare different-sized objects and accurately name common two-dimensional shapes. However, activities are too often teacher directed. This limits opportunities for the children to investigate and be actively involved in their own learning, as seen in one lesson using tally charts to record information. Teaching is satisfactory overall, as is the children's achievement. Most children are on course to attain the goals expected at the end of the Reception Year.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A varied range of practical activities makes learning interesting and fun.
- Visits and visitors to the school effectively enhance and enrich this area of learning.

Commentary

34. Well-planned, interesting activities successfully widen the children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Through the "Garden Centre" activities, children know that plants grow from seeds and bulbs and need light and water. The children enjoyed their visit to the farm during the inspection week and talked enthusiastically about the farmer's work and the different animals they had seen. Children show good mouse control when using the computers to paint pictures, and make simple maps and diagrams. However, they lack the appropriate co-ordination skills when using the built-in mouse control on the laptop computers. Visitors to the school further enrich the children's learning experiences by talking about their everyday work and how they help others. Well-planned follow-up activities and the good use of resources effectively link this area of learning to all others. This has a positive impact on the children's overall achievement. Teaching and learning are good and the children achieve well. Most are likely to attain the goals expected for their age as they move into Year 1, with a small minority exceeding the goals.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A varied range of activities is provided to develop children's physical skills.
- Resources for use in the outdoor area are limited.

Commentary

35. Children enjoy the varied range of activities planned to develop their control and co-ordination skills. They use a variety of cutting and sticking equipment, paintbrushes, pencils and small construction kits, which develop their manipulative skills satisfactorily. In the outdoor physical education lesson seen, the children use the playground space effectively to jump, run and jog in the warm-up activities and they develop their understanding of direction as they move around and between hoops on their teacher's clear instructions. However, the outdoor area is not used well enough on a daily basis to allow freedom of movement or to develop the children's physical skills. Children show appropriate control and co-ordination as they ride wheeled toys around the designated track but, because of a spate of vandalism, there is little equipment available to develop the children's skills in balancing and climbing. Overall, teaching is satisfactory, as is children's achievement. Most children are on course to attain the goals expected by the end of their Reception Year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range of creative activities provided is effectively linked to other areas of learning.

- Children develop good speaking and listening skills through their imaginative play activities.
- Some resources are not readily available for children to use.

Commentary

36. Children are given good opportunities to use a variety of resources to develop their skills in handling and using different materials. Their creative work is often linked to other areas of learning as, for example, they make farm animals from Play-Doh, Plasticine and collage materials, paint pictures of their favourite book characters and make three-dimensional robot models using various boxes and containers. However, sometimes activities are directed too much by adults and resources, such as paint, are not readily available to enable the children to choose for themselves the materials they need. Imaginative play activities provide good opportunities for the children to develop their ideas as, for example, they make the outside area into a farm and re-enact stories they have heard. Adults join in these activities, developing the children's language skills effectively and supporting their creative development. Children enjoy using a range of musical instruments to create different sounds and can keep a steady beat. Teaching is satisfactory overall, as is the children's achievement. Most children are on course to attain the goals expected by the end of their Reception Year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good and, as a result, pupils' achievement is good.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and present their work well.
- There are too few planned opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects or to use information and communication technology to support their literacy work.
- The targets in the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are too vague.
- Assessment systems are good but pupils are not sufficiently involved in evaluating their own learning.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

37. Standards attained by pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 are above those expected for their age and achievement is good overall. This is because the quality of teaching is consistently good and the very good teaching that Year 6 pupils receive enables them to achieve very well. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the good support they receive in class.

38. Speaking and listening skills are developed well throughout the school and across subjects. Pupils are confident, articulate youngsters who listen very well to both adults and each other. They have a good range of vocabulary and express their thoughts and opinions clearly in a range of situations in class and when talking to visitors. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading and events such as book weeks and book fairs successfully promote in pupils a love of literature. Pupils read well and with expression, following the good examples set by their teachers, and show good understanding of what they have read. By Year 6, pupils readily name their favourite authors, clearly explain why they like particular books and enjoy using non-fiction texts to research information.

39. The school's recent focus on developing writing skills has had a positive impact on the improvement in standards and on pupils' overall achievement. Grammar, spelling and punctuation are mostly accurate, sentences are well constructed and pupils write accurately in different styles and for a range of purposes. Handwriting is neat, joined and legible and pupils take an obvious pride in the presentation of their work. However, the use of ICT for drafting, editing and promoting extended writing skills is underdeveloped.
40. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan a range of activities to meet the needs of all pupils and the very good range of literacy prompts in all classrooms are used well to support learning. Lively, engaging teaching motivates the pupils well and results in high levels of productivity. This was particularly noted in the Year 6 classes where, in one lesson, there was good quality discussion about whether children should be allowed to vote and in another lesson where pupils successfully used subordinate clauses to make their writing more interesting. Time is used well and the teachers' effective questioning ensures that all pupils are fully involved in all activities. Well-briefed teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs and contribute well to the pupils' overall satisfactory achievement. However, the learning targets in the pupils' individual education plans do not always identify clearly enough the small steps needed for these pupils to improve the standard of their work and teachers do not use the targets explicitly in their planning. As a result, pupils' progress is not tracked closely enough.
41. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has only recently taken on the role, but has a good knowledge of the strengths and development areas and a good action plan is in place to support school improvement. As yet, she has had limited opportunity to observe teaching in classrooms but this has been regularly checked by the headteacher and senior staff. Assessment systems are good and information gathered is used well to track pupils' progress, plan their work and set targets for them. However, pupils are not yet sufficiently involved in evaluating their own learning. Resources overall are good and used well to support learning, although the lack of a designated library has somewhat limited the range of books available to all pupils. This issue has successfully been addressed within the recent building programme and a new library is currently being developed. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

Language and literacy skills across the curriculum

42. Pupils use their good speaking, listening and reading skills well in other subjects. For example, as they discuss changes in everyday life in different periods of history and research information to support topic work in history and geography. However, opportunities are missed to promote pupils' writing skills in these subjects because of an over dependence on the use of printed worksheets and copied text. As yet, the school does not plan systematically for pupils to use their literacy skills in all subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- More able pupils are challenged well in this subject.
- Achievement is very good in Year 6.
- The targets in the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are too broad.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Pupils are not sufficiently enabled to evaluate the success of their learning.
- Leadership and management are good.

- The systematic use of numeracy skills to support learning in other subjects is under-developed.

Commentary

43. In 2004, pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests was well above the national average and the average for similar schools. This very pleasing performance was because the school challenges its more able pupils well and there are a high number of pupils attaining above the level expected for their age. This is a result of effective school intervention strategies which include booster classes, extra work for targeted pupils and the teaching of pupils in ability groups from Year 5 upwards.
44. Pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are attaining standards that are above those expected for their age and achievement is good overall. However, in Year 6, achievement is very good because the quality of teaching is consistently very good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily in lessons because of the good support that they receive from adults. Teaching assistants are deployed very well and ensure that these pupils are included well in all parts of the lesson. Although satisfactory, individual educational plans do not provide a useful support for pupils' learning as targets are often too broad to be effectively integrated into teachers' planning.
45. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with evidence of very good teaching in Year 6. This is because the Year 6 teachers use assessment information very carefully to prepare work that is well suited to the needs of the pupils and makes mathematics fun and interesting. In one very good lesson, the teacher used the context of the general election in an innovative way to encourage pupils to solve mathematical problems. In another very good lesson, the teacher used her very good subject knowledge to ask pupils questions which encouraged them to find the most efficient strategy to solve questions involving time. Throughout the school, all staff insist on high standards of behaviour and pupils respond very well to these expectations. Pupils are attentive and have very positive attitudes towards this subject. All teachers share the learning intention of the lesson with pupils and usually ask pupils how well they have achieved the learning at the end of the lesson. However, pupils are rarely given sufficient information about how they might evaluate their own success. This is an area that the school wishes to develop further.
46. The subject is well led and managed by a competent subject leader. As a result of rigorous analysis of performance data, a good action plan is in place which is clearly focused on raising standards and achievement. Good tracking and assessment systems are in place and the curriculum is broad and balanced. Resources overall are good and used well to support pupils' learning, although the use of ICT is not maximised. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

47. Pupils sometimes use their mathematics skills in their work in other subjects and where this happens it satisfactorily helps pupils develop an appreciation of their practical uses. For example, pupils make measurements in design and technology and they use graphs and tables to record data in science. However, such opportunities are not as a result of systematic planning. As yet, the school does not have a planned strategy for pupils to develop and use their mathematical skills and knowledge in other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 6, standards are above those expected for the pupils' age and pupils achieve well.
- Staff are confident in teaching investigative science.
- Pupils greatly enjoy science.
- Very good analysis of data is helping the school to improve provision.
- As yet, pupils are not sufficiently involved in evaluating how well they are doing in their work.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

48. By Year 6, the majority of pupils are attaining standards above those expected for their age and achievement is good. The number of Year 6 pupils achieving the higher level in National Curriculum tests is steadily increasing. This is because pupils are given good opportunities to plan, carry out and independently record their investigations. In Year 2, pupils are attaining levels that are above those expected for their age and achievement is good. Throughout the school, the presentation of work is very good. Pupils take great pride in setting out their work carefully and accurately.
49. Since the last inspection, the training teachers have received in investigative science is helping pupils to achieve higher standards and teaching and learning are good overall. There is evidence of very good teaching in Year 6. All teachers expect their classes to work hard and time is used to good effect in almost all lessons. For example, in one Year 6 lesson, pupils undertake an investigation of pulse rates. Through effective questioning, pupils predict outcomes, draw conclusions and clearly understand the function of the heart and lungs. The pace of teaching briskly ensures maximum learning in the time available. Teachers seen in Years 4, 5 and 6 understand the importance of only changing one variable at a time and over time have conveyed this concept clearly.
50. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, give clear instructions and encourage scientific enquiry by the good use of 'hands-on' science using planned resources. This means that pupils co-operate well in small groups, as in a Year 4 class measuring the effect of friction on toy cars rolling down a ramp on to different surfaces. Teachers have high expectations in their lessons so pupils work hard and behaviour is very good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily as class teachers plan effectively, using teaching assistants and matching tasks carefully to suit the abilities of their pupils. Marking carefully records whether each pupil has achieved the lesson aims. However, this, together with summing up at the end of lessons, does not sufficiently indicate to pupils how they can evaluate the success of their own learning.
51. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader is well aware that analysis of value added data has raised concerns for the school and is taking steps to address the issue. She has produced a clear action plan to improve provision further. The focus on staff development and the use of tracking progress by analysing test results is effective. The curriculum is broad with good attention paid to all aspects of study. The purchase of a new science programme of work is enhancing the teaching and learning of science. Books are attractive, reduce the need for worksheets and give good opportunities for pupils to write independently. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been very good improvement in ICT since the previous inspection.
- By Year 6, many pupils' skills in ICT are above those expected for their age.
- Leadership and management of ICT are good.
- The use of ICT in other subjects is a developing area.

Commentary

52. The quality of provision for ICT has improved very well since the last inspection. This is seen clearly in terms of staff expertise and a wide range of new resources. As a result, by Year 2, pupils achieve well and standards mainly match those expected for their age. Good progress is maintained and by Year 6, many pupils are above the level expected, which is very good achievement overall. This is a significant rise in standards since the previous inspection. The school has improved resources, including a well-equipped computer suite. Laptops and classroom computers provide opportunities for pupils to reinforce the skills taught in the suite. The addition of a teaching assistant to work alongside classes in the computer suite is increasing staff confidence and good staff development is improving staff expertise. As a result of regular access to the suite, pupils' skills are improving at a rapid rate.
53. Pupils benefit from teaching that is good overall. In one Year 5 lesson, very clear instructions enabled pupils to use the 'PowerPoint' program for the first time to prepare a presentation for Year 4 on the forthcoming Confirmation service. The pace of the lesson was brisk and pupils made progress in downloading graphics for slides to illustrate their planned talk. In Year 4, pupils had challenging tasks to match their differing abilities when using a 'Flexi tree' sorting program. This meant one group engaged in lively debate on ways in which to sort fruit by categories, for example, shape, colour of skin or whether they contained seeds or pips. Confidence levels are high amongst most pupils and they greatly enjoy the subject. Year 6 pupils speak enthusiastically about the ways they have used ICT and understand about possible dangers associated with the Internet. They are much more aware of the application of ICT in daily living than pupils at the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the extra support that they are given by both teachers and teaching assistants.
54. The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic subject leader. He has led the very good improvements to the subject and a rigorous action plan identifies further needs. Good tracking and assessment systems are in place and the curriculum now meets statutory requirements. All the weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been addressed. However, pupils are not, as yet, sufficiently involved in evaluating their own learning. Also, the subject leader is aware of the need for more planned use of ICT to support teaching and learning in other subjects.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

55. The planned use of ICT skills in other subjects is a developing area. As yet, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise and use their skills to support learning in other subjects, for example, using the Internet for research or recording their scientific investigations. However, there is some good use of ICT in design and technology activities.

HUMANITIES

Geography

56. **Geography** was sampled during this inspection as no lessons were observed. Therefore, it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision, standards or pupils' achievement. However, teachers' planning shows that an appropriate range of topics is covered throughout the year and visits out of school effectively enrich the curriculum. Pupils in Year 2 are developing a sound understanding of the differences between man-made and natural features and they can compare an island and mainland environment. By Year 6, pupils use an appropriate range of geographical vocabulary as they learn about village settlements and localities far beyond their own. However, throughout the school, there are limited opportunities for pupils to apply and extend their writing skills because of an over dependence on the use of worksheets. Information and communication technology is not used well enough to support pupils' learning in this subject. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching promotes very good attitudes to learning.
- Visits and visitors effectively enhance the curriculum.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in this subject.
- Pupils are not always clear about how to evaluate their learning.
- History makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

57. As at the last inspection, the standards attained by pupils in Years 2 and 6 match that expected for their age. Achievement is satisfactory by Year 2 but by Year 6, pupils' achievement is good. Teachers plan an appropriate range of topics that effectively develop the pupils' understanding of the differences between life in the past and the present day. Year 2 pupils have a clear understanding of chronology as they accurately sequence events during the Great Fire of London. Pupils in Year 6 have good knowledge and understanding of different periods of history. Pupils greatly enjoy the subject and speak enthusiastically and knowledgeably about their work. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers' well-planned activities and effective questioning build well on pupils' previous knowledge and develops their thinking and historical enquiry skills well. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and enjoy the practical research which effectively fosters collaborative learning. As a result, pupils discuss ideas together and share their knowledge and understanding. However, opportunities are limited for pupils to apply their writing skills to record their findings because of an over dependence on worksheets. The planned use of numeracy and ICT skills to support pupils' learning is also limited.
58. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. She provides good support for the staff, checks teachers' planning and has worked hard to improve the range of resources. However, she has not had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and there are no formal assessment systems in place to track pupils' progress as they move through the school. Teachers' written marking gives pupils little guidance on how well they have achieved or what they need to do to improve and pupils have few opportunities to evaluate their own learning. Resources are good and the effective use of the local environment, visits and visitors to the school further enrich the curriculum and enhance pupils' learning. Overall, the

subject makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, Design and technology, and Physical education

59. **Art and design, design and technology, and physical education** were sampled during the inspection. Only one lesson was observed, in **art and design**, and therefore it is not possible to make a judgement about the overall quality of provision or of teaching in these subjects. Discussions with pupils and a review of work samples and displays around the school, as well as discussions with subject leaders and a review of planning, show that pupils have a well-balanced and broad curriculum in each of these subjects. Pupils enjoy all of these subjects and have very positive attitudes.
60. There are many displays of art across the school and these brighten and enhance the learning environment, stimulating pupils as they see how their quality work is valued and appreciated. Some particularly good examples are seen of Years 1 and 5 in the corridors where the work done with the artist in residence is on display. The display site was chosen by pupils themselves, which is good personal development. Most of the evidence of **design and technology** is photographic, though there are some samples of pupils' work in the subject leader's files. It is clear that there has been good improvement since the last inspection, when design and technology was unsatisfactory. Pupils throughout the school are planning, designing, making and evaluating and there is clear evidence of skills being well developed. Standards of work are above those expected for their age by Year 2 and Year 6 in both art and design and design and technology, and all pupils achieve well.
61. It is not possible to make a judgement about standards in **physical education** but pupils clearly are very positive about it and speak knowledgeably about athletics, games, gymnastics and dance. The sporting opportunities are very good, with pupils taking part in football, netball, rounders, volleyball and tag rugby, and with many opportunities to join in competitions with other schools. Pupils spoken to are proud of the school's sporting achievements and successes and, during the inspection week, boys and girls in Year 6 received an award for reaching the final of a tag-rugby competition.
62. Subject leaders are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and have a good grasp of the strengths of their subject areas and what needs to be done to improve. The physical education subject leader has been a prime mover in enabling the school to get a sports grant and in forming links with other schools and colleges so as to give pupils better facilities and coaching. The design and technology leader has helped develop staff confidence and develop a comprehensive scheme of work which enables pupils to progress through the school and develop skills. Some good uses of ICT are also seen. One example is the Year 4 work on lighting, which also links science, literacy and geography. Another is the use of computer control and modelling in the Year 6 designing of playground rides. The art and design leader has made effective use of the artist in residence and the art displays show healthy progression of skills. Although some classrooms are rather cramped, accommodation is suitable for the needs of the curriculum and staff make very good use of what is available. Resources are good and are well used.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in music are good and pupils achieve very well because of very good teaching.
- The very good use of the specialist teacher's knowledge and skills has raised the profile of music in the school and is integral to raising standards.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to music and respond very well in lessons.

Commentary

63. Pupils' attainment is above the expected levels by Year 2 and Year 6 and standards are rising as pupils achieve very well. Since September, the skills of a specialist music teacher have been used throughout the school and this has had a significant impact in raising the profile of music and developing very positive attitudes in the pupils, a number of whom spoke very warmly of their enjoyment of the subject. Pupils are offered a broad and balanced range of curricular opportunities in the composing, performing and appreciation of music.
64. The quality of teaching is very good. The specialist teacher clearly has very good teaching skills as well as being a very competent musician. Lessons are very well planned and prepared, with very good use of a good range of resources, and pupils know clearly what they are expected to learn. Expectations of both behaviour and work are very high and the lively presentation and stimulating range of activities enables pupils to really enjoy the lessons. In a Year 4 lesson seen, for example, pupils were learning to play the xylophone, using standard notation and, by the end of the lesson, were playing 'Westminster Chimes' and 'London's Burning' in different parts. All pupils spoken to have very positive attitudes and are keen to improve. Class teachers are closely involved in the lessons and work effectively in partnership with the music specialist. Pupils are taught basic skills very well, including posture, breathing, dynamics and rhythm. There is a real feel for both the words and the music and pupils sing expressively, sometimes in two-part harmony.
65. Music supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well, though there are not many examples of music from non-western cultures being used. Music particularly enhances spiritual awareness and listening to Years 5 and 6 sing 'The Potter's Hand' with such understanding, feeling and reflection was quite moving.
66. The subject is well managed and led. The specialist music teacher involvement has obviously been effective and the plans for extended involvement next year should further raise standards. The policy of getting the class teachers to work alongside the music specialist is an effective means of developing staff expertise. The choir is popular and effective in improving the quality of singing. In the choir practice seen, pupils sang tunefully, rhythmically, with clear diction and in two-part harmony. Pupils also have opportunity to sing at mass, in concerts and productions. The school joins many others in performing in the 'Young Voices' festival and this is very popular and was among the many positive features of music that Year 6 pupils spoke of. Improvement in this subject is very good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

67. The school's provision for promoting pupils' **personal, social and health education and citizenship** was sampled by talking with pupils and staff. It is evident that personal, social and health education and citizenship are an integral part of the school's curriculum and this is reflected in the very positive and very good attitudes that pupils display towards school and in their very good behaviour. The very positive views that pupils hold and their obvious trust in adults throughout the school reflect the very good relationships which exist and the confidence that pupils develop because they feel very secure. These are extremely positive

features in helping to raise pupils' attainment and achievement. The school is currently working towards achieving a *Healthy Schools Award* and during discussions pupils showed a good knowledge of healthy living. They know about balanced diets, the good effects of exercise and the dangers of drugs. The school council is developing very well, and gives pupils insights into the workings of democracy, and how their views can influence decisions. The involvement of the pupils in actively participating in the process of electing candidates for the school council enables them to experience citizenship in action. The subject leader provides good leadership and management and has a good action plan in place to improve provision even further. As a result of very good provision, pupils become caring, mature and responsible young people who are well prepared for life beyond the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
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	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	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	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
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).