

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST JOHN FISHER ROMAN CATHOLIC  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

St Alban's

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117480

Acting Headteacher: Mrs L Barton

Lead inspector: Mr M Newell

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> November 2004

Inspection number: 272044

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its

summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Infant and Junior  
School category: Voluntary Aided  
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 206

School address: Hazelmere Road  
St Alban's  
Hertfordshire

Postcode: AL4 9RW

Telephone number: 01727 861077

Fax number: 01727 831163

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of Mrs Lucy Hoad  
governors:

Date of previous 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1999  
inspection:

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated about two miles out of the city centre of St Alban's in Hertfordshire. The school gained a School Achievement Award in 2000. There are 206 pupils on roll with an almost identical number of boys and girls. The school is about the same size as other primary schools nationally. There is no significant level of pupil mobility. The majority of pupils are of white ethnicity and whilst there are a number of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, none are at an early stage of acquiring English. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs and the percentage of pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs are broadly in line with the national average. The nature of special educational needs includes specific learning difficulties, speech and communication, hearing impairment and physical. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals stands at 3 per cent and this is below the national average. Attainment when children start at the school covers the full ability range and is a little above average overall. The Governing Body has met with great difficulty in recruiting a permanent headteacher. During the week of the inspection an acting headteacher was in post but only for the autumn term. In the previous academic year the deputy

headteacher had assumed the post of acting headteacher. For the Spring and Summer terms of 2005 another acting headteacher will be in post.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10638	Martin Newell	Lead inspector	Science Music Physical education Personal, social and health education and citizenship
11437	Tony Anderson	Lay inspector	
32614	Marion Hunter	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology
20003	Susan Metcalfe	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language English
32415	Jane Allison	Team inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum History Geography

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Inspections Limited  
102 Bath Road  
Cheltenham  
GL53 7JX

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>10</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>13</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>34</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

This is a **good** school in terms of how well pupils achieve and attain but until the appointment of the acting headteacher it has lacked a sense of rigour in terms of how it monitors and evaluates its performance. Pupils achieve and attain well, and at times very well, in a number of subjects by the time that they leave school. There are significant strengths in many aspects of school life and the acting headteacher has moved the school forward considerably during her time in post. Taking all factors into account the school is providing good value for money.

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

- The acting headteacher has set a very clear and accurate agenda of precisely what is needed to improve the school further and governance has some significant strengths.
- Attainment is high in English, mathematics and science and pupils achieve well in these and some other subjects.
- The quality of teaching and learning overall is good across the school and very good in Year 5. Teaching assistants contribute much to the quality of pupils' learning.
- Pupils love school and all it has to offer, are keen to do their best and behave very well and contribute significantly to the life of the school as a community. Attendance rates are high.
- Although presently improving well the role played by subject leaders has been unsatisfactory over time
- The curriculum is good and is enhanced by very good enrichment of learning opportunities and the good provision made for pupils with special educational needs.
- The use made of assessment data has improved significantly this term but procedures for target setting and tracking pupils' progress are not yet firmly embedded enough in school practice.
- Better use needs to be made of pupils' computer skills across the curriculum.
- The school provides well for the care and welfare of all pupils and celebrates the individuality of pupils.
- The good links with parents and the very good links with the community and other schools bring an added dimension to the quality of pupils' learning.
- Assessment procedures in most of the foundation subjects are unsatisfactory.

Improvement since the time of the last inspection has been satisfactory overall. There were no key issues identified just minor ones. Most of these minor issues were addressed although there is still need for further improvements in how computers are used to support pupils' learning and for better assessment procedures. Standards and how well pupils achieve have improved well in some subjects since the time of the last inspection. Many of the strengths identified at the last inspection have been maintained with staff and governors recognising the need for a more rigorous approach to how the school evaluates its performance.



## STANDARDS ACHIEVED

### Year 6 results

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

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

Pupils' achievement is **good** overall in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1-6. Pupils in Year 5 achieve particularly well. The above table shows that on the basis of the 2004 National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils, attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above the national average and above average when compared to similar schools on the basis of prior attainment. Inspection findings show that standards in English, mathematics and science are on track to be well above average by the end of Year 6. Standards in information and communication technology are at an average level and achievement is satisfactory. Standards in art and design, music, history and aspects of physical education are above average and pupils achieve well. Standards in all other inspected subjects are never less than average and achievement not less than satisfactory, and good when teaching in lessons is good.

Inspection findings show that by the end of Year 2 standards are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils are generally achieving well. Standards are at an average level in information and communication technology and achievement is satisfactory. Standards in art and design, history, music and elements of physical education are above average and achievement good. Standards in other subjects are at least average and achievement never less than satisfactory.

Attainment when children start at the school covers the full ability range but is a little above average overall. All children make good progress and by the end of the reception year almost all attain the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals whilst a significant number exceed them.

Across the school pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well because of the good provision that is made for these pupils and in particular the teaching assistants who make a significant and pivotal contribution to how well pupils achieve.

Overall pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** and very good for pupils' moral and social development. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Behaviour is very good in class and around the school. The attitudes of pupils are very good and they clearly enjoy coming to school, which

is reflected in the well above national average attendance rates. Punctuality is very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** overall. Teaching in the Foundation Stage strikes a good balance between child initiated activities and the direct teaching of key skills and concepts. Teaching in Years 1-6 is good overall. Teaching is its best when lessons zip along at a cracking pace, work is challenging and demanding and learning is made fun. Often, there are good opportunities to learn through well planned and focused investigative and problem solving tasks. On occasions lessons lack a real sense of pace or only get going after a sluggish start. Teaching is at its strongest in Year 5 where the focus and pace of learning never drops, relationships are very strong and pupils are under no illusions as to what is expected of them. Invariably the pupils rise to the challenge. The acting headteacher has recently put in place good procedures for data analysis, target setting and for tracking pupils' progress which are just starting to give the school a better idea as to how individual and groups of pupils are performing. However, over time assessment has been unsatisfactory.

The curriculum on offer is good with very good learning opportunities provided outside of the formal curriculum through visits, visitors and a good range of extra curricular clubs and activities. Accommodation and resources are good. The school places a good priority on pupils' welfare and well-being. Pupils' voices are listened to and acted upon well and there has recently been a school parliament set up which is to be extended into a school council. The good links with parents and the very good links with the community and other schools enhance the quality of pupils' educational and social experiences.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. Leadership and management of the acting headteacher are good. In her short time in post she has very quickly, accurately and astutely identified the areas the school needs to address to improve so it is an even better school. Although the role played by subject leaders is currently improving rapidly, evidence indicates that over time this role has not been satisfactory because they have not played a proactive or rigorous enough role in monitoring and evaluating standards, teaching and learning in subjects that they are responsible for. Governance of the school is very good. Governors have instigated a number of very successful initiatives in their contribution to school improvement and have a very good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a very astute awareness of standards and achievement across the school.

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

Most parents are very happy with the quality of education that the school provides and feel that good quality teaching helps children to achieve and attain well. Parents have had some reservations over the last twelve months in terms of the quality of

information provided for them but feel that it is much improved this term. Parents are very supportive of the school and their child's education although a number are a little concerned about the lack of a permanent headteacher. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and all it has to offer. The pupils state that relationships in school are very good and that bullying or bad behaviour are not issues of concern to them. However, they were eager to point out that they would have no doubt whatsoever that should bullying occur it would be dealt with very quickly, fairly and sensitively.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure that subject leaders and all members of the senior management team play a strong, active and effective role in monitoring standards, teaching and learning across the school in subjects that they are responsible for and that they tackle any weaknesses and disseminate good practice.
- Ensure that test and assessment data are used in a rigorous manner for setting targets for individual pupils, that pupils' progress is closely tracked and reasons evaluated and action taken if pupils do not reach their targets or indeed exceed them.
- Ensure that meaningful and relevant opportunities for computers to be used to support and enhance pupils' learning in different subjects of the curriculum are planned for and capitalised on.
- Establish good quality and effective procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress in the foundation subjects.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Standards are well **above average** in the core subjects and above average in a number of other subjects by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1-6 achieve **well**.

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

- Children get off to a good start in the reception class.
- Pupils in Years 1-6 make good progress in their learning and achieve well, particularly in Year 5
- Pupils attain particularly well in English, mathematics and science as well reaching good standards in some other subjects.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates.
- Better use of computers across the curriculum could improve standards.

#### **Commentary**

##### **FOUNDATION STAGE**

1. Attainment on entry to school covers the full ability range and is a little above average overall. During their time in the reception class all children make good progress and achieve well. By the time that children start in Year 1 almost all have attained the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning and a significant number of children exceed them and overall attainment is above the nationally expected level for their age.

##### **KEY STAGE 1**

2. On the basis of the 2004 teacher assessment trial results for Year 2 pupils, attainment was well above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. When the school's performance is compared to similar schools on the basis of free school meals, attainment is well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Attainment has been at this level over time and the school's trend of improvement has been broadly in line with the national trend. Inspection findings indicate that this pattern is continuing with standards well above average in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils of all abilities generally achieve well. Standards in information and communication technology are at an average level and achievement is satisfactory. Standards are above average in art and design, history, music and aspects of physical education and pupils achieve well. Standards in other inspected subjects are at an average level with examples of good work and achievement is never less than satisfactory and at times good. There is no significant evidence of

differences in achievement of boys and girls or different groups of pupils in any subjects.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.1 (18.4)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.5 (17.2)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.9 (18.2)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

### KEY STAGE 2

3. On the basis of the 2004 National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils, attainment was well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. When the school's performance is compared to similar schools on the basis of prior attainment and on the basis of free school meals, attainment is above average in all three subjects. The trend of improvement for the school is a little below the national trend. Inspection findings show that pupils continue to do well as attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above average. All pupils achieve well with achievement particularly strong for the Year 5 pupils because of the very effective teaching. Standards in information and communication technology are at an average level and achievement satisfactory. However standards could be better as opportunities are not consistently provided in Years 1-6 for pupils to develop and enhance their skills by using computers in different subjects of the curriculum. Standards in art and design, history and music are above average with all pupils achieving well. Standards in all other inspected subjects are at least at an average level with examples of good work in subjects such as design and technology. Achievement is never less than satisfactory.

### Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6- average points score 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.8 (29.8)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	29.0 (29.6)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.4 (31.6)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs achieve well because work that is set for them matches their needs. The pupils benefit from good levels of support and the teaching assistants make a significant contribution to how well pupils learn and achieve. Pupils make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall. Their social and moral development is **very good** and their spiritual and cultural development is **satisfactory**. Pupils' attendance and punctuality at the school is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are well motivated and are keen to do well.
- The high standards of behaviour and the strong relationships add much to the ethos of the school.
- Incidences of bullying are rare.
- Very good provision is made for pupils' moral and social development which impacts positively on their personal development.
- More could be done to enhance pupils' spiritual and cultural development
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in the high attendance rates.

### **Commentary**

5. Relationships across the school are very good and add much to the sense of community within the school. Pupils are respectful to one another and to all adults in the school. Older pupils take responsibility for caring for the younger pupils and younger pupils see the older ones as very good role models. Extensive discussions with pupils show that they do not see bullying as an issue. Furthermore pupils are keen to point out that should it occur they have every confidence that it would be dealt with quickly and sensitively. Pupils also feel that there is always an adult to talk to in school, should they have any worries or concerns. Many of the strengths, identified at the previous inspection, in terms of pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal qualities have been maintained.
6. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and all that it has to offer. In many lessons pupils show high levels of commitment and concentration and are keen to achieve well. Many pupils take a real pride in their work and have a genuine desire to do well. By the time that pupils leave the school they are highly motivated learners. Discussions with pupils show that they are enthused by the learning activities on offer as well as the very good array of enrichment opportunities such as visits, visitors to the school and the extra-curricular clubs and activities. These factors add much to the quality of the learning environment within the school.
7. The behaviour of pupils both within class and around the school is very good. Pupils listen attentively and show good levels of respect to adults and to classmates. Pupils are very self-disciplined and very polite and courteous to visitors. Behaviour at break times and lunch times is equally good and this helps to make these times of the day pleasant social occasions. Pupils play well together with older pupils showing a good awareness of the needs of the younger pupils. There have been no exclusions during the last twelve months.

8. Pupils' personal development is good and is enhanced by the very good provision that the school makes for their moral and social development. Much social responsibility is invested in pupils because they are asked to carry out a wide range of different tasks and responsibilities around the school. They carry out these tasks with high levels of maturity and responsibility. Pupils also show a high level of readiness to take initiative and responsibility for their own learning. Although there is currently no school council in place at the school, there is a pupils' parliament during which pupils take part in short debates and are invited to vote on issues of the day. The high standards of behaviour owe much to the strong emphasis that the school places on the moral development of pupils. The school nurtures pupils' moral development through assemblies and discussions that cover a wide range of social issues. This helps pupils to gain a strong insight into justice and fairness and to have a very secure understanding of the difference between right and wrong and of the impact that their actions could have on others. The provision that is made for pupils' spiritual and cultural development although satisfactory is not as strong as the provision made for pupils' moral and social development. Although the headteacher leads assemblies in an excellent manner and spirituality abounds there are other occasions when this is not the case and opportunities are not always capitalised on within lessons to promote pupils' spiritual awareness. Although good provision is made for recognising and celebrating pupils' own culture, less evidence is available as to how a wide range of differing cultures and beliefs are celebrated.

**Attendance**

9. The overall attendance at the school is very good and is well above the national average. The incidence of unauthorised absence is low. Punctuality is very good and only very occasionally are pupils late coming to school. The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school in terms of helping to ensure that their children attend regularly and promptly. The school is very proactive in promptly following up unexplained absence and occasional lateness.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003/2004 (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	3.6	School data:	0.0
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Teaching and learning are **good** overall but assessment is **unsatisfactory**. The curriculum is **good** with **very good**

enrichment opportunities for pupils' learning outside of the formal curriculum. The accommodation and resources are **good**. The care and welfare for pupils is **good** and guidance based on monitoring is **satisfactory**. The involvement of pupils through seeking, listening to and acting on their views is **good**. Links with parents are **good** and links with the community and other schools are **very good**.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. Assessment is **unsatisfactory** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is at its best in Year 5.
- Teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1-6 overall provides good learning opportunities and contributes much to how well pupils achieve.
- Although improving well at the present time, assessment over time has not been good enough.
- Teaching assistants make a powerful contribution to how well pupils learn.
- Pupils' writing skills are promoted well across the curriculum.
- Computers are not consistently used well to enhance pupils' learning in different subjects.

## Commentary

10. Teaching and learning are good across the school. Teaching is at its strongest, and is often very good or better in Year 5. Many of the strengths identified in teaching and learning at the last inspection have been maintained although the effectiveness of assessment has declined.
11. Teaching in the Foundation Stage provides children with a good range of learning activities that help to enthuse and motivate them. Children are given the opportunity to learn through practical tasks and activities and find things out for themselves as well as being directly taught key skills and concepts. Staff work well together and ensure that there is a consistent approach to meeting the individual needs of children. Teaching is becoming more successful at providing opportunities for children to plan and instigate some of their own learning activities but there are still occasions when opportunities are missed.
12. Reading skills are taught well across the school. Reading has a high profile in school and from an early age pupils are provided with a good range of strategies to help them tackle new words. Good attention is given to the development of pupils' phonic skills and they are taught well how to locate information. Good teaching continues as pupils move through school and by the time that pupils leave school many are very good readers with a battery of skills to help them read with expression, understanding and fluency as well as good referencing and research skills. These strengths owe much to the good quality direct teaching of key reading skills as well as the school's desire to help develop in pupils a genuine love for all kinds of literature. The main thrust of the school's desire for improvement has been in raising writing standards. The school has been successful because it ensures that across the school pupils are taught well the skills that are needed to write for a variety of different audience and purposes. Much is done to use other subjects of the curriculum as vehicles for developing pupils' writing skills in a stimulating and meaningful manner. Teaching pays good attention as to how different writing stimuli may enthuse boys and this has proved successful in significantly raising standards in boys' writing. The extended writing sessions that the school provides for all the older pupils are taught well and at times very well and again are factors contributing to the good improvement in writing.
13. Teaching in mathematics and science are good overall across the school. In mathematics, teaching provides good opportunities for pupils to learn through practical and problem solving tasks which become increasingly complex and challenging as pupils move up the school. Pupils are expected to explore a range of different strategies to arrive at the correct answer. In science a similar emphasis is given to developing pupils' investigative and experimental skills alongside the acquisition of a good body of scientific knowledge. Teaching is at its best when pupils are expected to put this knowledge to the test to help them make informed predictions or to offer an explanation as to why things happen as they do. Occasionally opportunities are missed for pupils to take a more proactive role in designing and instigating their own investigations. In

English, mathematics and science teaching is strongest for Year 5 pupils. There is consistently a high level of challenge for pupils in this class, the lessons invariably rattle along at a cracking pace, the teacher's enthusiasm infectious and the pupils under no illusion as to what is expected of them.

14. Teaching and learning in information and communication technology are satisfactory. Although there is some good teaching in terms of the direct teaching of key computer skills, teachers do not consistently plan well enough for how computers can be used in a relevant and meaningful way to support and enhance pupils' learning in the different subjects of the curriculum. Teaching is good in history because teachers use drama, role play and artefacts to help bring the subject to life. Good opportunities are provided in art and design for pupils to work with a wide range of exciting materials and media and in this subject as well as design and technology specific skills and techniques are taught in a direct and systematic manner. In music the skills of peripatetic teachers are put to good use to provide good quality musical tuition on a range of instruments for a good number of pupils in the school. Teachers' own enthusiasm is often used to good effect to motivate and enthuse the pupils, such as in an excellent dance lesson for the Year 5 pupils.
  
15. The teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs are good. Work is well matched to the individual needs of the pupils. Individual education plans are of a good standard and the contents shared with pupils and parents alike. Teaching assistants are closely involved in drawing up individual targets for pupils and the contribution that teaching assistants make to pupils' learning is significant to their progress as well as being highly valued by teachers and pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants use a good range of teaching and learning strategies to help pupils achieve well.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (6%)	8 (24%)	19 (56%)	5 (15%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

16. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory with an increasing emphasis put on the analysis of any available data to help guide and inform curriculum planning. Assessment for pupils with special educational needs is good and used well to identify pupils' needs at an early age. The acting headteacher has introduced good quality assessment, target setting and tracking procedures this term for English, mathematics and science. If rigorously followed up and built on in the future these procedures should provide good information and data to closely track pupils' progress and evaluate and take action if pupils do not reach their targets or indeed exceed them. The weakness is that these procedures have only just been instigated, and as a result, they have not yet had enough time to impact as well as they could on pupils' achievement. Over

time assessment has been unsatisfactory in the core subjects. This is compounded by the fact that there are no formal procedures in place for assessing and tracking pupils' performance in the foundation subjects of the curriculum.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is **good** overall and there are **very good** opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation is **good** and resources are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The provision for pupils with special educational needs contributes much to their progress.
- The Foundation Stage curriculum and the curriculum in Years 1-6 offer stimulating and interesting learning opportunities.
- Visits, visitors and other activities are used very well to enhance the quality of pupils' learning.
- There have been recent and good improvements in the resources for information and communication technology.

### **Commentary**

17. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good. It provides a good range of learning opportunities where there is a good balance struck between practical, hands-on learning experiences and the direct teaching of key skills. The school recognises that young children learn best as a result of their own experiences. The curriculum on offer in Years 1-6 is also good. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and ensures that all subjects are covered and taught in sufficient depth. The good emphasis that is given to subjects other than the core subjects is reflected in the fact that standards are above average in a number of foundation subjects by the time that pupils leave the school. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to put their literacy skills to the test across different subjects of the curriculum. Improvement overall, in the school's curriculum, since the last inspection has been satisfactory.
18. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Good use is made of the skills of outside agencies to support learning by helping staff to identify needs and suggest work to match the individual education plans of such pupils. The school has a very positive, inclusive focus and monitors pupils' access to all learning activities across the school. Individual education plans are of a good standard and teaching assistants contribute much to how well pupils learn. The provision that is made for higher attaining pupils is good and enables pupils to achieve well. At present the school does not have any pupils who are at an early stage of acquiring English but strategies are in place to identify and provide for their need.

19. There is a very good range of activities to support and enhance pupils' learning outside the classroom. Visitors, such as an artist in residence, a local rugby club, puppet makers and others are invited into school to help pupils gain a wider view of the curriculum taught. Outside visits to places of historic and geographical interest are arranged to support pupils' work and help to bring learning to life. An annual residential trip gives Year 6 pupils an opportunity to work together away from home in safe surroundings and to develop their personal and social skills. The many links with local secondary schools are a strength of the school and pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have weekly French lessons with a teacher from a local high school. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities and there are good opportunities for pupils to take part in inter-school sporting competitions. Discussions with pupils indicate how pupils appreciate the effort that the school puts in to making learning more fun and enjoyable.
20. The school provides well for personal, health and social education and has good procedures for teaching pupils about drug abuse. Teachers use the science and physical education curriculum to promote healthy living and lifestyle and good opportunities are provided within the timetable to talk about moral and social issues and citizenship. Plans are in hand to finalise a programme for the teaching of sex education and to discuss it with parents before it becomes embedded in school practice.
21. The school's accommodation and resources are good and are used well to enhance the quality of pupils' learning. Support staff are used well. The school's grounds are extensive and attractive and increasingly good use is being made of the outside play area for children in the Foundation Stage. Resources are generally good in many subjects and bring an added dimension to learning. The school has recently invested in providing a suite of computers that are used regularly and well to develop pupils' skills and this is beginning to impact positively on the standards that pupils achieve.

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

The procedures for ensuring pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are **good**. Procedures for supporting and guiding pupils through monitoring are **satisfactory**. The procedures for seeking and acting on pupils' views are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are cared for well.
- Systems for monitoring pupils' academic progress are not yet fully embedded in school practice to have the biggest possible impact on standards.
- Relationships are a significant strength.
- Good health and safety procedures are in place.
- The systems in place to seek and act on pupils' views of the school are good.

### **Commentary**

22. Good child protection systems and procedures are in place and the reporting person is known to all staff in the school. Recent and relevant staff training in child protection matters has taken place. The school teaching and support staff, occasionally supported by external agencies, provide a good level of welfare support to individual pupils as evidenced, for example, by the good provision for pupils with special educational needs. In the classroom, teachers and support staff know their pupils well and they are quick to observe any personal difficulties exhibited by pupils and to take appropriate and remedial action. The school operates a good first aid system for minor accidents. Regular fire drills are carried out and the school maintains a detailed record. A further log is maintained of pupils' medical records including food allergies, which are copied to relevant staff around the school. The school carries out health and safety audits of the site and is proactive when considering possible risks on external trips out of school. These overall good quality procedures for ensuring pupils' health and welfare have been maintained since the time of the last inspection.
23. The procedures for monitoring and guiding pupils' academic achievements are good but have only been introduced recently. This means that they have not yet had sufficient time to impact as well as they could on helping to make pupils' achievement and attainment even better. The procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development, although informal, are satisfactory because staff know and recognise pupils' personal needs well. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and this adds much to the ethos of the school. Staff work closely as a team to encourage pupils to work and behave to the best of their ability and pupils understand the school's high expectations of good behaviour.
24. Good arrangements are made for pupils' to undertake a range of responsibilities around the school and pupils' voices are listened to and valued. Although there is not yet a school council in place, other opportunities are provided for pupils to have a voice in the way the school is run and managed through the recently set up school parliament. Discussions with pupils indicate that they value and appreciate this forum and plans are already in hand to develop a more formal school council. Pupils are confident at expressing their views both in the parliament and in personal and social education lessons where their views on different aspects of school life are often explored and acted upon. Several pupils were interviewed during the inspection and all demonstrated growing confidence and high levels of self-esteem. They are clearly very happy at this school.

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

The school has a **good** partnership with parents. The school's links with the local community and other schools are **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school welcomes parents and the good partnership between home and school impacts positively on pupils' learning.
- Information provided for parents is generally good.
- The school has developed very strong and purposeful links with other schools.
- The school utilises the community very well to support the curriculum.

## **Commentary**

25. The school has continued to maintain a good partnership with parents since the time of the last inspection. A significant majority of parents are very supportive of the school and of its aims and objectives. They feel that their children like school, make good progress and achieve well and that all staff are approachable. Most parents state that behaviour is a strength of the school and that the learning activities on offer are fun and interesting. A minority of parents registered a little concern over the lack of a permanent headteacher and said that communication between home and school had not been at its best during the last academic year. However, they were keen to point out that there had been significant improvements in communication during the present term and felt very positive about the leadership of the acting headteacher.
26. The information provided by the school through the prospectus, annual governors' report to parents and via regular and very well designed newsletters is of a good standard. Annual academic reports to parents, about their child's progress are of a good standard particularly in relation to the reporting of the main core subjects. However, there is a little inconsistency across the school in the clarity and depth of identified areas for pupil improvement. There are two parents' evenings each year during which parents have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress and these evenings are generally very well attended by parents. The school has also established good links with parents of pupils with special educational needs. They are kept fully informed of the progress of their children, are consulted about the planned targets to support their children's learning and invited to frequent reviews of these targets.
27. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school and in supporting their child's education. A number of parents are frequent visitors to the school both in terms of providing very welcome classroom support and in assisting with external visits. The Parent Teachers Association is very strong and also very successful in its fundraising efforts. For example, the Parent Teachers Association has recently been able to improve the provision of computer equipment. Parental attendance at school concerts, celebrations and sports days is very good. Parents are very supportive of their child's education and contribute much at home to helping them to achieve well.
28. The school has established strong links with the community and other schools which impact well on pupils' social as well as their academic achievements. Many incoming visitors from the community are used well to enhance curricular access and these include representatives of the fire and police service, a local

artist, a local author and many visitors linked to sports such as cricket, football, rugby, tennis and athletics. The school has very good links with the local parish church where all children are invited to take part in special masses. There are particularly good musical and sporting links with other schools and institutions. Pupils, for example, who play musical instruments are invited to a local music school for a 'Stringalong'. The schools' netball and football teams regularly play against other schools in the locality. Pupils attend a range of different activities at high schools in the locality including technology days, keyboard classes and dramatic and musical productions. A teacher from a high school visits the school to teach French to some pupils. These all help pupils' transfer to high school to be trouble free as well as providing fun learning experiences.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The leadership and management of the acting headteacher are **good**. Leadership of key staff overall is presently **satisfactory**. There is **very good** governance of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The acting headteacher has very quickly, accurately and astutely identified areas for school improvement and put in place strategies to address important issues.
- The role subject leaders and some members of the senior management team have played in monitoring teaching, learning and standards have not been effective enough over time.
- Leadership and management of English and special educational needs are good.
- Governors have played a very proactive and effective role in helping the school to keep moving forward.
- Financial management and school administration are good.

### **Commentary**

29. Despite the concerted, persistent and very professional efforts of the Governing Body the school has, over time, found difficulties in recruiting a permanent headteacher. During the last two and a half years the school has had different headteachers and during that period of time the rate of school improvement, although satisfactory overall, has not been as dynamic as it could have been. However, since the appointment of the present, but temporary acting headteacher, the rate of school improvement has increased significantly. In her short time in post she has very swiftly, astutely and accurately set an agenda for school improvement directly aimed at raising standards and pupil achievement still further. She has most successful and has carried out her role in a very professional and rigorous manner. She has not shirked from tackling the issues that were most needed to move the school forward at a more dynamic pace. There is, amongst many staff, a shared

desire for improvement and a clearer focus as to what they need to do to contribute to the school's further success.

30. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory with the co-ordinator, who is new to the post, developing an increasing awareness and recognition of the quality of provision that is needed to ensure that the needs of how young children learn best are well met. Management of special educational needs is good and ensures that the school is an inclusive school where the individual needs of pupils are met well and that support is targeted to where the need is greatest. At present the school does not have any pupils who are at an early stage of acquiring English but management strategies are in place to identify and provide for their need when necessary. The role of subject leaders has improved significantly since the appointment of the present headteacher and the role is now satisfactory. However evidence clearly indicates that over time subject leaders and members of the senior management team have not played a proactive enough role in monitoring teaching, learning and standards in subjects or aspects of school life that they were responsible and accountable for. As such the role played has been unsatisfactory. A similar position also pertained in relation to the analysis of test and assessment data. Procedures and the expectations on subject leaders to carry out such analyses only took on any significant importance with the appointment of the current acting headteacher.
31. During the period of a lack of a permanent headteacher the governing body of the school has worked tirelessly in its recruitment drive. Equally impressive has been the governors' commitment to working with the school in a very supportive manner whilst at the same time playing a very proactive role in holding the school to account for the quality of education that it provides. Governors are regular visitors to the school, both as individuals and in their role as link governors to different subjects or aspects of school life. Outcomes of visits are formally recorded and fed back to the full governing body. Governors have instigated a number of initiatives in their contribution to school improvement and have played a significant and telling role in the strategic management and planning for the school and in acting as a critical friend. Governors have a very good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a very astute awareness of standards and achievement across the school. The Chair of Governors has played a particularly significant role during the last two years in both supporting and challenging the school and in having an excellent grasp of what is needed to drive the school on. She has led the governors in asking very pertinent and relevant questions about pupil achievement and whilst recognising successes shows a determined commitment to look for further ways of improvement. Governors fulfil their statutory duties very well and put their professional skills to very good use for the benefit of the school. All these factors contribute much to the strong and effective governance of the school with evidence clearly indicating that as a body they make a difference to how the school performs.

32. Financial planning and budget control are good. The school and governors ensure the principles of best value are applied well when purchasing goods and services. Good procedures are in place to assess the impact of major spending decisions on standards and the quality of education provided. Spending is very much linked to the educational priorities that are identified in the school development plan. The finance committee of the Governing Body play a very effective role in both setting the budget and monitoring spending patterns. The office staff ensure that the day-to-day running of the school is smooth, unobtrusive and efficient. Taking all factors into account the school is providing good value for money.

## Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	465 782	Balance from previous year	35 804
Total expenditure	482 945	Balance carried forward to the next	18 641
Expenditure per pupil	2 344		

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

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children get off to a good start in the reception class.
- Teaching provides varied and stimulating learning activities which enable all children to achieve well.
- Adults work well together and are very good role models.
- Some opportunities for children to plan and develop their own activities independently particularly over an extended period of time, are missed.

### Commentary

33. Children are admitted to school in the September after their fourth birthday. The ten oldest children receive full-time education. Others increase their attendance, from half days to full days, in the January term. All children have benefited from some form of pre-school education before they start at the school. Attainment on entry covers the full ability range but is a little above average overall. All children make good progress and achieve well and by the end of the reception year almost all attain the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals whilst a significant number exceed them. Attainment is

therefore above the nationally expected level for children of this age by the end of the reception year in all areas of learning. Children are well prepared for entry into Year 1. Improvement has been satisfactory since the time of the last inspection.

34. The quality of teaching is good and enables children to make good progress. The well-planned and varied range of learning activities and the good resources stimulate the children's interest and desire to learn. The teacher is new to the Foundation Stage and is developing the skills of how to balance adult-led with child-initiated activities. There are occasions when opportunities are sometimes lost for children to plan and extend activities independently over a period of time. Adults work well together to make learning fun and enjoyable and they provide very good role models for the children. Staff are aware of and sensitive to individual children's needs and all children are treated equally and fairly. Overall, assessment is satisfactory, and the day-to-day on going assessment is good and means that staff are able to monitor the children's progress closely and to modify their planning to ensure that teaching is focused on the next steps in learning.
35. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the teacher is increasingly monitoring curriculum provision to ensure that it is best matched to the way in which young children learn. Good channels of communication have been set up with parents although it is the school's policy to exclude Foundation Stage parents from helping in their children's own classroom. The accommodation has been improved since the last inspection. The classroom has been refurbished and is attractive and welcoming providing a good learning environment. There is now a secure and well designed outside area with a good range of large play equipment. This is well used and enriches the children's learning experiences.
36. Children achieve well in their **personal, social and emotional development** and most attain, with a significant minority exceeding, the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. Teaching and learning are good. Staff share a consistent approach, providing a calm and secure environment with well established routines so that children grow in confidence. Staff use every opportunity to praise acts of consideration and kindness as well as sustained effort and application. Children respond well, treating each other with respect and co-operating with adults. They enjoy school and are pleased to arrive in the morning. Throughout the day children behave very well and respond maturely to the high expectations that staff set for good behaviour and self-discipline. Teaching helps to ensure that children are well motivated and this is reflected in children's concentration levels which are good. Although teaching puts a good emphasis on children developing as independent learners, there are occasions when children are not always given the opportunity to initiate and instigate their own learning activities.
37. Children make good progress and achieve well in the area of **communication, language and literacy** skills. Most children attain the Early Learning Goals

with a good percentage of children exceeding them by the end of the reception year. Teaching and learning are good. Staff plan a wide range of activities to promote good communication skills. Sensitive use of praise encourages listening and taking turns, and good questioning develops the children's speaking skills. Teaching places a good emphasis on the development of early phonic skills and awareness. Early writing skills are developed equally well with higher-attaining children already writing simple familiar words accurately and making good attempts at more complex words. Less able children use drawings and emergent writing confidently to record stories and events and all children are encouraged to use paper and pencil independently across a range of activities. Children make good progress in their reading and staff read stories with animation and enthusiasm. Children clearly enjoy books and listening to stories and retell the essential features accurately.

38. Children achieve well in their **mathematical development**. Teaching and learning are good and most children will attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year and a significant minority of children will exceed them. Teaching ensures that number knowledge and skills are developed and reinforced through imaginative games and songs, well-chosen computer programs and stimulating practical activities. Children count confidently to ten and discuss higher and lower numbers. They sort and match, recognise and create patterns, name simple two-dimensional shapes and have a good awareness of time through daily classroom routines. Staff constantly reinforce the use of correct mathematical language across a wide range of activities. Children show a keen enjoyment of mathematical activities and, for example, when learning about symmetry, a group was entranced by discovering they could create butterflies by using paint and folded paper.
39. Many children's attainment in **knowledge and understanding of the world** exceeds the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the reception class and achievement is good. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching provides many stimulating practical activities which help the children to explore the world in which they live. Children are asked to compare wet and dry sand, find out about the effects of the wind, make baptism party food and discuss why things look different through transparent sheets of different colours. Children respond with high levels of natural curiosity. Good use of questioning challenges their understanding further. For example, when the children made camouflaged homes for a variety of wild animals, one child struggled to understand how she could hide her polar bear but the nursery nurse persisted gently with her questioning until the child grasped the concept. The children use the computers in the classroom well and regularly and many children are already using the mouse confidently and acquiring good basic keyboard skills. The teacher uses the digital camera constantly to record a wide range of classroom activities and special events. Children learn much about their own feelings and those of others through religious education lessons and the act of collective worship.

40. By the end of the reception year many children have attained the Early Learning Goals in their physical **development** and a good number of children exceed them. Good teaching and learning helps children to achieve well in terms of the development of their gross and fine motor skills. The teacher makes good use of the outdoor play area throughout much of the school day. The children are taught to use the wheeled toys and the climbing equipment safely and creatively. The teacher creates imaginative links between physical education and other areas of the curriculum. For example, the children acted out the story, "The Train Ride", on wheeled toys on a chalked out track, remembering the sequence of events in the story. Children control their bodies well in physical education lessons in the hall and show a good sense of space and an understanding of how to start and stop and perform different movements. They are aware of the changes in their bodies brought about by exercise. A good range of well-planned practical activities, including painting, printing, sticking and cutting, enables the children to improve their fine motor skills and, as a result, most children show good levels of control when they are using a range of tools.
41. By the end of the reception year most children have attained the Early Learning Goals in terms of their **creative development**, with a good percentage of children exceeding them. Achievement is good because of good quality teaching and learning. Teaching ensures that there is a good range of activities to develop children's creative skills. There are good opportunities for the children to develop skills in many areas including drawing, painting, printing, collage and construction. Staff provide direct teaching to help children learn new skills but also leave room for the children to experiment and to extend their imaginations. For example, when the children made their camouflaged animal homes they were encouraged to choose their own materials and to discuss the reasons for their choices. The teacher provides good opportunities for role play and the children respond well by developing their own imaginative stories and routines. The teacher guides the children well in dance encouraging them to respond with creative movements to different music and they show a good awareness of changes in mood. The children enjoy singing and join in confidently and tunefully in a variety of songs, prayers and rhymes.

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

### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

#### **French**

42. The school provides **French** lessons for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 in school. The lessons are taken by a teacher from a local high school that many of the Year 6 pupils transfer to. Evidence indicates that the subject is well taught and provides pupils with a good insight and early knowledge of conversational French. Discussions with pupils indicate that they really enjoy learning French

and that it also enables them to establish good early relationships and links with staff from the secondary school.

## English

Provision in English is **good**.

### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The quality of teaching plays an important role in how well pupils achieve.
- Reading and writing skills are taught well
- Literacy skills are developed well across the curriculum.
- Teaching assistants contribute much to the quality of pupils' learning.
- The local education authority literacy consultant, acting as the subject leader, has played a pivotal role in monitoring teaching and learning and helping to improve writing standards.

### Commentary

43. On the basis of the 2004 teacher assessment trials for Year 2 pupils, attainment was well above the national average in reading and writing and well above average when compared to similar schools on the basis of free school meals. The National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils showed attainment to be well above the national average and above average when compared to similar schools on the basis of prior attainment and free school meals. Inspection findings indicate that standards are on track to be well above average by the end of the year for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. The school has placed a great deal of emphasis on improving writing standards, particularly for boys, and the school has been successful in its efforts. Across the school pupils achieve well. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.
44. Speaking and listening skills are well above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Most pupils across the school listen very carefully and make appropriate replies and comments in class discussions. They speak with good levels of confidence and explain their thoughts clearly. Older pupils, especially in Years 5 and 6, have developed well the ability to identify key points in complex discussions and debate their own and others opinions with maturity. They question well what others, including their teachers, have to say and use an increasingly complex, but accurate, vocabulary in their conversations.
45. Pupils achieve very well in their reading across the school and reading has a high focus. Good teaching ensures that younger pupils know how to tackle unknown words or text, how to use information from the cover, the title, author, publisher and the illustrations to identify the type of book chosen and whether it is fiction or non-fiction. By the end of Year 2 many pupils are fluent and expressive readers. Skills continue to develop as pupils move through Years 3-6. By the time that pupils leave the school many are avid and very competent readers. Higher order reading skills such as skimming and scanning are taught well and pupils locate information quickly and accurately. The higher attaining pupils read and understand well, beyond the literal level.

Pupils have well developed research and library skills and have a wide knowledge of famous authors, poets and playwrights.

46. The school has targeted improving writing standards and its efforts have paid dividends. Writing skills are now taught well across the school and pupils are equipped with the skills to enable them to write well for a variety of audiences and purposes. Writing tasks have been particularly well targeted to capture the interest of boys, who have responded positively. The gap between the achievement and attainment of boys and girls in writing has narrowed considerably. By the end of Year 2 pupils' knowledge and use of punctuation is very secure. Pupils understand the need for capital letters and full stops, and use such as question, speech and exclamation marks with skill. They choose adventurous words instead of always falling back onto 'and' and 'then'. By the end of Year 6 pupils write extended pieces of writing for a wide range of different purposes and their writing is often of a good and at times very good standard. Writing often hooks and then maintains the interest of the reader. This has been helped by the fact that opportunities to write at length in a range of different styles now occur weekly in the classes of older pupils, separate from the literacy strategy work. Pupils have developed a love of words and enjoy writing with an expressive vocabulary. Their knowledge of grammar is very good and pupils are very secure in the range of punctuation they use.
47. Teaching and learning are good overall and very good for Year 5 pupils. Generally, teachers relate well to the pupils and this has a good, positive effect on attitudes to learning. Teaching is at its best when the enthusiasm and knowledge of the teacher is used to ignite the interest of the pupils and very good pace and challenge within lessons ensure pupils work very hard on clear, carefully focused activities that develop knowledge and skills very well. Within many lessons very effective questioning skills ensure that all pupils fully understand core ideas. Across the school teaching assistants make a significant and pivotal contribution to the way in which pupils with special educational needs learn. The marking of pupils' work is generally good and very good for some of the older pupils in school because pupils are given clear guidance as to what to do to improve. Where teaching is a little weaker, progress is slower as pupils are kept too long on the carpet during introductions and the lesson focus is sometimes lost. Teachers generally have high expectations of how pupils present their work and provide a language-rich environment and good quality resources to enable pupils to do so. Good attention is given to celebrating pupils' writing in displays in classrooms and around the school, generating in pupils a sense of pride and having a positive impact on the learning of all.
48. Leadership and management of the subject have been good because of the role played by the local education authority literacy consultant in leading the subject. She has been shadowed in this role by a member of the school staff who is to take over the role on a permanent basis. It is important that the good quality procedures that have been introduced for monitoring teaching

and learning, for analysing test and assessment data and for tracking pupils' progress continue to be rigorously carried out. The action plan drawn up for the subject is clear, detailed and focused on maintaining existing high standards and raising them higher wherever possible.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

49. The use of pupils' language and literacy skills across the curriculum is good. Pupils have many opportunities to use their skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing in other subjects apart from English. Discussion is a feature of most lessons and all pupils are encouraged to contribute. Science, religious education, history, geography and design and technology lessons are used effectively to develop and consolidate reading and writing skills in a range of forms.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A good range of different teaching strategies is used to enthuse and motivate pupils.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and this contributes much to how well they achieve.
- Teaching assistants contribute a great deal to how well pupils learn.
- The role of the subject leader and the use made of test and assessment data are not yet as effective as they could be.

### **Commentary**

50. On the basis of the 2004 teacher assessment trials for Year 2 pupils, attainment was well above the national average and above average when compared to similar schools on the basis of free school meals. The 2004 National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils showed attainment to be well above the national average and above average when compared to similar schools on the basis of prior attainment and free school meals. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils are on track to attain well above average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Across the school pupils achieve well and there is no significant evidence of differences in achievement between boys and girls. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall with good improvement in standards by the end of Year 2.
51. Pupils in Year 2 have good mental agility skills and are able to apply these well in problem solving tasks. Pupils have very well developed number skills and they confidently read, write and order numbers up to a hundred and beyond and have a good early understanding of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Their work with measurement and shape is very secure and pupils use a good range of mathematical vocabulary when talking about their work. Many pupils are confident at drawing simple graphs and interpreting the results. Pupils continue to develop their mathematical skills at a good rate as they move through Years 3-6 and by the time that pupils leave the school they are very confident and competent mathematicians. Pupils have very good number skills which are often put to the test in challenging investigative activities. Pupils invariably rise to the challenge. They have a strong knowledge of decimal notation and a good understanding of probability. Pupils measure accurately and have a very good awareness of the properties of regular and irregular shapes. They are confident at plotting co-ordinates in all four quadrants.
52. Teaching and learning are good overall and particularly good for Year 5 pupils. This is because work is consistently challenging and demanding, the pace of lessons is always high and pupils are made well aware of what is expected in terms of the quality and quantity of work. Across the school carefully planned

lessons start with a short mental mathematics session which quickly helps pupils think mathematically as well as filling the pupils with enthusiasm and enjoyment for learning. Pupils clearly enjoy the subject and are keen to do well. Teachers make sure pupils understand the purpose of the lesson and use a variety of teaching strategies which keeps them interested. Individual white boards are used for pupils to record individual answers which they discuss with their "talk partner", as well as using number fans and other practical resources. This means that pupils practise skills before they put pen to paper. Teachers often gets pupils to explore different strategies for arriving at an answer. These strategies are often shared with the rest of the class and this improves the learning for all pupils. When teaching assistants are present at mathematics lessons they are a valuable addition to the lesson, supporting individuals and small groups of pupils. Teachers expect good behaviour and pupils respond well, work hard and make good progress. The marking of pupils' work is generally good as it directs pupils to explore and learn from the mistakes that they have made.

53. The leadership and management of the subject are currently satisfactory because procedures have been recently introduced for the subject leader to monitor the quality of teaching and learning across the school and to play a more proactive role in analysing test and assessment data. However over time this has not been the case and until recently the role of subject leader has been unsatisfactory. The school has also recently introduced good quality procedures for assessing, target setting and tracking the attainment and progress of pupils. However, these procedures are not yet firmly embedded enough in school practice to have the biggest possible impact on further raising standards and how well pupils achieve.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

54. The use of pupils' mathematical and numeracy skills across different subjects is satisfactory. Although there are some good examples in subjects such as science, geography and design and technology, there are occasions when opportunities are missed such as in science when pupils are not always encouraged to measure accurately.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching generally strikes a good balance between developing pupils' scientific knowledge and their investigative skills, although occasionally there is a lack of challenge.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for the subject impacts positively on how well they achieve.

- Although the subject is often used well to enhance pupils' writing skills, better use could be made of computers to support learning.
- Over time the role of the subject leader, assessment and tracking of pupils' progress have not been good enough.

## Commentary

55. On the basis of the 2004 teacher assessments for Year 2 pupils, attainment was well above the national average. National Curriculum test results for Year 6 pupils in 2004 showed attainment to be well above the national average and above average when compared to similar schools on the basis of prior attainment and free school meals. The inspection findings indicate that this present level of high attainment is set to continue with standards on track to be well above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils achieve well and there is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall, although there has been a good improvement in standards at the end of Year 2.
56. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of healthy living and what constitutes a good diet. They label and know body parts well and differentiate well between living and non-living things. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the different characteristics of plants and animals and are very aware of how different materials are better suited to different conditions than others. Pupils have a strong early knowledge of circuits and electricity and talk about their work using a good level of scientific vocabulary. Pupils' investigative skills are good and they are already getting a good understanding of testing although they do not always measure as accurately as they could do. Pupils continue to develop skills and knowledge well as they move through Years 3-6. By the time that pupils leave school they have acquired a strong body of scientific knowledge and are confident scientific investigators. Pupils have a very good understanding of food chains and forces and are fully aware that micro-organisms can be both beneficial and harmful. Their knowledge of forces, materials and healthy living is very good. Alongside this knowledge pupils have developed good investigative skills and use their knowledge to good effect to help them make informed predictions and to explain well why things happen as they do.
57. Teaching and learning are good across the school with particular strengths for the older pupils in school. Teaching is effective at introducing at an early age to pupils the importance of finding things out through practical and investigative tasks. This continues as pupils move through the school so by the time that pupils leave school they carry out tests confidently. Occasionally there are examples at both key stages where there is not enough challenge in the activities provided. Teaching is often fun and generates in pupils a very positive attitude to the subject which results in high levels of interest, motivation and enthusiasm which impacts well on how well they achieve. Topics are often covered in depth and this gives pupils a greater understanding

of new scientific concepts. Marking of pupils' work is often good with clear pointers for improvement or concise comments to help pupils to understand a piece of learning that they have perhaps not fully understood. Some good examples were seen of the subject being used well to develop pupils' writing skills but teaching does not always capitalise on opportunities for computers to be used to produce, for example, tables, charts or graphs to record findings in different formats.

58. Leadership and management of the subject are currently satisfactory because procedures have been recently introduced to enable the subject leader to play a more rigorous and effective role in monitoring standards, teaching and learning and in the analysis of test and assessment data. It is clear however that over time the role of the subject leader has not been at this satisfactory level. The procedures that have just been put in place for target setting and tracking pupils' progress have not yet had sufficient time to have the maximum possible impact on standards and pupils' achievement.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are very enthusiastic about their information and communication technology lessons.
- Key skills are now being taught systematically.
- The use of information and communication technology is not routinely included in plans for other subjects.
- A teaching assistant's computer skills are put to good use to enhance the learning of some pupils.
- The role of subject leader is not yet as effective as it could be.

### **Commentary**

59. Standards are at an average level by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory. Improvement has been satisfactory since the time of the last inspection.
60. By the end of Year 2, pupils recognise the different icons on screen and save and retrieve their work. They have satisfactory keyboard skills and know how to change the size and colour of font. Pupils use a satisfactory level of technical language when talking about their work, and have a satisfactory understanding of how computers might be used in the wider world. There is little evidence of pupils giving instructions for a programmable toy. By the time pupils leave school many are competent computer users. Key Stage 2 pupils have satisfactory skills of word processing and are working at multi-media PowerPoint presentations. They write explanations of classroom displays,

devise posters and newspaper articles and merge text and pictures in a satisfactory manner. Pupils have less awareness of spreadsheets, but are knowledgeable about the potential of the Internet and electronic mailing.

61. Teaching and learning in the subject are satisfactory. A strength in teaching is that key skills are being taught to pupils in the computer suite and then tasks provided where pupils can put newly acquired skills to the test. Pupils are encouraged to try things out for themselves and teaching avoids being over directed. Pupils put a great deal of effort and enthusiasm into their computer work, learn quickly from their mistakes and are always ready to help a classmate that might be struggling. Though the new computer suite can only cater for a small number of pupils at a time, the school has organised its use so pupils are now getting more regular practice in the computer suite. This facility was not available before the start of the term and so in the past there have been more limited opportunities for pupils to systematically develop their computer skills. Good use is made of a teaching assistant who has good subject knowledge and expertise. She teaches small groups of pupils in an effective manner, enhances their learning well and deals with any technical problems calmly and efficiently.
62. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and procedures are now in place for the subject leader to begin to play a far more influential role in monitoring provision, teaching and standards. This is an important development because over time the role played by the subject leader has been unsatisfactory. The school has adopted the local education authority's assessment system and this is proving useful in helping to track the progress that pupils make.

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

63. The use made of computers to support and enhance pupils' learning in different subjects of the curriculum is satisfactory but could be better. Although some good examples were observed during the inspection, particularly for using the Internet for research purposes, there are too many opportunities missed and teachers do not identify at the curriculum planning stage as to where relevant and meaningful learning opportunities could be capitalised on.

## HUMANITIES

Due to timetable constraints, not all subjects were inspected in depth and therefore a judgement on provision in geography cannot be made. Inspection of religious education was carried out by denominational inspectors from the diocese. The following represent the inspection findings.

64. In **geography**, evidence from pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and teachers indicates that standards are at least at an average level by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 with examples of above average standards in evidence. A good emphasis is given across the school to the development of geographical skills as well as geographical knowledge. By the end of Year 2 pupils are developing good early mapping skills and are learning about local landmarks in the area. Pupils express reasoned opinions on what they like or dislike about the local area. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of areas of the world that they have recently studied although their recollection of studies from a little while ago is more patchy. Pupils recognise the ways in which people can change an environment and discuss thoughtfully whether there are good or bad outcomes. Teaching encourages pupils to make good use of atlases and globes. Pupils collect and record geographical data well and there have been some opportunities for pupils to use the Internet for research. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that the subject is being used well to develop their writing skills. There are no formal assessment procedures for geography and this means that assessment in the subject is unsatisfactory. Opportunities for the subject leader to directly monitor the quality of teaching and learning have been very few and as a result leadership and management over time have been unsatisfactory.

### History

Provision in history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop good research skills through using a good range of resources.
- Learning is enhanced by the use of visits, artefacts, drama and role-play.
- Opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills are used well.
- The role of subject leader is in need of further development.

Formatted: Bullets and Numbering

### Commentary

65. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6. All pupils achieve well. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.
66. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of chronology and are eager to share their knowledge of how life was different in the past. They talk

enthusiastically and knowledgeably about people in history whom they have learnt about and explain why looking at artefacts can help them find out about the past. As the pupils move through Years 3 to 6 they develop a good knowledge of events, people and changes in the past. They are keenly interested in and have a good knowledge of the periods and peoples they have studied including the Romans, the Ancient Egyptians and the Victorians. Discussions with pupils show that they understand well the fact that different events in history may be interpreted differently by different people.

67. Teaching and learning in the subject are good. Teachers use a good range of interesting resources to help pupils learn about the past and to bring learning to life. In addition drama and role play activities are used well to deepen pupils' understanding of the past. Pupils thoroughly enjoy this kind of learning. The pupils' research skills, including the use of computers are well developed and pupils understand how to interpret primary and secondary sources of information. A good range of visits enhances learning with local places of historical interest being well used. Good use is made of the subject to develop pupils' writing skills, with careful consideration being given to the appropriateness of different writing styles. For example, in Year 6 a pupil discussed with the teacher whether a letter would be a good way to illustrate the life of a rich Victorian child. Good links are made with other curriculum areas. Pupils speak with enjoyment of painting Tudor portraits.
68. The subject leader has a good overview of what is being covered in the teaching of history but opportunities for her to monitor the quality of teaching and learning have been very limited and as a result leadership and management over time have been unsatisfactory. Teachers keep their own records of pupils' progress but there are no formal or consistent assessment procedures for history and this means that assessment in the subject is unsatisfactory.

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

Due to timetabling constraints, not all subjects were reported in depth. The inspection focused on physical education, and art and design, design and technology and music were sampled.

69. In **art and design**, on the basis of the good amount of pupils' work available, teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils, evidence indicates that standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Younger pupils in school mix colours well to produce the desired effect and pupils are confident at carrying out observational drawings that are often of a good standard. Pupils are encouraged to be imaginative and creative in their work and often rise to the challenge. Across the school pupils are encouraged to use sketchbooks and the older pupils in school, in particular, use the books well to try out new techniques and ideas. Teachers' planning shows that artistic skills and techniques are taught in a systematic and direct manner. As pupils move

through school they are provided with many opportunities to work with a range of different media and materials. Pupils work with clay, fabric, pastel, watercolours, wax crayons and other medium. Using a range of different ideas, tools and techniques there are good examples around school of still life pictures, weaving, sculpture, collage, printing and other three-dimensional work. Pupils are introduced to the work of famous artists and produce good work in the style of many, such as Charles Rennie, Mackintosh and Hoffman. Many pupils leave school as good artists and have a good understanding of terminology such as "perspective" and "proportion." Good use has been made of the stimulus of an artist in residence and this term parents have been able to buy children's framed art. Despite the good standards in the subject, leadership and management of the subject have been unsatisfactory over time because there have been too few opportunities to monitor teaching, learning or provision and there are no effective procedures in place for assessing pupils' attainment or to track their progress.

70. In **design and technology**, scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work and discussions with pupils and teachers indicate that standards are at least at an average level by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 with examples of good work also in evidence. Planning indicates that over time the subject is taught in sufficient depth and taught regularly. Planning also shows that teaching places a good emphasis on the direct teaching of key skills and that much is expected of pupils in terms of the planning and evaluating aspects of the subject as well as the making element. Discussions with pupils show that they thoroughly enjoy the subject. Pupils have made wallets, puppets, containers, musical instruments, moving toys, photograph frames and have taken part in food technology activities. Finished products are of a good standard and pupils have used a good variety of joining and fixing techniques. Leadership and management of design and technology have been unsatisfactory over time. This is because no formal procedures have been in place over time for the subject leader to monitor and evaluate teaching, learning and provision in the subject. Furthermore there are no formal procedures in place for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment and progress in the subject, and so assessment is unsatisfactory.
71. In **music**, scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils indicate that standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. By the end of Year 2 pupils sing well, have a good knowledge of different musical instruments, recognise that different pieces of music can evoke different feelings and memorise a good range of songs and hymns. As pupils move through Years 3-6 they continue to acquire skills at a good rate. Many pupils play the recorder well and the school provides good opportunities for pupils to have music tuition from peripatetic teachers in a range of instruments including cello, violin, guitar and piano. Many pupils leave the school as good musicians. Singing continues to be a strength of the school in Years 3-6 and by the end of Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge of famous classical and more contemporary composers. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to listen to music, to compose their own music and to write lyrics. The school also gives

pupils the chance to sing and perform concerts in the locality and with other schools. Pupils really enjoy taking part in musical activities and speak enthusiastically about the musical opportunities and activities that the school provides. Despite the obvious strengths in the subject the leadership and management of the subject have been unsatisfactory over time because there has been very little formal monitoring of provision in the subject and there are no formal procedures in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress in the subject.

### **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average in some aspects of the subject.
- Elements of teaching are of a high standard.
- A good and varied range of physical activities is provided both within and outside of the formal curriculum.
- Leadership and management of the subject and assessment procedures could be better.

### **Commentary**

72. Not all elements of the physical education curriculum could be observed during the week of the inspection but on the evidence available standards in some aspects of the subject are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils achieve well. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.
73. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of the importance of keeping fit and healthy and an early awareness of the impact that exercise can have on the body. Pupils put together a sequence of movements well and move around the hall with a good degree of poise and elegance and show a good awareness of the needs and space of others. Pupils throw and catch with a satisfactory degree of accuracy and precision. By the time that pupils leave school many take part in sporting activities with a good degree of competitiveness and sportsmanship. Swimming standards are above average with all pupils being able to swim at least 25 metres and many swimming much further distances. Standards in dance are also above average with pupils demonstrating great poise, energy and vigour with very good sequencing of movements.
74. Teaching and learning in the subject are good overall with an excellent dance lesson observed for Year 5 pupils. In this lesson the level of challenge was very high and an excellent balance was struck between expecting pupils to put a great deal of effort into their work whilst also providing time for reflection and evaluation. The finished product brought applause from the teacher and pupils alike. Elsewhere in school teaching is good because key physical skills are

taught in a direct manner, good use is made of demonstration of good work and pupils are kept physically active throughout the lesson. All these factors lead to improvements in pupils' performance over the course of lessons. Learning in the subject is enhanced by the good range of extra-curricular clubs that the school runs, the involvement of outside coaches and the inter-school competitions that the school regularly takes part in.

75. Despite some notable strengths in the quality of provision, leadership and management of the subject have been unsatisfactory over time because of the lack of formal systems for monitoring provision in the subject and because of a lack of rigorous enough procedures to assess and track pupils' progress as they move through the school.

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

76. The programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship is good and adds much to pupils' personal development. The school promotes healthy eating and healthy lifestyles through both the science and physical education curriculum. There is good provision made for pupils to learn about drug awareness and plans are already in hand to implement a programme of sex education relationships once parents have been consulted. In many lessons and in 'circle time' and citizenship time pupils are encouraged to offer their views and opinions on a wide range of different and diverse issues. The pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for tasks around the school and do so well, and there is a good emphasis on pupils taking initiative and responsibility for their own learning. Discussions with pupils show that they feel confident in expressing their views. They know that their voices will be listened to, respected and taken on board. The pupils have an opportunity to put their views forward through the school parliament with plans being put together to introduce a more formal school council where pupils will be able to play an even bigger role in the decision making process.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	4

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

