

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC SCHOOL PLATT BRIDGE**

Platt Bridge, Wigan

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106496

Headteacher: Mrs P A Floyd

Lead inspector: Mr J Morris

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> July 2004

Inspection number: 256843

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Voluntary aided  
Age range of pupils: 3 to 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 243

School address: Wigan Street  
Platt Bridge  
Wigan  
Lancashire  
Postcode: WN2 5JF

Telephone number: 01942 704148  
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body  
Name of chair of governors: Mrs C Cotter

Date of previous inspection: 11/05/1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Holy Family is an average sized primary school. At the time of this inspection, 59 children were attending the nursery part-time and there were 33 full-time children in the reception year. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is average at 20 per cent. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below average at 12 per cent and the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is also below average. Pupil mobility is slightly below average. There are three pupils with English as an additional language. The school's socio-economic context is unfavourable. Attainment on entry to the nursery is below average and a significant number of children have well below average language skills.

The school received a DfES School Achievement Award in 2001, 2002 and 2003. It is working towards a national Healthy Schools Award and a Work-Related Learning Award through the local Education Business Partnership. It has a significant partnership with the high school that most pupils transfer to.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23696	Mr J Morris	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage curriculum Information and communication technology Personal, social and health education and citizenship Music
1165	Mr P Dannheisser	Lay inspector	
31838	Mr M Williams	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Art and design Design and technology
18146	Mr M Onyon	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language English Geography History Physical education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very good school.** Pupils achieve very well and standards are well above average at the end of Year 6. Teaching and learning are very good. Leadership and management are very good. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children in the nursery and reception years and pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve very well.
- At the end of Year 6, standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science and above average in information and communication technology (ICT).
- Teaching and learning are very good overall. They are particularly strong in Years 5 and 6, where expectations are extremely high and progress accelerates. Support staff make a significant contribution to pupils' learning throughout the school.
- The headteacher leads the school very effectively. She inspires and motivates colleagues in the pursuit of all that is best for the pupils. All other key staff are very effective in their respective roles. There is a strong sense of teamwork in the school.
- All pupils have very good attitudes, behave very well and are very mature and responsible for their age. This is because they form very positive relationships with adults and other pupils; there is a very good atmosphere for learning and they feel cared for.

Improvement since the last inspection in 1998 has been very good overall. The most significant factor is that standards were average at the time of the last inspection and they are now well above average. The quality of teaching and learning is significantly better. In relation to the key issues for action in the previous report, there have been very good improvements in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Governors now pay full regard to all statutory requirements, including the contents of their annual report to parents and health and safety procedures.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	D	C	A	A
mathematics	A*	A*	A*	A*
Science	A	A*	A	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
A\* means that the school's results were in the top five per cent. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Achievement is **very good** overall. When children start in the nursery their attainment is below average. Children in the nursery and reception classes achieve well. They have a good start to their education and, by the time they move on to Year 1, most of them achieve the standard expected nationally in all of the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. The work they do builds well on what they have done previously. Standards at the end of Year 2 are currently average in English, mathematics, science and ICT. They are higher than they were in the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics last year. Pupils in Years 3 to 6, and especially Years 5 and 6, achieve very well. Standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science and above average in ICT. From 1999 to 2003, the school's results in national tests improved in line with the national trend of improvement. However, this does not reflect the very significant difference between standards at the time of the last inspection and now. Standards have been very high in mathematics and well above average in science since 1999. They have been well above average in English since 2003.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very good. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and behave very well during lessons and at other times. All pupils act in a mature and responsible manner for their age. Pupils from the reception year to Year 6 make a significant contribution to the school council. All pupils have very good opportunities to express their feelings and opinions through their class council and the high quality lessons in personal, social and health education and citizenship. Pupils in Year 6 are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Attendance is above average and punctuality is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **very good**. Teaching and learning are **very good** overall. They are good overall in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. They are very good in Years 3 to 6 and expectations and challenge are very high, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Throughout the school, teachers and support staff are very successful in promoting a thirst for learning in all pupils and in achieving very high standards of behaviour and productivity. The school provides very good learning opportunities for all the pupils both during and beyond the school day. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and, as a result, these pupils are very well supported and make very good progress in their learning and personal development. The care provided for pupils is very good. Partnership with parents is satisfactory and links with other schools and colleges and the community are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **very good** overall. The headteacher is a very effective practitioner. She has been very successful in significantly raising academic standards and promoting the pupils' personal development since the previous inspection. All other key staff, including the deputy headteacher and members of the senior management team, provide very effective leadership and management in their respective areas of responsibility. The school governors are very supportive of the school and they make a good, effective contribution to its success and efficiency.

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

Parents are pleased with the quality of education and standards of care provided by the school. A small number feel that they could be better informed as to how their children are getting on. Nearly all pupils say that they really like being at the school and most of them think that other pupils are friendly and behave well.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

No significant weaknesses, either in the pupils' achievements or in the school's provision, were identified during this inspection.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Achievement is very good overall. All children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve very well and standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6.

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

- Children in the nursery and reception year have a good start to their education. Pupils at the end of Year 6 are more than ready to move on to the next stage of their education.
- All pupils achieve well and pupils in Year 3 to 6 achieve very well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- All pupils achieve well in information and communication technology (ICT) and personal, social and health education and citizenship.
- The pupils' considerable successes, arising from very good teaching and learning and very good leadership are celebrated in lessons, assemblies and displays.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children in the nursery and reception classes achieve well. When they start school most of the children are below average and a significant number have well below average language skills. Because of the good teaching and learning and good balance between direct teaching and exploratory learning, most of the children achieve the expected standards in all of the six areas of learning by the end of The Foundation Stage.
2. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2. Standards are currently average in English, mathematics, science and ICT. This is higher than they were last year and standards have improved at this stage in line with the national trend of improvement since 1999.
3. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve very well. Progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6 in particular. This is because of the very high quality teaching, best characterised by very high expectations of work and behaviour and very effective use of assessment information to match tasks to individual needs. Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. They have been well above average in English for two years and in mathematics and science for five years. The trend in the school's results in national tests at the end of Year 6 is broadly in line with the national trend. However, this is clearly a school in which standards are much higher than at the time of the previous inspection and improvement has been very good. Furthermore, standards are above average in the other important subjects of ICT and personal, social and health education and citizenship. This is because teaching and learning are very good overall and very rarely less than good and also because the headteacher provides very good leadership, characterised by very high aspirations for all the pupils.
4. The school currently has priorities for writing, speaking and numeracy. The standards achieved in reading, writing, numeracy and the key skills of observation, investigation, research and ICT all improve pupils' learning in other subjects. However, whilst standards are high, inspection evidence shows that pupils' speaking skills are not as well developed

as others. There is insufficient evidence to make reliable judgements in other subjects and there is no indication of less than satisfactory progress in any area of the curriculum. However, the evidence does suggest that this very successful school could usefully raise standards in art and design and music.

- Very good support is given to pupils with special educational needs, who achieve very well, because their work is tailored to their individual needs and builds steadily on previous learning. Needs are identified early and teachers and learning support assistants know and plan for them very effectively. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into classroom activities and other pupils are very sensitive to their needs, helping them to achieve very well. The small number of pupils learning English as an additional language and Travellers are supported very well. Opportunities are provided in lessons, and through additional daily activities for pupils to build their literacy and numeracy skills.

#### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.2 (15.0)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.1 (13.9)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.7 (16.5)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

#### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.6 (27.2)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	30.8 (30.4)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.5 (31.9)	28.6 (28.3)

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

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

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good. Their attendance and punctuality are good.

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

- Pupils' very good attitudes, relationships and personal development are promoted by the caring atmosphere of the school, which permeates all activities.
- The very good role models of the staff ensure that pupils quickly know the difference between right and wrong and behave very well.
- Pupils' spiritual and social development is very good.

#### **Commentary**

- The very good picture found at the last inspection continues at a similar level. Pupils are well behaved, polite and courteous, and respond very well to the ethos of the school.

Pupils enjoy school and they say so. They are interested and often enthusiastic. They are involved in the wide range of activities that the school provides, both in lessons and out of school hours. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good overall. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection and no pupils were excluded in the last year. The school strives to involve all pupils in as many activities as they are ready for. Pupils are confident. They are willing to ask questions. Year 1 pupils were eager to correct a teacher when she made 'deliberate mistakes' during a mathematics lesson. Above all, the pupils are polite, friendly and happy.

7. Pupils work very well in pairs or small groups and this was seen to full effect when they worked together in an ICT lesson sharing computers. They were good at taking turns when using the mouse and typing. Pupils rise to the challenge, when they are given responsibilities. Older pupils do many jobs around the school. School councillors are elected by their peers from reception to Year 6. They meet frequently and are proud of their achievements, reporting back to their own class council meetings.
8. Pupils with special educational needs have the same positive attitudes and values as their peers. These pupils are very well managed by staff, so that they always fit in well when they are in class and receive very good support out of their classrooms, when appropriate.
9. Pupils' relationships with adults and each other are very good, and have a positive impact on their learning. Pupils of all ages mix well at playtime and lunchtime. Both boys and girls make the good use of the large field and available equipment. Pupils say that they like their teachers, who, they feel, care about them. Pupils who came to the school from other primary schools said they fitted in easily, supported by special friends, whom staff selected to help them.
10. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong and this is successfully promoted from a very early age. They benefit from the good role models set by the adults in school. When pupils show qualities such as honesty, politeness and helpfulness, these are rewarded alongside academic achievement. Achievements both in school and outside are celebrated in assemblies and this provides all pupils with accomplishments to admire and emulate. All pupils are well aware of the school and class codes, which they take part in formulating. In classrooms pupils can gain stars on their star chart and certificates. Very good personal development is fostered through well-planned assemblies that teach life skills and understanding. Above all, this is a school in which all pupils know that they are cared for as individuals – a feeling that is transmitted by all the adults.
11. Spiritual values are reinforced through the school's activities, including the provision for their personal, social and health education. They also manifest themselves in other areas such as history, where pupils are encouraged not only to learn facts but also to empathise with children living at different periods. Pupils not only understand what they are learning, but know why they are learning. At the end of Year 6, pupils show maturity and self-confidence and say that they are ready to move on.
12. There are opportunities for pupils to enhance their social development by taking part in the school and class councils and in the extra-curricular activities that they very much value. Pupils contribute to events that raise funds for less fortunate people. The clubs, trips, residential visits and performances enhance the social environment and make a big

difference to these pupils' life experience. The school celebrates a range of religious holy days, but acknowledges that there is room for a wider range of multi-cultural education throughout the curriculum.

## **Attendance**

13. Attendance was above the national average in 2002/3, and higher than at the time of the previous inspection. Registration practice is efficient and the school carries out detailed analysis of the data electronically. Levels of unauthorised absence were below the national average. Currently punctuality is good, with just a very small number of pupils arriving a few minutes after the start time. Pupils use the time well, for example for silent reading. A few parents withdraw their children from school to take holidays during term time, after they have asked the school. The school rewards good personal attendance with various incentives and prizes for classes. These are strong motivators. Any unexplained absences are followed up promptly and the school works closely with the educational liaison officer and other agencies.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.8	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

*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 quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are very good overall. The curriculum is very good and there are good opportunities for enrichment. The care provided for pupils is very good. Partnership with parents is satisfactory and links with other schools and colleges and the community are good.

**Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning and assessment procedures are very good overall.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Lessons are stimulating and orderly and there are very good relationships throughout the school.
- The pupils want to learn and they do so, because the tasks set are challenging and matched well to individual needs and success is celebrated.

**Commentary**

14. Teaching and learning are good overall in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. They are very good in Years 3 to 6 and particularly in Years 5 and 6. The consistently high quality of the teaching is perhaps what best characterises this school. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and, in fact, only one lesson seen was judged to be satisfactory. All other lessons were good or very good. These judgements are supported by the examination of teachers' planning and assessment files, the pupils' work books, particularly in English, mathematics and science but also in other subjects, their reading records and homework books.
15. Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage. Activities are well planned and organised in all of the six areas of learning. All staff effectively promote and support the children's learning through structured whole-class and small group activities and good opportunities for imaginative and exploratory play. The children enjoy school and are keen to learn and form positive relationships with adults and each other. The children make a good start to their education and are prepared well for the National Curriculum. The grouping of children in reception by ability for literacy and numeracy activities is successful.
16. Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are encouraged to answer questions and express their opinions and feelings. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been successfully implemented and there have been good improvements in the provision in ICT since the previous inspection. Consequently, all pupils make

substantial, progressive gains in the key skills of reading, writing, mental calculation and entering and manipulating text and data. Pupils have good research and investigative skills for their age. All of these learning and thinking skills stimulate their interest and involvement and help them to acquire new facts and understanding across the curriculum.

17. In Years 5 and 6 in particular, all of the positive characteristics of the teaching and learning are at their best. The teachers have very high expectations of work and behaviour. Homework is set and marked and, if not completed at home, has to be done during school break-times. Tasks are challenging and stimulating and matched very well to the various needs of different groups of pupils. This is because assessments are very rigorous and systematic and the teachers know where all the pupils are in their learning and what they need to do next. This information is shared with the pupils, so they have a good understanding of what they have to do to improve.

<b>Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons</b>						
Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	12 (38%)	19 (59%)	1 (3%)	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.*

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is very good overall and it is good in the nursery and reception classes. There are good enrichment opportunities, especially in sports. Staffing, accommodation and resources are good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum in English, mathematics, science and ICT is very well developed. ICT is very well used throughout the school.
- A very good programme of personal development contributes to pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support from their teachers and teaching assistants and there is very good provision for gifted and talented pupils.
- Curriculum enrichment, especially for sports, is good.

## **Commentary**

18. The curriculum is good in the nursery and reception class and enables children to achieve well in all areas of learning. The curriculum as a whole develops pupils' skills and knowledge progressively as they move through the school, so that by the time pupils leave they achieve very well and reach high standards. Its main strength lies in the very good match of tasks to needs and their relevance to all groups. The approaches recommended by the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented very effectively and have led to high standards. In English, for example, pupils achieve very well, especially in reading and writing. The current focus on speaking and listening is bearing fruit in the growing competence of pupils in speaking for a variety of purposes. A strong focus on mental methods underpins mathematical achievement effectively. Problem

solving and opportunities for investigation are at the centre of work in both mathematics and science, so pupils use and apply their learning very effectively.

19. The ICT curriculum has improved greatly since the last inspection. A well-equipped ICT suite, interactive whiteboards in classrooms for pupils in Years 5 and 6 and improved software have all contributed to raising achievement, not least through building up teachers' own competence. ICT is now planned and used throughout the curriculum and contributes significantly to pupils' very good achievement in literacy, numeracy and science. Links between different subjects are also being strengthened, to help pupils see how all of their learning fits together.
20. There is very good provision for pupils' personal development. A programme of discrete lessons includes 'circle times' - when pupils discuss matters of importance to themselves, classmates and the school in general. School and class councils enable pupils to have a say in how their school is run. There are regular residential experiences, which give pupils the opportunity to relate to each other and to adults in a less formal context and develop their social skills and independence. Much is accomplished relatively informally throughout all subjects. Thanks to teachers' very good examples and their high expectations of behaviour, whether as individuals or in group activities, pupils learn to think maturely and act responsibly.
21. Social and educational inclusion is strongly fostered. The school ensures that pupils with special educational needs are identified as soon as possible, so that lessons can be suitably modified for them. This provision is much improved since the last inspection, when it was a key issue for development. Booster sessions and some withdrawal sessions provide extra support for pupils who need to achieve the next level. The very good numbers of teaching assistants, working in close liaison with the teachers, use their experience and skills very well to meet the various needs of individuals. There is very good provision for those pupils for whom English is an additional language. The test results of pupils from Traveller families show that their needs are very well met. Provision for gifted and talented pupils makes good use, for example, of strong links with the secondary school, which give able mathematicians opportunities to reach high levels. Extra-curricular activities, including entries to local and national competitions in sports, also help talented pupils to achieve well in those areas.
22. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very effectively planned. Pupils are mostly taught in class, alongside their peers, and are helped very effectively by the support staff. This is complemented by carefully planned withdrawal teaching, sometimes in small groups and sometimes on an individual basis. Pupils follow programmes of learning that are formulated and updated on the basis of regular, careful assessment of their individual needs. Each pupil's individual education plan is carefully prepared with clear and measurable targets, activities and resources that enable the pupils to achieve their best. The staff work closely together to support each pupil. They communicate regularly with parents and with outside agencies, which provide regular specific support and advice as part of the school's provision. This very good focus on all individuals' needs ensures that all pupils achieve well and are included equally in school life.
23. The curriculum is particularly rich in opportunities for sports. Pupils regularly receive professional training, thanks to strong links with local rugby clubs. There are many clubs which enhance the physical education curriculum, including athletics, golf, netball and football. The positive impact is shown clearly by the girls' football team reaching the final

in the Manchester Mini-Olympics. Provision for the arts is less well developed, although broadly typical for a school of this kind. There is a choir, opportunities for instrumental tuition and regular concerts and productions, which add to the music and drama provision. Visiting musicians and artists have shared their skills with pupils in a range of classes. A French club also gives pupils a taste of a foreign language and helps prepare them for the next stage of their education.

24. Strengths of staffing include a very good match of both teaching and non-teaching staff to pupils' needs. The accommodation has improved to include a well-equipped ICT suite and three libraries. The school has plans to improve further its outdoor facilities, particularly for younger children. Overall improvement has been good.

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

Care is very good. Pupils are given very good support and advice. Governors and staff have good procedures for checking that pupils and staff work in a healthy and safe environment. There are very good arrangements to take account of pupil's views.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good pastoral care of pupils gives them confidence and trusting relationships with staff.
- The school has developed very good ways of listening to pupils' views and involving them in their school's development. All pupils take part in class councils and make their views known to the school council.
- The school has good system of introducing new pupils to the school.
- Health and safety audits by staff and governors are not undertaken frequently enough.

## **Commentary**

25. Induction procedures when children start at school and arrangements to ensure a smooth transition to the secondary school are very good. Parents of newly enrolled children are invited to sessions about the curriculum, through a local initiative called 'Inspire'. This helps parents to support their children when they start school.
26. There is a clear awareness by pupils of what they need to do to make good progress. Some targets are written in pupils' books, but this good practice is not used consistently. Pupils who are new to the country and for whom English is a new language, have special lessons from visiting experts and are given very good support within the classroom. Similarly, pupils with physical disabilities are quickly assessed and effectively helped, both by support services from outside the school and by the teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils from Traveller families have been welcomed over many years and are a valued part of the school.
27. Pupils are given very good opportunities to be involved in their learning and helping run aspects of the school. The school knows pupils' views through the school council. This is very well organised by the pupils themselves with the help of staff. The pupils meet every two weeks and work closely with their peers through the class councils. They feel that they have made a significant contribution to the school and have clear ideas for the future. The school is developing ways in which pupils can assess their own progress.
28. The school's procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils are good. At the time of the previous inspection a number of outstanding health and safety matters were raised. These have all been addressed. There are good risk assessments associated with planned activities, but the staff and governors are not undertaking structured safety audits often enough to ensure that nothing is missed. As a result, a few minor matters need to be put right or professional advice sought. There has been little training in this aspect. First aid provision is satisfactory, but currently few staff are qualified to provide assistance in the event of an emergency. Child protection procedures meet requirements and the school exercises its responsibilities with vigilance and care. There has been up-to-date training in procedures for caring for pupils who are not living at home.

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

Links with parents are satisfactory. The partnership with other schools and the community is good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have positive views of the school and the education it provides.

- Links with other schools and the community are good and play a positive role in supporting pupils' learning.
- Parents' involvement in the activities of the school is limited.

## **Commentary**

29. The positive views of parents reflect an overall good level of satisfaction with all aspects of the school's provision. There are no areas for which more than a few parents do not agree with positive statements in the pre-inspection questionnaire, although a small minority do not feel well informed about their children's progress.
30. Inspectors support the positive views of parents. Families of newly enrolled children are offered home visits and these help to make starting school pleasant and successful. Whilst the newsletters are satisfactory, they are infrequent. Annual reports on pupils' progress are lengthy, but not always easy to assimilate. They do not indicate how well pupils are succeeding against national expectation or include self-evaluation by pupils. The school is trialling the national profiles for nursery and reception children and is taking good steps to ensure that all parents understand them. Parents are informed, but not fully involved in discussions and planning for pupils with special needs, with the exception of those with children having statements. Parents contribute to their children's reading record books and say that their comments are responded to by staff.
31. Parents have a high regard for the school, but their involvement is limited. A large proportion attends the two termly meetings about their children's progress. Parents are not encouraged to participate in nursery activities. There is no parent teachers association. Parents are not invited to assemblies, including the Friday class assemblies, apart from special occasions such as Harvest Festival.
32. Links with the community are good. The range of visits and visitors provides enrichment to the curriculum and supports pupils' personal and social development by widening their experience. There are good links with the local education business partnership. Pupils have been to a nearby bakery, have a productive association with a rugby club and have been to local environmental projects, the seaside and the church. High School students make good use of the school for work experience. The pupils' experience of different cultures is satisfactory. There are few visits to places of worship, apart from the local church. The school does not fully exploit the rich variety of the local cultural heritage to enhance the pupils' experience of world art, music, food and traditions.
33. There are good links with other primary schools and the local secondary schools. When pupils in Year 6 have finished the national tests, they take part in mathematics projects that will continue in the secondary school. This provides them with a bridge that helps to make the transition between the schools smooth. However, there are few local professional links for staff to share training and exchange information, although there is a useful forum for headteachers. Partnership with other schools and the community was judged satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection and improvement has therefore been good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership. The school is very well managed. Governors carry out their roles effectively.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher leads the school very effectively. She inspires and motivates colleagues in the pursuit of all that is best for the pupils.
- The procedures in place for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are very good and the resulting data is used very well.
- Leadership and management of special educational needs are very good and pupils are very well supported as a result. This represents considerable improvement since the previous inspection.
- Subject co-ordinators lead their subjects very effectively, with clear action planning to address identified areas for development.

## **Commentary**

34. The headteacher provides very effective, well focused leadership. She is totally committed to raising standards in all aspects of the school's work. Since the previous inspection there has been a significant and sustained improvement in standards through very good strategic planning and well monitored developments. The headteacher is very well supported by key staff, and a strong sense of teamwork, where all adults work together, means that the school has no significant areas of weakness. The commitment that all staff show to the inclusion of pupils, regardless of background or level of attainment, contributes strongly to the very caring ethos. The deputy headteacher fulfils her responsibilities very effectively, working in partnership with the headteacher. She has successfully led developments in literacy and works effectively alongside teaching colleagues in classrooms, using these opportunities very well to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. This impacts positively upon provision for pupils, for example, through daily sessions for individuals and groups of pupils supporting their learning in English and mathematics.
35. The governors are very much part of the team. Their role is effective in the development of the school and they are determined to provide opportunities for all pupils to reach their full potential. The chair of governors has a good understanding of her role and, in partnership with the headteacher, provides a clear steer to the work of the school. The chair has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher and chair are determined to provide pupils with life skills that will enable them to develop fully. This teamwork contributes positively to the maintenance of high standards.
36. The school development document is clearly focused on maintaining high standards, based on a very good analysis of performance and the needs of the school. In addition, the school is aiming to broaden the curriculum to provide more opportunities in creative areas. It is a well-prepared document clearly indicating planned areas for development. Due to their careful analysis of the outcomes of the assessment of pupils' progress, teachers have a very clear understanding of their levels of work. As a result, they carefully match tasks to pupils' abilities, ensuring very good achievement. Responsibilities for leading the development of areas within the development plan are effectively delegated to individual teachers, who work well with others to move things forward. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, because of very good support in classrooms from teachers and support staff and good leadership and management by the special educational needs co-ordinator, who carefully monitors and evaluates the area. This represents a considerable improvement from the previous inspection. Staff share a strong commitment to including all pupils in every element of school life and provide very well for pupils from Traveller families and pupils learning English as an additional language. As a result, these groups of pupils are achieving very well.

37. Subject co-ordinators monitor performance in their subjects very well and subscribe to the priorities of the school development plan, currently focused on maintaining high standards in English and mathematics. They confidently and consistently lead and manage their subject areas very well, working well together to ensure that good practice is shared. For example, discussion between subject leaders, followed by the active involvement of pupils, has led to the very effective introduction of class councils and the school council, with the emphasis on Holy Family being a 'listening' school. Actions were carefully planned to ensure that the developments were effectively introduced over a given period of time, to ensure that good practice was embedded and successful. This is an example of the school's careful and considered approach to ensuring that new developments are well thought through and introduced to the benefit of the pupils.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	581,656
Total expenditure	563,597
Expenditure per pupil	2,409

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	22,500
Balance carried forward to the next year	18,059

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

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

38. Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**. The children get a good start to their education in the nursery class and reception year. The nursery class, reception class and mixed reception and Year 1 class are all organised well. The reception children in the mixed-age class are the 10 oldest. All the reception children join together for some activities. Activities are planned well in accordance with the national recommendations for this stage of learning. The planning in the mixed reception and Year 1 class takes good account of the various needs of the different groups of children and they are taught separately for some activities.
39. Attainment on entry to the nursery is below average and a significant number of children have well below average language skills. Teaching and learning are good in all of the six areas of learning. As a result, the children achieve well and most of them reach the standards expected nationally by the end of the reception year. Children with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans, because of the very good individual support they receive. There are good arrangements for the support of children with English as an additional language. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.
40. As a result of staff changes, there has not been a co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage this year. Nevertheless, leadership is satisfactory and management is good. This is because all the staff in the three classes have worked well as a team and have met regularly to review the provision and children's progress. All the support staff in the Foundation Stage are very competent and work very well with the teachers. Consequently, they make a significant contribution to the children's progress. In all classes, there are good procedures to assess and record the children's attainment and progress.

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

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

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

- Classrooms and activities are organised well and successfully establish routines and order and a positive atmosphere for learning.
- Children make good progress in learning how to work on their own and with others.

#### **Commentary**

41. Children achieve well. Because of the good teaching, particularly the stimulating activities and good classroom organisation, all children understand the rules and routines and are keen to learn. They work and learn well independently and very well in small groups supported by an adult. The teachers are skilled at getting the children to understand how their actions affect others and, for example, nearly all the children listen well during whole-class activities. The children understand the different rules in the different classes. In the nursery the children know they have to put their name cards on the boards in the different areas and that numbers are restricted for some activities. In the reception class the children know they have to check the board to see which activity they are doing next.

Because they enjoy school and know what is expected of them, the children behave very well and begin to form positive relationships with each other. In the nursery, a small group was observed 'writing' a picnic list with the nursery nurse. One boy spent a great deal of time adding to this list and drawing a map. This was an excellent example of an activity stimulating individual, independent learning. In the hall, reception children learn how to find their own space and to be aware of others when moving around.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good balance of formal teaching and structured play activities promotes good progress in speaking and listening and the initial stages of reading and writing.
- Work in the reception year is planned well to meet the needs of children of different abilities.

### Commentary

42. Although some children are well below average when they start in the nursery, all of the children achieve well and most of them reach the expected standard by the end of reception. Children in reception clearly benefit from their time at the school and their spoken language is significantly clearer and more sophisticated than that in the nursery. The most able children in reception know what a digraph is and what a phoneme is. They are making rapid progress in learning to distinguish the different sounds in words and, for example, several of them correctly identify the three sounds in 'fish'. Many of the children in the reception year write a few words and some write complete sentences. Well organised and resourced whole-class activities successfully promote the development of early reading skills. For example, in the nursery, the teacher used models and sensitive questioning to get the children to recall the main characters and events in the story of 'The Three Little Pigs'. More able children remembered the different types of houses and spoke the wolf's words with good expression. Less able children had great difficulty recalling the most basic parts of the story. In the reception class, the teacher involved individual children very well in writing four sentences on the board about 'Bear's adventure'. The children made good gains in learning, to spell key words such as 'no', 'on', 'big' and 'dog', recognising numbers and capital letters and when to use a full-stop. Small group activities, for example 'key words lotto', reinforce these skills and develop social skills such as turn-taking.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are well planned and organised.
- Grouping by ability in the reception year successfully enables all children to make good progress.

### Commentary

43. All children achieve well and most reach the expected standard by the end of reception. Teaching and learning are good. Most of the children in reception know how to make 10 in lots of different ways and those who do not are learning quickly, as a result of well planned whole-class teaching and group tasks. In a large group, the children count confidently from zero to 20 and back again. Activities are well organised, so more able children are given significant additional challenges and less able children are given good

quality support. During one very good session, the children made very significant gains in learning how to estimate and then check if they were correct. Children in the nursery make good progress in learning to count and the properties of shapes such as the number of sides. They are learning to recognise different colours and the mathematical language of position and size. However, during a story time, none of them understood 'one too many'.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- By the end of reception the children have developed good skills of observation and investigation.
- Activities are varied, stimulating and challenging.

### **Commentary**

44. The children achieve well and most of them reach the expected standards by the end of reception. Teaching and learning are good. For example, during a reception class investigation of push and pull forces, activities successfully stimulated the children's thinking and observation skills. One group noticed that two ramps were different heights and lengths and, before testing cars on them, one boy said, "that's well faster than that". Similarly, a classroom display showed how the children had noticed the changes during a simple gardening activity 'before and after planting'. Children in reception are beginning to identify the various characteristics of different creatures in God's creation. They have explored and identified the differences between old and new toys. In the nursery, the children made good gains when exploring different construction kits and a small group of boys successfully organised a 'Teddy Bears' Picnic' table by putting plates and cutlery on a mat of the same colour. In all of the classes the children learn how to use a computer mouse and some of the special keys on the keyboard to play simple language and mathematical games and to draw pictures. They are beginning to understand how to give instructions to the programmable 'Roamer' device. Well organised visits, for example to a miniature railway, reinforce and extend classroom learning.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children make good progress in the basic skills of movement and balance.
- Good use is made of the available equipment and outdoor areas.

### **Commentary**

45. The children achieve well and most of them reach the expected standards by the end of reception. Teaching and learning are good. Whole-class activities, in the hall and outside, successfully promote the children's physical development. During a very good lesson, characterised by a rapid pace and a very stimulating, well sequenced variety of activities, children in reception learnt a great deal very quickly. They discovered many different ways of balancing a bean bag on different parts of their bodies and make good progress when throwing and catching. A good range of outdoor equipment is used effectively, to encourage physical skills such as playing on scooters and bicycles, basic ball skills and skipping. However, the staff have identified a need to improve the quality and range of equipment, especially bikes. Children develop physical and language skills, when

exploring a wide range of 'choice' activities. For example, a girl in reception successfully doing a lacing activity said, "these are what you put in the holes".

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good opportunities for children to participate in art and music activities.
- Imaginative play is stimulated well.

## **Commentary**

46. The children achieve well and most of them achieve the expected standards by the end of reception. Teaching and learning are good. Children have good daily opportunities to draw and paint and to explore materials such as play-dough, sand and water. The children include good details in their drawings of people and animals. In all classes, the children join in familiar action songs. Reception children play simple rhythms, using tambourines and shakers. The children participated in a music workshop with a visiting specialist.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **very good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve very well over their time in the school, because the teaching is very good and tasks are very well matched to individual needs.
- Assessments are very thorough and help teachers set tasks to challenge pupils of all abilities, very effectively.
- The subject is very well managed. Action planning is focused well upon the development of speaking and writing skills.
- The development of literacy is emphasised well throughout the curriculum, improving pupils' access to other subjects.

## **Commentary**

47. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below average overall but is particularly low in communication, language and literacy. Pupils' standards in listening, speaking, reading and writing have risen to average by the end of Year 2, representing good achievement relative to their starting point. Pupils make very good gains in learning in Years 3 to 6. By the end of Year 6 standards are well above average. Pupils learning English as an additional language, those with special educational needs and those from Traveller families also achieve very well. This presents a much better picture than that at the time of the previous inspection, when standards were average and the progress of pupils with special educational needs was unsatisfactory.

48. A key strength of teaching lies in the very good relationships between teachers and pupils. This helps to raise pupils' self-esteem and build their confidence in expressing themselves. By Year 2, pupils speak confidently, but not at length. For those pupils with particular needs there is a daily focus on language skills. Pupils with special educational needs very effectively follow a daily programme of structured language support. By Year 6, however, even lower attaining pupils contribute relevant comments, although they tend not to initiate conversation or speak at length. Pupils listen carefully and, as a result of structured opportunities in class councils, show confidence in justifying their own views, to

the extent of politely disagreeing with others. There is a continued focus, in the action plan for the subject, to present opportunities to further develop pupils' speaking skills.

49. Teachers and their well-briefed support assistants encourage and engage their pupils very well, by making sure that they have tasks to suit their previous levels of attainment. Pupils know that they are expected to work hard but also know that the work they are expected to do, whilst challenging, is within their capabilities. Lessons are very productive, because pupils know that they are getting somewhere and that their achievements are recognised. As the result of teachers' probing questions, opportunities for discussion and tactful, focused correction and attention to detail, pupils steadily build up their vocabulary and understanding of language. In lessons and work examined there was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
50. Adults make a useful contribution to guided reading sessions. This provision supplements the individual support regularly given by class teachers. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly for a variety of purposes. By Year 2, pupils regularly read accurately and offer well-considered opinions about the things they read. They know how to locate information in books. By Year 6 lower attainers locate books in the library effectively and pupils make good use of inference and deduction.
51. The school's current priority is to raise standards in speaking and in writing. Strategies include specific handwriting lessons. The books of Year 2 pupils show that letter formation, spelling and punctuation have improved well over time. There are many opportunities in other subjects to write for different purposes. The written work of the pupils in Year 6 is well above average and is assisted by the display of good quality pupils' work on 'writing walls' in each classroom and 'punctuation pyramids', displayed to support the presentation of pupils' writing. Examples of extended writing on display show work of a very good standard.
52. The assessment of pupils' progress is regular and very thorough. The tracking of individual pupils' work helps to match work precisely to their abilities. Targets are set by teachers for groups and individuals. At the end of many lessons, teachers evaluate what pupils have done and how well they have moved forward. The school acknowledges that pupils can be more effectively engaged in the process of setting their own targets for improvement. Written comments in exercise and homework books help pupils to see what needs to be done, but some comments are more focused, so some pupils have a better idea of how well they are doing than others do.
53. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator is able to work alongside teaching colleagues and to monitor and evaluate pupils' work regularly. As a result, she is able to ensure that pupils and teachers have their needs met very well. The school has accurately identified areas for more focused development. Its action plan for English is very well thought out and is showing clear benefits as it is implemented. Teachers share their expertise by planning together effectively within a clear culture of teamwork. The National Literacy Strategy is adapted to suit the school and many additional support programmes contribute very well to the development of pupils' skills. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved and standards have risen significantly.

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

54. Many pupils start at the school with limited language and communication skills. To help overcome this, literacy is emphasised well in all subjects. In most lessons, targeted vocabulary is identified and this means, for example, that correct scientific and mathematical vocabulary is used properly. Word-processing supports drafting in several subjects effectively, as well as in English itself. The use of ICT for research helps pupils learn a variety of styles and there are good opportunities to write for various purposes throughout the curriculum. There is a clear and well understood focus upon language and literacy skills across other subjects of the curriculum.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils build up their skills securely, particularly through problem-solving activities.
- Teachers make mathematics relevant to life.
- Assessments are thorough and help match tasks closely to needs.
- Numeracy is emphasised very well in other subjects.

## **Commentary**

55. National Curriculum assessments at the end of Year 2 were below average in 2003, but in line with those for similar schools. This represents satisfactory achievement, because pupils enter the school with below average attainment. Results at the end of Year 6 were well above average, both nationally and in comparison with those for similar schools. This shows very good achievement and a very good improvement on the average standards found at the time of the last inspection. Pupils in the current Year 6 continue to achieve very well and work at well above average standards. There are clear signs that rising standards are working through the school, because pupils in Year 2 are now achieving well and reaching average standards.
56. A key factor in these improvements is the balanced presentation of all strands of the subject and especially the emphasis given to using and applying mathematics. Teachers ask probing questions and insist that pupils explain their reasoning. Mental agility is fostered by number games, so pupils learn to think quickly and re-use what they have learnt before in new situations. Teaching and learning are very good, because pupils develop their skills through practical activities. These are usually taken from realistic situations, so pupils see that what they are learning is important in the world beyond school. Pupils in Year 5, for example, learnt that estimating and measuring angles with accuracy is of vital importance to a builder and that in many spheres of industry even a measurement to the nearest degree is not good enough. Pupils in Year 6 became engrossed in data-handling, because they calculated the median, mode, mean and range of a series of attendance figures for their favourite football clubs. This also told them something of their relative popularity.
57. The subject is led and managed very well. This is shown by the very good system of assessments using statutory and non-statutory tests, which are closely analysed. Lessons are monitored regularly and the information gathered is used to help plan work to suit all groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by teaching assistants, so that they play a full part in lessons. Higher attainers in Years 5 and 6 benefit from very good links with the secondary school and sometimes tackle much more demanding work than is usual at their age. The very good teaching and provision for pupils of all abilities has contributed to the rising standards and represents a very good improvement since the last inspection.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

58. A major strength is the way in which numeracy lessons include other subjects and therefore reinforce the relevance of mathematics to virtually all areas of life. Pupils in Year 2 readily related problems about vehicles to work they had done in design and technology. Pupils in Year 3 similarly saw connections between design and technology and geography. Tasks therefore made more sense. ICT features regularly, as interactive whiteboards make learning vivid and memorable and mathematical skills are used to

construct graphs. Mathematics is used very well in most areas, especially in science, for measurements, calculations and the presentation of data.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Investigations and experiments are at the heart of studies.
- Resources, including ICT, are used well.
- Work is very well matched to pupils' needs.
- There is a very good balance between all strands of the subject.

## **Commentary**

59. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were above average by the end of Year 6. In recent years the results of National Curriculum tests have regularly been well above both national and similar schools averages. By the end of Year 2 standards are broadly average, a similar picture to that reported previously, but representing good achievement, because pupils enter the school with below average attainment. Standards in the current Year 6 reflect those of the last four years. They show that, over their time in the school, pupils achieve very well.
60. This is the result of very good teaching, which enables pupils to learn very well through stimulating first-hand experiences. The visual and 'hands-on' approach engages their desire to find out things. The thrill of discovery enables them to grasp new concepts and skills with enthusiasm and this in turn helps them retain and apply their knowledge and understanding all the better. Pupils in Year 6, for example, experimented to find out which materials might make the most effective black-out blinds. Through this practical application, the teacher presented studies as relevant and useful in real life and not simply a sterile exercise, so pupils based their predictions on real experiences and sensible ideas. Systematic trials, using light sensors and computers to record and analyse data, confirmed what they had thought. Thanks to the improved use of ICT, they could support their evaluations with precise information clearly expressed in terms of translucence and opacity and accurately measured in lux, because they had proved them for themselves.
61. Very good resources in general mean that pupils work in reasonably-sized groups and do not have to wait very long to use equipment. Sufficient hand-held sensors enabled the whole of Year 5 to go outside together to measure the reduction in volume of sounds over distance and return promptly to class, where each group had its own laptop computer to help plot the resulting graphs.
62. All groups of pupils now achieve very well, because they have suitable challenges. Pupils with special educational needs have the support of very well-briefed teaching assistants, who make sure that questions are within their capabilities but always require plenty of hard thinking. The books of higher attaining pupils show that the level of detail required of them is high and that they must regularly contend with variables, making for more intriguing experiments and requiring more complex answers.
63. Teachers have a very good grasp of all aspects of the subject. Very good subject leadership also helps to ensure that the different parts of the very good curriculum receive equal attention. Plans are regularly monitored and lessons are sampled. As a result, whether investigating conditions for plant growth, the effects of heating chocolate or breaks in electrical circuits, pupils have a suitable experiment to focus their attention and demonstrate clearly what happens.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have good skills and understanding of a wide range of ICT equipment and computer programs and this enables them to use modern technology well in other subjects.
- Good leadership has effectively developed staff skills and resources, to enable good learning.

## **Commentary**

64. All pupils achieve well. Throughout the school and particularly in Years 5 and 6, pupils have good knowledge, understanding and skills for their age. Pupils in Year 6 have completed a wide range of very good quality writing, using a word processor. They have a good understanding of how to present text in different ways. For example they use columns when writing newspaper reports, headings, colours and different fonts when writing autobiographies and poems, and insert graphic images into party invitations or when writing about Aztecs in history. They have a good understanding of how to use tables and grids to record or present numerical or written data. Similarly, pupils in Year 2 have completed a reasonable amount and good range of work, including simple writing tasks, constructing decision trees and creating pictures using a 'paint' program.
65. Teaching and learning are good. Work is planned well to develop pupils' understanding and skills progressively from year to year. In a good lesson, pupils in Year 6 made substantial gains when learning to design and link pages using a multi-media programme. They understood that this could involve text and graphics presented in many different ways and made a good start at producing their own individualised presentations. Although this was the first of a series of lessons and the use of sound and moving images were planned for later, these aspects could usefully have been discussed more fully at this stage. During a very good lesson, all of the pupils in Year 2 learnt a great deal about writing simple instructions for a programmable 'Roamer' device. This was because the activity in the ICT suite successfully built on the classroom introduction using the Roamer and helped pupils build up a list of instructions logically.
66. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and skills and has successfully co-ordinated training including teaching other classes as a 'model', so all staff are competent and confident. He examines all teachers' planning, including that for cross-curricular links. There are sound arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress at the end of each unit of work. Resources have been developed well, keeping pace with the rapid developments nationally in modern technology. There is a good subject action plan, approved by the local education authority. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, particularly in the quality of teaching and learning, which was previously judged to be satisfactory.

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

67. There are good links between ICT and other subjects. A great deal of work on display, especially in Years 5 and 6, showed good use of ICT to reinforce and extend pupils' keyboard skills and to help them present their stories and poems in interesting ways. Observed lessons in science and ICT in Year 5 demonstrated very good links between these subjects and with literacy. Pupils used a sensor device and a range of materials to investigate the idea of muffling sound and to record their findings. In a Year 4 lesson, a

CD-ROM was used very well to develop pupils' editing and research skills, making excellent links with literacy and history.

## HUMANITIES

68. Religious education is being inspected separately. No lessons were seen in **history** and **geography** and, therefore, it is not possible to make reliable judgements about standards or provision. Discussions with pupils and with the subject co-ordinator reveal that subject planning is closely based on the national guidance for units of work. The school is developing a range of field visits, for example, to Pennington Flash, Worthington Lake and Southport, enabling comparisons to be made between the local environment and those further afield. In history, parents were recently involved in providing a range of toys and games from their childhood and artefacts from World War II. These enabled pupils to look at first hand evidence and relate it to their research. In displays of completed pupils' work around the school, ICT was used effectively to enable pupils to use their skills. Observations of completed pupils' work, links with other subjects, scrutiny of planning documents and action plans for the subjects indicated that history and geography are led and managed well.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

69. Only one lesson was seen in **art and design** and no lessons were observed in **design and technology**. Both subjects were therefore sampled and it is not possible to make reliable judgements about provision and outcomes. However, examination of planning, evaluation of previous work and discussions with staff indicate that a wide range of experiences is provided in each area. In a good art and design lesson, pupils in Year 6 evaluated how various artists such as Bruegel, Van Gogh, Derain and O'Keefe had evoked both urban and rural landscapes. They showed their appreciation through good discussion on the use of colour, line and perspective, before applying their knowledge in sketches and watercolours. Displays show that pupils use an appropriate range of media for both two- and three-dimensional work, suggesting that they follow a good curriculum. Displays of design and technology work similarly suggest a good curriculum successfully enhanced by visits, for example to a local bakery, to extend pupils' understanding in food technology. Pupils in Year 2 have looked at the uses of wheels and axles, and pupils in Year 5 took studies in this area further, to consider mechanisms using cams. By Year 6, pupils display good skills when making slippers to suit different wearers and designing and evaluating shelters for various purposes.
70. The small amount of evidence collected in **music** suggests that provision and outcomes are satisfactory. No lessons were seen, but discussions with pupils in Years 3 to 6 indicate that they experience a reasonable range of types of music and learn a variety of songs. There is a school choir, which performs on special occasions in the school and church. Video recordings of whole-school performances show the quality of singing to be enthusiastic and in line with national expectations. The available instruments appear to be under-used and pupils report rather few opportunities to compose their own music.
71. Since only one lesson in **physical education** was seen, it is not possible to make a judgement about standards. In the lesson for pupils in Year 5, the teaching was good. The lesson involved an effective warm-up and good questioning of pupils about the effects of exercise. Pupils enthusiastically took part in warm-up activities, where they considered the effects of exercise, as the result of well-focused questions from the teacher. They were

encouraged to consider how they might improve their work and to offer constructive comments about the work of others, whilst refining their athletic skills in the triple jump. The resources for physical education are good. There is a good range of equipment for both outdoor and indoor activities and apparatus is of sound quality. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well and many activities are provided for pupils outside the usual lesson times. The girls' football team recently won a local inter-schools football competition and is to represent the school in the regional finals. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught to swim and most achieve the nationally expected standard of swimming 25 metres by Year 6. Discussion with the co-ordinator suggests that all strands of the curriculum are covered and that older pupils take part in a bi-annual residential visit that includes adventurous outdoor activities.

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

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is **very good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The provision is wide-ranging and good links are made across the curriculum.
- There are very good mechanisms for pupils to express their views and develop their understanding of living in a community.

## **Commentary**

72. The school provides very well for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship, in the first place through specific lessons in a wide range of social and community issues, such as those observed, about bullying and rights and responsibilities. In addition there are 'circle times', during which important school and pupil issues are discussed openly and all views are accepted and valued. Teaching and learning are good during personal, social and health education and citizenship lessons and 'circle times'. Lessons are planned well, successfully develop pupils' understanding and skills and make very good links with other subjects, particularly literacy and religious education. The school and class councils provide frequent, very good opportunities for pupils to have a say in how their school is run and to begin to understand the basic principles of democracy. Although religious education was not inspected, displays in all classrooms entitled 'Here I Am' clearly illustrated the very close links between work in this subject and personal, social and health education and citizenship. Educational visits, particularly the residential experiences, very successfully develop pupils' social skills and independence. Personal qualities and skills are developed less formally but very effectively throughout the school day, both during lessons and at other times. As a result of all these learning activities, pupils achieve well and by the end of Year 6, they are very mature and responsible for their age.
73. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator has successfully led very significant developments during the two years she has had this responsibility. She has provided a clear steer to the developments in curriculum planning, using national and commercial materials. There is a clear vision and plan for what the school wants to do next, with well-thought out ideas for developing the work on citizenship through charitable activities and community links.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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