

# INSPECTION REPORT

## ST JOSEPH'S R.C. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sunderland

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique Reference Number: 108841

Inspection Number: 188013

Head Teacher: Mr L Jukes

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Reporting inspector: Sheila Pemberton  
20810

Dates of inspection: 8-11 November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706927

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary

Type of control: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Rutland Street  
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Telephone number: 0191 553 7725

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr J Foster

Date of previous inspection: 7th – 10th May 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Sheila Pemberton, Rgl Linda Buller Lay Inspector	Design and technology Art Under-fives	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Partnership with parents and the community Staffing, accommodation and learning resources The efficiency of the school Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
George Halliday	Mathematics History Geography	
Chris Taylor	Science Music Physical education	Equal opportunities Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
Gianna Ulyatt	English Information technology	Special educational needs The curriculum and assessment

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## **MAIN FINDINGS**

### **What the school does well**

- The standards pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 reach in English are very high and are a strength of the school.
- The attainments of pupils in Year 6 are well above average in mathematics and science.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning, behaviour, relationships and personal development are very good.
- Over half of the teaching is good or better.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. It is good for their cultural development.
- The school takes very good care of pupils.
- The involvement of parents with their children's learning is very good. Links with the local community are very good.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the work of the school.
- The ethos of the school is excellent.
- Financial control and planning, and the administration of the school are very good.

### **Where the school has weaknesses**

- Attainment in information technology is below the levels expected for 11-year-olds.
- The school has insufficient resources to organise activities that will allow children under five to become active independent learners.

**The school has many more strengths than weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection will be dealt with. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.**

### **How the school has improved since the last inspection**

There have been continuous improvements to the attainments of 11-year-olds in national tests in English, mathematics and science since the time of the last inspection. In response to issues raised at that time, the governors produced a thorough and detailed action plan. As a result, the process of improvement was carried out at a pace, which continues to give good support to new developments. One of these issues concerned improvements to the work of teachers responsible for different subjects of the curriculum. Their roles were extended very successfully. They now have opportunities to check teachers' planning, observe lessons and sample pupils' work. As a result, co-ordinators are knowledgeable and confident about the strengths of teaching. Their ability to fill gaps in pupils' learning is apparent in the school's high standards. The involvement of governors in the management of the school has also strengthened since 1996. They have become very well-informed of the work of the school by involving themselves in all aspects of its life. Governors meet all statutory requirements and maintain a very positive commitment to high standards and the school's role in the Christian life of the parish. Assessment now plays an important part in gaining information about pupils' learning. Teachers, especially those responsible for pupils of similar age in different classes, plan together to ensure that all pupils

receive equal access to the curriculum.

· **Standards in subjects**

This table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key	
			<i>well above average</i>	A
			<i>above average</i>	B
			<i>average</i>	C
			<i>below average</i>	D
			<i>well below average</i>	E
English	A*	A*		
Mathematics	A	A*		
Science	A	A		

From an initially low starting point for many pupils, standards in English, mathematics and science improve to either a very high or high level by the time that pupils are in Year 6. The school exceeds all its targets and standards are considerably higher than in most schools of this type. It is difficult to see how the school could achieve higher standards than it does. In 1999, the percentage of pupils in Year 6 reaching the national average and above in English was very high compared with all pupils both nationally and in similar schools. This very high attainment is a strength of the school. The percentage of pupils reaching level 4 and the higher level in mathematics was well above that of 11-year-olds nationally and very high in comparison with the results of pupils in similar schools. When compared with the results of pupils nationally and those in similar schools in 1999, pupils' performance in science was well above average. The results of National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2 in 1999 show a slight improvement of eight per cent in English, an improvement of 20 per cent at the higher level in mathematics and 40 per cent at level 5 in science. Pupils in Year 6 reach standards that are below expectations for their age in information technology. Their attainments are typical for their age in geography, history, physical education and music. Attainment is above that of most 11-year-olds in art and in design and technology.

· **Quality of teaching**

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
English	Good	Good	Very good
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Very good	Good
Science		Satisfactory	Good
Information technology		N / A	Good
Religious education		N / A	N / A
Other subjects	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good

The quality of teaching is mainly good and has been maintained at this level since the last inspection. Five per cent of teaching is excellent, 18 per cent of teaching is very good; 41 per cent is good and 36 per cent is satisfactory. There are equal proportions of satisfactory and good

teaching in art and geography. Teaching is satisfactory in history and music. In physical education it is good.

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses*



## Other aspects of the school

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Behaviour	Behaviour is very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and this has a very strong effect on their attainment.
Attendance	Good. It is above the national average.
Ethos*	The school has an excellent ethos, which is based on an outstanding commitment to high standards, very good relationships and equal opportunities for all pupils to learn and make progress.
Leadership and management	The headteacher, supported by a capable team of teachers and conscientious governors, gives excellent direction for the work of the school.
Curriculum	Although the curriculum is broad and balanced, too little attention is given to information technology and attainment is below that of most 11-year-olds. Good use is made of the findings of assessment to plan the next stage of pupils' learning.
Children with special educational needs	The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. It is good for their cultural development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory and sufficient in most subjects to maintain the current high levels of teaching and learning in the school. Some resources for children under five are in short supply and limit independent learning.
Value for money	Pupils attain very high standards and make very good progress. Their spiritual, moral and social development is very good. The quality of education provided by the school is also very good. As a result, the school provides very good value for money.

*\*Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

## **The parents' views of the school**

### **What most parents like about the school**

- I. Parents are very pleased with the standard of work reached by their children.
- II. They find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems.
- III. They are pleased that there are opportunities for them to play an active part in the life of the school.
- IV. They are sure that the school achieves high standards of good behaviour.
- V. They believe that the school's attitudes and values have a positive effect on their children.
- VI. Parents are well-informed about their children's progress.
- VII. The school gives them a good understanding of what is taught.
- VIII. They are satisfied with the amount of homework their children receive.
- IX. Parents are pleased that their children like school.

### **What some parents are not happy about**

There are no aspects of the school's provision about which parents are unhappy.

Inspection findings confirm parents' very positive views of the school. By the time that pupils leave the school, their parents have good reason to be pleased with the high standards many pupils reach in English, mathematics and science. They are right to think that there are many opportunities for them to become involved in the life of the school and that the headteacher and staff are very approachable. Parents' belief that much of the behaviour in school is very good is accurate and that much of it results from the attitudes and values the school promotes. Good information about what their children are taught and learn is available to parents. Inspectors agree with parents that pupils are provided with a reasonable amount of homework. Most pupils enjoy their time in school.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

Governors, headteacher and staff should

### **raise pupils' attainment in information technology in both key stages by**

- providing training to improve teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject
- implementing a clear programme of work to ensure that pupils make progress and build on what they already know and can do
- organising the use of resources to ensure that best use is made of computers
- allocating sufficient time for pupils to gain new skills in the subject and to use information technology more frequently in other subjects

*(Paragraphs 22, 33, 45, 77, 133 and 135 of the main report.)*

### **improve the knowledge and understanding of the world, personal, social, and creative development of children under five in the nursery and reception classes by**

- increasing the resources available in the reception classes for role-play, construction, experiments and investigations
- organising a wide range of first-hand experiences to allow for active, independent learning in the reception classes
- improving existing strategies used in the nursery to develop children's approach to planning and reviewing their own activities
- using the area outside the nursery more intensively to provide a planned outdoor curriculum in different areas of learning.

*(Paragraphs 39, 44, 79, 94 and 98 of the main report.)*

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## INTRODUCTION

### · Characteristics of the school

1. St. Joseph's RC Primary School serves the parish of St. Joseph in the City of Sunderland. Pupils come from Catholic families living in a community reaching from its surrounding locality Millfield and Pallion, as well as from a large estate of council-owned property at Lower Ford and owner-occupied homes in High Barnes. The school is situated in an area of mainly nineteenth century terraced houses with some new starter homes built on the sites of former shipbuilding and engineering works. The school is bigger than most primary schools nationally, although there are fewer pupils on roll, 263, than at the time of the previous inspection. All pupils speak English as their first language and very few pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds.
2. The number of pupils with special educational needs, 46, has increased since the last inspection. This figure is broadly in line with the national average. There are no pupils in the school with statements of their special educational needs. Although the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, 8.6%, is fewer than the national average, this figure does not give an accurate picture of parents' economic circumstances in an area of high unemployment. Many families are eligible for family credit. Most pupils attend the school's nursery before starting school. Many children's attainment on entry into school is below that typical of most four-year-olds.
3. The governing body admits up to 38 pupils to each class. There are two reception classes for younger pupils with 19 and 20 children in each. Priority is given to baptised Catholic children in the parish who attend Mass on a weekly basis.
4. The school aims to provide a safe, happy, responsible, well-ordered community in which children can learn and be valued as individuals. To achieve this the school helps children
  - to develop a deeper knowledge of the Catholic tradition,
  - to examine their lives to deepen their faith and to respect that of others,
  - to develop lively minds,
  - to apply themselves to their work,
  - to acquire relevant knowledge and skills,
  - to understand the world in which they live,
  - to appreciate human achievements and aspirations,
  - to develop appropriate relationships.
5. The school's targets for 1999 to 2000 are to
  - a. implement the National Numeracy Strategy
  - b. implement the IT policy and scheme of work
  - c. integrate and expand the policy and practice of health education within the wider curriculum.

## Key indicators

### 6. Attainment at Key Stage 1<sup>1</sup>

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1  
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999 (1998)	17(24 )	18(23 )	35(47 )

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<sup>1</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	17(24)	17(24)	16(24)
	Girls	16(23)	16(23)	16(23)
	Total	33(47)	33(47)	32(47)
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	94(100)	94(100)	91(100)
	National	82(80)	83(81)	87(84)

<b>Teacher Assessments</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	17(24)	16(24)	17(24)
	Girls	17(23)	17(23)	18(23)
	Total	34(47)	33(47)	32(47)
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	97(100)	94(100)	100(100)
	National	82(81)	80(85)	86(86)

## 7. Attainment at Key Stage 2<sup>2</sup>

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999 (1998)	27(27)	14(15)	41(42)
	)	)	)

<b>National Curriculum Test Results</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	27(24)	25(20)	25(20)
	Girls	13(15)	14(9)	14(10)
	Total	40(39)	39(29)	39(30)
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	98(93)	95(69)	95(71)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	75(69)

<b>Teacher Assessments</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	25(21)	26(24)	25(24)
	Girls	14(13)	13(15)	13(15)
	Total	39(34)	39(39)	38(39)
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	93(81)	100(93)	93(93)
	National	68(65)	69(65)	75(72)

## 8.

<sup>2</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

## Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:			%
	Authorised	School	5.0
	Absence	National comparative data	5.7
	Unauthorised	School	0.0
	Absence	National comparative data	0.5

## 9. Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	0
	Permanent	0

## 10. Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	23
	Satisfactory or better	100
	Less than satisfactory	0

· **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

· **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

· **Attainment and progress**

11. On entry into the nursery, many children have little experience of early reading, writing and mathematics and some lack aspects of personal and social development that are typical for their age. The results of formal assessments at the end of their time in the nursery indicate that apart from reading and writing, the attainments of four-year-olds are very low when compared with those of other schools nationally. Although their attainments in mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, personal, social and creative development remain below those expected of four-year-olds, most children make good progress and are on course to reach expectations for five-year-olds in these areas. Children in the reception classes are ready for work in the National Curriculum in speaking and listening, reading, writing and physical development. Higher attaining children already work at the first level of the National Curriculum in reading.
12. From an initially low starting point on entry into the nursery, standards in English, mathematics and science improve to either a very high or high level by the time that pupils are in Year 6. The school exceeds all its targets and standards are considerably higher than in most schools of this type. It is difficult to see how the school could achieve higher standards than it does. Attainment in English is a strength of the school. In National Curriculum tests in 1999, the attainment of 11-year-olds in English at the expected level 4 was very high when compared with all schools nationally and with pupils in similar schools. The performance of pupils at level 5 was above the national average. Pupils' attainments in English have improved and risen gradually since the last inspection. The results of the tests in mathematics and science in 1999 for pupils in Year 6 show that the percentage reaching the expected level 4 and above was well above both the national average and the average for pupils with similar backgrounds. Attainment in mathematics has continued to rise to this high level since 1996. Almost all pupils reached at least the expected level and a large number gained level 5. When compared with the results of pupils in similar schools, attainment in mathematics is very high. At Key Stage 2, boys did better than girls in the 1999 tests in English and at the higher level in mathematics. Girls did better than boys at level 5 in science. Above average attainment in science has been maintained since the previous inspection. As with English and mathematics, performance in science improved in 1999 and was well above average at level 5.
13. The percentage of seven-year-olds reaching the expected level 2 and higher level 3 in reading and writing in 1999 was well above the national average and the performance of pupils in similar schools. This high level of attainment has been maintained since 1996 and represents a strong gain in the standards reached by most children from the time they enter the school. The results of teachers' assessments of speaking and listening show pupils' attainments to be well above the national average. The performance of girls in English in 1999 was very high when compared with the national average; the performance of boys was well above average. The percentage of pupils reaching level 2 and above in mathematics in 1999 was similar to the national average and above the average reached by pupils with similar backgrounds. The percentage reaching level 3 was above the national average and represents a rising trend of improvement at the higher level since 1996. There was no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils' attainment in assessments by teachers in science in 1999 was very high when compared with all schools nationally and with the results of pupils in similar schools. All pupils achieved level 2, but none achieved the higher level. Overall, standards in English,



mathematics and science are high enough for pupils to be doing better than most seven-year-olds in similar schools.

14. Standards of speaking and listening are very high throughout the school. Pupils of different abilities listen attentively, follow instructions accurately and respond confidently to questions. Pupils in Year 6 are articulate and use an adventurous choice of high-quality, fluent language. They are all fluent readers. Higher and average attaining pupils read at a level above that expected for their age. Pupils make informed choices when selecting books and have well-developed skills for retrieving information. All pupils write for a wide range of purposes. High attainers in Year 6 spell complex words accurately and use high levels of punctuation. Average and lower attaining pupils spell accurately and punctuate their writing at a slightly lower level. Pupils with special educational needs use punctuation inconsistently. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs spell common words accurately. The handwriting of all pupils is fluent, joined and presented with care. Pupils in Year 2 talk confidently and use a good range of vocabulary. They read a very good variety of books and use different strategies to identify new words. Most pupils in Year 2 spell many common words correctly. Their handwriting is comprised of clear, well-formed letters and the use of punctuation is usually accurate. Pupils with special educational needs carry out the same work as other pupils but at a slightly lower level.
15. Pupils' make very good progress in English, mathematics and science. Because of teachers' very high expectations of pupils' ability to make very good progress, pupils respond by doing their best. Progress in speaking and listening is consistently very good in both key stages. Good opportunities for speaking and listening in many different subjects enable pupils' language to widen and become increasingly lively and interesting as they move through the school. All pupils make very good progress in reading. Parental support helps younger pupils to develop their reading at home. The many opportunities to practise reading with adults have a marked impact on pupils' progress. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress as a result of additional support from the special educational needs co-ordinator in small groups outside the classroom. In Key Stage 2, pupils make very good progress by reading a wider range of materials, which includes poetry, stories and non-fiction. They read accurately with expression and tackle new words with confidence. Progress in writing is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. Pupils in Key Stage 1 write clearly and neatly, and increasingly depend on their growing knowledge of phonics to spell unknown words. With additional support for their learning in the literacy hour, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in writing. They work in small groups but carry out the same activities as the rest of the class. The range of pupils' writing widens considerably.
16. The attainment in mathematics of pupils in Year 6 is well above average in the first term of the school year. Pupils work accurately when using addition, subtraction and multiplication with large numbers. Pupils convert improper fractions to mixed numbers, use decimal notation to two places and name and classify quadrilaterals. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs work at a slower rate and at a lower level than other pupils. Most understand improper fractions but take longer to secure their learning. Higher attaining pupils have fast recall of number facts and very good reasoning skills. Most pupils in Year 2 have good understanding of number bonds up to 20 and recognise and describe two-dimensional shapes. Lower attainers use practical equipment to count in small numbers up to 100. Pupils with special educational needs understand the same mathematical ideas but work with smaller numbers up to 25. Higher attaining pupils use mental strategies quickly to add units to tens and units beyond 20.
17. Most pupils make very good progress in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress from the high levels of support they receive. Pupils

expand their understanding of place value so that by the time they begin Key Stage 2, they use mental strategies to multiply by ten or 100. Pupils learn correct mathematical language from their earliest days in school and use it in Key Stage 2 to explain how they work out problems.

18.

The attainment in science of pupils in Year 6 is above expectations for their age at this time of the school year, and pupils are on target to achieve standards well above the national average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils at Key Stage 2, design and carry out their own investigations. They handle equipment safely, make informed predictions, record and analyse their results, and draw conclusions. In Year 6, for example, pupils performed their own experiments to test the solubility of a range of common solids. They observed the effect of ice on the temperature of water in a beaker, and plotted their results as a graph. Pupils in Year 5 carried out a fair test to determine the strength of different plastic carrier bags, and assembled and re-wired an electric plug to further their understanding of electrical circuits. As a result, they understand the difference between organic and inorganic substances, and carry out experiments to determine the electrical conductivity of different materials. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 investigate the properties of different building materials, and identify the fruits and leaves of different trees by using a key.

19. At Key Stage 1, pupils recognise different sounds, and discover that rulers and rubber bands make different noises when they vibrate. Pupils sort common materials into those that are transparent or opaque, and observe their texture and rigidity. They carry out simple experiments to discover which materials change shape when pressure is applied, and investigate how far model cars travel when placed on slopes of different steepness. They investigate different sources of electricity, and create a simple circuit to illuminate a bulb.
20. All pupils make very good progress in science. Emphasis on investigative science ensures that both higher and lower attaining pupils at both key stages make good progress. Their investigative abilities develop from making simple observations in Years 1 and 2, to designing and carrying out detailed investigations in Years 5 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs receive special assistance as part of a small group and make very good progress at both key stages.
21. Other subjects of the curriculum provide very good opportunities for pupils to practise and improve the skills they acquire in lessons in literacy and numeracy. Throughout the school, there are opportunities for pupils to improve the skills of speaking and listening through discussions in a wide range of topics. Pupils' reading improves when they work independently to research information in science, history and geography. The scope and accuracy of their writing increases in other subjects when they produce accounts of historical events, record their findings about other countries in geography, label diagrams and make good use of technical language in mathematics, science, design and technology and geography. The quality of punctuation and spelling is strengthened when pupils draft their writing with word processors. Pupils extend and make good use of their growing skills when they carry out work in mathematics in other subjects. For example, they record the results of scientific investigations as charts and graphs and use charts in geography and history to illustrate findings. They read temperatures in science and geography and use time-lines in history.
22. Pupils' attainment in information technology is below the levels expected at both key stages. Standards are at their highest in Year 5. Progress is unsatisfactory throughout the school as a result of the limited amount of time allocated to direct teaching of the subject and to opportunities for pupils to practise new skills. In Key Stage 2, progress is good in Year 5, where a teacher with secure skills in the subject teaches information technology. It is unsatisfactory in Year 6 where the subject receives less emphasis. Pupils make steady progress in word processing to draft and redraft their written work. They have too few opportunities to use computers to control and monitor experiments and to investigate options in real or imaginary situations.
23. Most pupils in Year 6 reach standards in art that are above those typical for their age. The school has maintained similar standards since the last inspection in 1996. A strength of the

subject and of pupils' good progress lies in the development of the skills needed to produce very finely observed drawings with delicate colouring and shading. Very attractive landscapes are painted with good awareness of colour and with fine brush strokes. The attainment of pupils in Year 2 is typical for their age when they work in the style of artists from different cultures. Pupils at both key stages reach standards in design and technology that are above those typical for their age. No judgements were recorded about the subject during the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress through the school as they refine the skills of designing and making and become adept at finishing and evaluating their work. Pupils' choice of products widens and their progress strengthens in the safe use of a growing range of tools and materials.

24. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils reach standards in geography and history that are typical for their age. The school has maintained similar standards in both subjects since the previous inspection. Pupils appreciate the importance of location in understanding places, know how physical and human processes affect people's lives and understand some of the problems of a Third World country. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in both key stages in the development of knowledge, understanding and skills in geography and history. By time they are 11, pupils understand some of the similarities and differences between the lives of people at different levels of society in the past and the present. A strength of history lies in pupils' awareness of the feelings and emotions of people in different eras.
25. Pupils reach standards in music and physical education that are typical for their age which have been maintained since the previous inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in using musical notation, developing the skills of listening and singing to contrasting rhythms, and identifying and using a range of instruments and a variety of music from different times and places. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress in all aspects of physical education at Key Stage 2, and good progress in gymnastics and dance at Key Stage 1. Older pupils make good progress in developing co-ordination, balance and control when using space and equipment in gymnastics. Nearly all pupils swim 25 metres confidently by the end of Key Stage 2, and some swim over 100 metres.

#### **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

26. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and this makes a strong contribution to the progress they make. Throughout the school, pupils respond positively in lessons and work hard to meet the challenges set by teachers. Parents agree that the school promotes attitudes consistent with their own values. Children under-five in the nursery and the reception classes make good progress towards the outcomes of learning for personal development. They show enthusiasm when engaged in practical activities and demonstrate good levels of concentration when listening to their teachers. Children are co-operative when working in pairs or larger groups. They often share equipment, for example, when working in the sand tray or making models with bricks. Pupils throughout the school are keen to learn, they are well-motivated and sustain high levels of concentration. Pupils in Year 6 work independently from written instructions provided by their teacher. This allows the teacher to give her attention to pupils involved in practising for the school's Christmas performance. Parents say that close links with the church and the parish helps their children to develop very good attitudes and values.
27. Pupils' behaviour is consistently very good; at times it is excellent. These high levels of behaviour have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection. Parents feel that their children are happy in school and that they behave very well. A parent who went

on a recent school trip reported that pupils' behaviour was of a very high standard. There were no exclusions for poor behaviour in the last academic year. All pupils understand the school rules and no bullying was seen during the inspection. Parents are confident that teachers always take prompt action if any bullying occurs. Pupils are courteous, well-mannered and treat one another, adults and property with respect. When working with a volunteer helper, pupils were heard to say, *that's a good idea*, in response to his suggestions to improve their work.

28. Relationships between pupils are very good. For example, in a lesson in English in Year 4, pupils shared their ideas and listened attentively to the views of others when discussing the differences between fact and opinion in newspaper articles. Relationships between pupils and staff are also very good. Teachers use these good relationships to motivate pupils to work hard and this has a positive contribution to the high standards they attain. Very good relationships are evident when pupils and teachers enjoy extra-curricular activities, which extend the routine activities of the classroom. Older pupils waiting to take part in a practice game of football at lunchtime expressed their appreciation of the teacher who was sharing his skills with them. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of independent study and pupils respond very positively to these opportunities. In a class containing pupils in Years 4 and 5, pupils used a variety of media to carry out research into the Viking culture from the stories they told through the *runes*.
29. Pupils readily take responsibility for their own learning, looking after one another and contributing to the smooth day-to-day running of the school. Older pupils take responsibility as prefects, acting as good role models for others and assisting in the care and supervision of younger pupils. Pupils regularly take initiatives in lessons such as extending the activities provided by teachers and asking probing questions to widen their knowledge. Following a visit to Beamish Museum, pupils asked many sensible questions about schools in the past and devised a questionnaire to gather information about their parents' experiences while at school. Pupils respond very well to the opportunities provided to consider the values, beliefs and feelings of others. In an assembly for pupils in Key Stage 2, they demonstrated a high level of maturity for their age in understanding the moral dilemmas of war and the feelings of those affected by it.
30. Pupils and teachers are immersed in the almost tangible Christian climate of the school. This is at the heart of pupils' very good attitudes to work and progress, their very good behaviour and relationships and provides the school with a continuing basis for its success.

#### **Attendance**

31. Attendance is good. Levels of authorised and unauthorised absence have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection and remain better than the national average. The school's capacity to improve attendance is hindered by the number of families who interrupt their children's learning by taking them out of school for holidays in term time. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They arrive on time and this ensures a prompt start to the school day.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

#### **Teaching**

32. The quality of teaching is mainly good and has been maintained at this level since the last

inspection. Five per cent of teaching is excellent, 18 per cent is very good, 41 per cent is good and 36 per cent is satisfactory. There are equal proportions of satisfactory and good teaching in art and geography. Teaching is satisfactory in history and music. In physical education it is good.

33. Teachers in both key stages have good knowledge and understanding of most subjects of the curriculum. Some teachers lack skill in information technology and this slows the rate of pupils' progress. The quality of teaching in English is a continuing strength of the school. The successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy provides a framework for teachers' existing expertise and contributes to the rising trend of attainment in English. Teachers now use the framework and activities provided by the National Numeracy Strategy to add to their existing strengths in teaching mathematics and to continue to secure high standards in the subject.
34. The links teachers create between subjects such as art, English, science, mathematics, history and information technology widen pupils' knowledge and experience, and promote their intellectual and cultural development. In an excellent lesson during the literacy hour, the teacher used an informational text about the *Olympic Games* to develop pupils' vocabulary to a very high standard. Following a lively discussion about the principles underlying the games, pupils in Year 3 peppered their talk with words such as *honour*, *compete*, *repetitive* and *disobey*.
35. Teachers of children under five place suitable emphasis on personal and social development, language, literacy and mathematics. They use their good understanding of ways to teach reading and writing, to provide a secure foundation from which children can become effective readers and writers. Teachers provide a safe and caring background for learning to take place and establish the very good relationships necessary for parents to become involved in their children's learning.
36. A feature of successful teaching at both key stages lies in teachers' very high expectations of pupils' ability to produce high standards and to behave in the best possible way. This level of expectation forms part of the school's excellent ethos and is responsible for the strength of pupils' attitudes to learning and their high attainment in English, mathematics and science. Teachers are unstinting in applying their very high expectations to pupils at every level of ability. In a very good lesson in mathematics in Year 2, the teacher showed considerable patience when introducing a group of lower attaining pupils to counting in steps of ten, five and three. He used a wide range of strategies and resources to ensure that everyone understood the work, allowed time for pupils to reach the right answer and provided strong support for pupils in need of extra help.
37. Planning has improved since it was identified as an issue at the last inspection. The nursery teacher passes detailed information about children's attainment and progress to teachers in the reception classes. The quality of this information allows them to build effectively on children's early learning. The teachers of classes containing pupils of the same age plan together to ensure that pupils cover the same work but at a level that suits their needs. Teachers in Key Stage 2 separate pupils from classes containing different year groups for science to allow pupils of the same age to be taught together. In this way the curriculum is covered fully and no time is wasted by needlessly repeating previous work. The planning in Year 6 allows pupils at different levels of ability to cover the same work at a different pace and with a different teacher. As a direct result, 95 per cent of all 11-year-olds reached the expected and higher level in the National Curriculum tests in science in 1999.

- 38. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good. When preparing lessons, teachers plan and work systematically towards the targets identified in pupils' individual education plans. Class teachers and the support teacher work very well together to allow all pupils to take a full and active part in the curriculum. In some subjects, the support teacher runs a parallel lesson on a planned topic to ensure that pupils with special educational needs cover the same work at their own level and pace. Additionally, the support teacher works with small groups of pupils outside the classroom to provide close attention to resolving the difficulties they encounter in their work. The special needs co-ordinator provides very good support and guidance for individual teachers and assists in the review of pupils' individual education plans. This supplies teachers with clear, up-to-date information of pupils' progress and gives them a good basis for planning what pupils need to learn next.
- 39. In order to provide pupils with a higher quality of experience, teachers share their expertise by teaching classes other than their own for subjects such as literacy, mathematics, drama and music. By sharing the responsibility for teaching literacy and mathematics to a whole year group, teachers work more efficiently with classes organised to contain pupils of similar prior attainment. This allows teachers to meet the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment more closely and to maintain high standards. In addition to occasionally keeping children inactive too long, teachers in the reception classes organise too few experiences that give rise to active, independent learning. Activities to promote independence in the nursery, by allowing children to plan and review their own activities, lack the organisational strategies needed to make them effective.
- 40. Teachers exert firm control to maintain very high standards of good behaviour. This is an outstanding feature of all teaching. From the time they begin to attend the nursery, teachers establish very good relationships with children and their parents. Standards of care for individual children start at a high level and teachers maintain these as pupils pass through the school. It is on the basis of very good relationships that teachers inspire the respect needed to secure very good behaviour and attitudes to learning. The concern teachers show for pupils as they get older extends not only to their work in the classroom but to the additional activities teachers provide to extend pupils' interests and skills outside lessons.
- 41. Teachers at both key stages make good use of most resources to increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning. To allow pupils in a geography lesson in Year 6 to appreciate the feelings of people in India towards monsoon rains, the teacher used a video showing its effect on lives and landscapes. Through the work of a theatre company, who recreated a Victorian classroom in school, teachers in Years 5 and 6 extended the impact of visits to places of interest, such as Beamish Museum. Staff asked parents of pupils in Year 2 to complete questionnaires about their more recent experiences at school as a resource for learning in history. Teachers make regular use of local facilities such as the swimming pool at Sunderland University to ensure that all pupils learn to swim. Staff do not always use computers to best effect. Machines are turned off in some classrooms for a considerable part of each day. Most teachers use the support of parent helpers and volunteers from the parish effectively. Pupils in Year 3 made good progress in an art lesson as a result of the support provided by a volunteer helper who worked closely with a group of pupils engaged in a challenging activity and who helped the teacher to prepare a wide range of resources.
- 42. The quality of day-to-day assessment is very good at both key stages and has improved since the last inspection. Good and efficient systems are in place in the nursery to record assessments of children's progress as they complete activities. In this way, the teacher knows the exact point of children's development in different areas of learning and what

they need to learn next. The use teachers make of information gained from marking, questioning and listening to pupils' responses to plan the next step of learning is a contributory factor to existing high standards. Marking is generally positive and is particularly effective when teachers give constructive advice to encourage pupils to improve their work.

43. Parents are satisfied with the amount of homework their children receive. The support parents provide for pupils' reading, spelling, multiplication tables and research has a positive effect on their attainments in school.



## The curriculum and assessment

44. The curriculum for children under five in the nursery and two reception classes is satisfactory overall. It takes account of the six recommended areas of learning and prepares children for work in the National Curriculum. The planning of activities for the under-fives has improved since the last inspection and teachers in the reception classes now plan together to ensure that children receive the same curriculum. The strong emphasis that the nursery places on developing language and literacy is responsible for children's good early progress in these key areas. Insufficient emphasis is placed on aspects of personal development that allow children under five in the nursery and reception classes to become independent learners.
45. With the exception of information technology, the curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad and balanced and makes good provision for pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development. It prepares pupils very effectively for work in the secondary school. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal and social skills, which are reflected in their very good attitudes to learning and very good behaviour. Health education, including drug education and sex education, is taught in religious education and science, and is part of a planned programme for personal and social education.
46. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good throughout the school. Pupils have well-formulated individual education plans with clear, measurable targets, which are reviewed on a regular basis. Class teachers and the co-ordinator for special educational needs check pupils' progress rigorously. They plan together carefully to ensure that all pupils have full access to work in English and mathematics. Pupils in Key Stage 1, with difficulties in reading and writing, work in small groups outside the classroom each day. Pupils in Year 1 who experience difficulties in mathematics have an additional lesson in the subject each week. Pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 2 have at least two additional weekly lessons in reading and writing. In Year 6, they are taught science once a week in a smaller group. Careful planning, regular checks on pupils' progress and skilful teaching result in pupils with special needs making very good progress in both key stages.
47. Staff are aware of the need to ensure that all pupils regardless of ability, gender and race have full access to the curriculum. Short-term planning usually shows an accurate match between the work teachers provide and pupils' needs. Younger pupils with high ability in mathematics, for example, work with older pupils at a similar stage of development. In response to the report from the previous inspection, planning throughout the school has improved and now ensures that all pupils, including those in mixed age classes, have equal access to the curriculum.
48. Curricular planning is generally effective at both key stages. Extra time is allocated to literacy and numeracy, and with the exception of information technology, sufficient time is allocated to other subjects. The school has added the practices of the National Literacy Strategy to its own very successful provision to promote very high attainment in reading and writing. Mathematics is receiving more attention this year as a result of the recent and successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers provide very good opportunities in other subjects of the curriculum for pupils to practise and improve the skills they acquire in lessons in literacy and numeracy. Teachers use literacy and numeracy very effectively to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Clear policies and schemes of work provide helpful guidance for teaching and learning. The school makes good use of its curriculum entitlement policy to ensure full coverage of most subjects and to build on what pupils already know and understand. Medium and short-term plans contain clear objectives for pupils' learning and establish good links that widen pupils' knowledge and

understanding of different subjects. Teachers make regular evaluations of short-term planning to improve and modify future plans.

49. The school promotes a satisfactory range of extra curricular activities. This includes sporting activities such as football and netball, and clubs for homework, foreign languages, guitar and recorders. The curriculum is extended through visits to areas of educational interest in the locality. Many visitors, such as the parish priest, theatre groups, journalists and sportsmen visit the school regularly to share their expertise and experiences with pupils.
50. Assessment was identified as a key issue for improvement at the time of the previous inspection. The school has addressed this issue well, especially in Key Stages 1 and 2 and has developed and implemented a clear policy for assessing and recording pupils' attainment. Teachers have reviewed assessment procedures recently to accommodate the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. This prompt action gives a good indication of the school's intention and ability to keep both the policy and assessment practice up-to-date.
51. Systems to measure the achievements of three-year-olds on entry to the nursery are undergoing review. The school has devised effective ways of assessing children's achievements on entry into the reception classes. Statutory assessments at the end of each key stage are completed efficiently. The school has made good progress in using the information gained from assessment to plan the next step of pupils' learning. Assessments by teachers at the end of each key stage have improved to the extent that they match the results of National Curriculum tests for seven and 11-year-olds. Teachers analyse the results of tests thoroughly to raise standards by filling gaps in pupils' learning. They use additional testing at the end of each year in Key Stage 2 successfully to track pupils' progress, to group them with others of similar ability in mathematics and science, and to provide additional support in English. The school keeps portfolios of pupils' work as a record of their progress throughout the school. In response to issues from the previous inspection, the quality of marking has improved. Teachers add clear, evaluative comments to pupils' work and write suggestions to help them make further improvement. Teachers' files contain up-to-date results of regular tests, which they use to plan the next step of pupils' learning. Procedures for identifying and assessing pupils with special educational needs are effective and teachers frequently check that their progress is maintained.

#### **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

52. Very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development remains a strength of the school from the time of the previous inspection. Good provision for pupils' cultural development represents an improvement since the last report. The school provides a very welcoming and caring environment in which very good relationships are developed. It fulfils its mission statement of building school life upon Gospel values.
53. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good, with some excellent features. Daily acts of worship are deeply spiritual and give pupils time for quiet reflection. Pupils worship in a variety of groups, as a class, in a reception year group, with others at different key stages and as a whole school. They reflect on a lighted candle and pray with reverence. Even the youngest children sit still in a very calm atmosphere and thoughtfully recite the Lord's Prayer. Older pupils help their teacher to lead worship and prayers. A programme of Christian and moral themes lays an outstanding basis for spiritual development. The school provides regular opportunities for all pupils to take part in worship in church and for the parish priest to fulfil his role in school. Opportunities for the

development of spirituality are planned into lessons, particularly in religious education, but also in other subjects. For instance, in English in Year 6, pupils were encouraged to compose poetry, taking care not *to tread upon other people's dreams*.

54.

Provision for moral development is very good. Staff promote a very strong moral code and are themselves very good role models. The headteacher takes a very strong lead in setting the tone of the school. There are clear guidelines to promote good behaviour and caring attitudes. From the earliest age, pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong. They respond positively to expectations to behave well and to be respectful and considerate to others. Older pupils have many opportunities to consider wider moral issues in a programme for personal and social development and as they study issues such as conservation and pollution. Parents agree strongly that the school's moral values have a positive effect on their children.

55. The school's provision for pupils' social development is very good. It extends to its pupils a powerful sense of belonging to a lively, caring Christian community. Care is taken to ensure that children under five in the nursery and reception classes are inducted with ease into the social conventions and very desirable attitudes to others that the school promotes. Teachers help pupils to develop their social skills by providing them with many opportunities to work together in lessons. Extra-curricular activities and sport provide older pupils with wider experiences of working and playing together amicably. Pupils become increasingly aware of the wider community on visits that support the curriculum. Their social skills are refined from meeting and working with the many visitors to school. The oldest pupils take part in an annual residential programme of outdoor activities designed to challenge them as individuals and to raise their belief in themselves as successful individuals in a new setting. Teachers go out of their way to encourage good manners and sociability at all times in class, in the dining hall and at play. Very good relationships are a strong feature of the school. Pupils are taught to understand that rights and responsibilities are of equal importance and begin to contribute to the smooth running of the school from the time they are in the reception classes by undertaking everyday tasks, such as taking registers to the office.
56. The oldest pupils take turns to act as prefects and all pupils help with duties in class. Good readers often support others in their work. Pupils are expected to listen with care and respect to one another's views. They are involved in the Millennium Tree Campaign and the Millennium Celebration. Pupils are taught to communicate with deaf people and one another through the *signing* of the British Deaf Language. Pupils make donations and learn how charities such as Cafod and St Cuthbert's Care improve the life of others. They support and receive regular newsletters and visits from a representative of the Amala Christian Homes in India. The school develops pupils' understanding of local issues and prepares them for citizenship. They support the local charity Street Care and gain an insight into the circumstances of homeless people. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 gained valuable experience when they enacted a public debate on the issue of the Metro rail extension to Sunderland. The school's very good links with the community make a strong contribution to pupils' social development.
57. The school makes good provision for pupils' cultural development. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils now have many opportunities in subjects such as art, history, geography, music and religious education to learn of different cultures and civilisations past and present. The study of world religions introduces them to Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Rastafarianism. Pupils in Year 6 compare the architecture of St Joseph's Church with the Taj Mahal in India. The school promotes interest in good quality children's literature and takes part in National Poetry Day and National Book Week. Pupils visit theatres, museums and archaeological sites. The school arranges for visitors to heighten pupils' cultural experiences. For instance, a Viking storyteller entertains pupils in Years 3 and 4 and a theatre group involves the oldest pupils in role-play about life in wartime Britain.
58. From the strength of improvements to cultural development since the last inspection, it is

evident that the school is able to both maintain and improve its provision.

**Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

59. Provision for pupils' support, guidance and welfare is very good. The school has maintained its very high standard of provision from the time of the previous inspection.
60. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and personal development are good. Teachers maintain up-to-date records of pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and science. In literacy, they set individual targets for pupils at the beginning of the year. Parents and teachers discuss pupils' progress towards these targets. Teachers give advice and guidance so that parents can support their children's learning. Procedures for checking the progress of pupils with special needs are very good. Pupils' individual education plans have well-defined, measurable targets that are reviewed regularly by teachers. Pupils are withdrawn from the classroom for individual support on a daily basis at Key Stage 1, and at least twice weekly at Key Stage 2. There is also some additional support in science at Key Stage 2, and in mathematics at Key Stage 1.
61. Very good procedures for the promotion of good behaviour and discipline follow the school's Christian values. Pupils are aware of the rules of the school and almost all abide by them. The behaviour policy lists an appropriate system of rewards and sanctions that teachers use consistently. It places emphasis on rewarding good behaviour. Teachers issue house points regularly for good work and good behaviour, and send pupils to the headteacher to receive praise for good work and good attitudes. Every week, teachers award a *star* badge for good progress or a helpful or positive attitude to a pupil in each class in Key Stage 1. Teachers in Key Stage 2 reward similar behaviour with *well done* certificates. The school awards progress certificates each term. A clear policy exists to deal with isolated incidents of bullying. Support staff on duty during breaks and at lunchtimes are vigilant and helpful to pupils and play an important role in promoting good behaviour.
62. Teachers check pupils' behaviour regularly, and record incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour, together with the action taken. Occasionally, teachers monitor pupils who show signs of restless behaviour more closely by means of a daily observation sheet, which is discussed with parents. The school keeps close checks of pupils' personal development, and teachers record examples of development in pupils' personal profiles.
63. Good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance contribute to above average levels of attendance in the school. The headteacher monitors absence closely and contacts parents when necessary. Each week, there are certificates for classes with full attendance, which are on display in classrooms. The school awards a certificate to pupils with full attendance at the end of the school year. These procedures are effective in promoting good attendance.
64. The school makes good provision for child protection and very good provision for pupils' health, safety and wellbeing. Although the headteacher is ultimately responsible for child protection, all staff are aware of the clear procedures, and have been trained to recognise signs and symptoms of child abuse. Pupils gain awareness of their own personal safety through the teaching of life skills and family values. All aspects of health and safety are monitored regularly. Governors arrange regular checks for defects in electrical equipment and apparatus for physical education. An annual assessment of risks to pupils' safety lists possible hazards and the steps taken to eliminate them. The school holds fire practices twice a year, and provides regular servicing for fire alarms and extinguishers. All staff are trained in health and safety procedures. There are two qualified first-aiders, and first-aid supplies are maintained efficiently. There is an up-to-date record of accidents. Good liaison exists with professional bodies outside the school. For example, a nurse visits the school

regularly to carry out screening tests and to talk to pupils about health issues.

· **Partnership with parents and the community**

65. Partnerships between the school, parents and community are very good. The quality of support given to the school by parents has been maintained since the time of the previous inspection and continues to impact positively on pupils' learning. Information provided for parents is good. They are kept well-informed about school events and about their children's attainment and progress through good quality newsletters and annual reports. These include advice as to how pupils can further improve their work. Opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress are provided during the autumn and spring terms. At a meeting held prior to the inspection, parents expressed the view that the work their children take home is an effective means of keeping them informed about what is taught in lessons. Inspection evidence supports this view.
66. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are well-informed about their children's progress. Once their children's special educational needs are identified, parents are involved in all decisions about the help provided for their children and their continuing involvement is in line with the guidance of the national Code of Practice.
67. Many parents support the work of the school by helping in classrooms, working in the school and accompanying pupils on visits and activities such as weekly swimming lessons. When teachers use the support provided by parents efficiently, it has a positive impact on pupils' learning. For example, in science in Year 1, a parent offered good assistance for pupils who were predicting which of a range of objects were magnetic. Other parents support the school as Friends of St Joseph's. The school makes good use of their fund raising by allowing all pupils to take part in educational visits. Parents host social events, which contribute to pupils' personal development. Well-organised homework allows parents to become involved with their children's learning. Teachers use reading records as an effective means of communicating with parents. They often contain targets to develop pupils' skills in reading.
68. Links with the community, the church and local business are very good. These involve pupils in working alongside visitors from businesses such as the *Sunderland Echo* and Sunderland Football Club. Extensive links with the church make a very good contribution to pupils' personal and spiritual development. During the inspection pupils in Year 2 and children from the nursery were involved alongside the parish priest and members of the parish in the planting of a Yew Tree in the church garden. Teachers planned this event very effectively to support pupils' spiritual development and understanding of changes that take place over time by linking the growth of the tree to their own growth.
69. A very strong commitment to partnership with parents and the community places the school in a very good position to maintain parents' very high levels of confidence in the school and the contribution this makes to pupils' attainment and progress.

· **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

· **Leadership and management**

70. Its excellent ethos is an outstanding feature of the school. The intentions of the headteacher, staff and governors are clearly and consistently directed towards maintaining

very high standards. The school works very closely with the parish to effect very good relationships between school, church and parents. Pupils learn in a calm and positive atmosphere that allows their needs to be met with success and their personal growth to be developed in a deeply caring Christian community.

71. The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the work and life of the school. His powerful commitment to getting the best possible results for the children in his care is reflected in the strong support of the governing body and the marked enthusiasm of teachers. This commitment extends not only to continuously raising and maintaining very high educational standards, but also in creating a safe, happy, responsible and well-ordered community in which children learn and are valued as individuals. Parents hold the headteacher and staff in very high regard. The very good relationships the headteacher maintains with parents ensure their outstanding support for the aims, policies and values of the school.
72. A strength of the school's ability to improve its performance lies in the thorough and detailed action plan which was drawn up in response to issues raised during the previous inspection. One of these issues concerned improvements to the work of co-ordinators for different subjects of the curriculum. The role of co-ordinators has been extended very successfully through audits of provision prior to the development of their subjects within an agreed budget. Co-ordinators are provided with opportunities to monitor provision for prioritised subjects by checking planning, observing lessons and sampling pupils' work. A policy for checking the quality of the curriculum has grown from the school's practice in this area, which provides very clear guidelines for all activities and defines the roles of the senior management team, the assessment co-ordinator, subject co-ordinators, teachers and governors. From their supportive work in classrooms, co-ordinators are now knowledgeable and confident about the strengths of teaching in their subjects and of their position in ensuring that teachers at both key stages are aware of all initiatives and issues. Their ability to fill any gaps in programmes for pupils' learning are apparent in the school's high standards.
73. An issue to promote the deeper involvement of the governing body in the management of the school has been developed particularly successfully. Governors' increased commitment to the school includes working on sub-committees covering areas such as the curriculum, finances, premises and personnel. Groups of governors now meet each half-term to review current priorities and to consider future action within budget constraints. Individual governors are responsible for checking the quality of the school's provision for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. This activity involves governors in discussion and agreement about all aspects of the work of the school and in meeting all statutory requirements. They are very well-informed and as a result, maintain a very positive and enduring approach to the standards the school achieves and to its role in perpetuating the Christian life of the parish.
74. Through systematic and thorough planning, all other issues for development raised at the previous inspection have been improved with similar success. Assessment now plays an important part in the evaluation of pupils' progress from the reception classes to Year 6. Teachers, especially those responsible for pupils of similar age in different classes, plan together to ensure that all pupils receive equal access to the curriculum. The headteacher, co-ordinator and governor with responsibility for special educational needs ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive their full entitlement and that the requirements of the Code of Practice are met.
75. The school's development plan is a carefully considered, realistic working document, which provides a very secure mechanism for implementing change in all aspects of the work of

the school. It is prefaced by thorough evaluations of recent improvements to the provision for different subjects. This includes very helpful summaries of where the school is up to in implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, information technology and other subjects and policies in need of review. The plan contains analyses of the results of National Curriculum tests, which are used very effectively to check and improve the quality of teaching. An example of a recent planning issue includes the school's concern about narrowing differences in the comparative attainment of boys and girls. To ensure that areas prioritised for development are under constant scrutiny, their position is reviewed at the end of each term, and new targets are set together with strategies for their implementation. Resourcing and funding are analysed, responsible personnel are identified, timescales established, as are ways of evaluating their success. With such effective planning at the basis of developments, the school is in a good position to achieve its aims and targets and to maintain the quality of its provision.

#### **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

76. Staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory and sufficient to maintain the current high levels of teaching and learning in the school. Issues raised during the previous inspection have been dealt with successfully. For example, accommodation in the nursery has been improved with the provision of a safe, surfaced outdoor area.
77. The school has enough suitably qualified and experienced teachers to teach all subjects of the curriculum to very good effect on pupils' progress, with the exception of information technology. A teacher employed on a part-time basis provides very good additional support for pupils with special educational needs. A continuous programme of training is in place to support teachers' professional development. This continues to be linked closely to the school's priorities. As a result of staff training, the school has successfully implemented both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Satisfactory arrangements are in place for staff appraisal and the induction of newly appointed staff. There are sufficient support staff who together with the school secretary and caretaker, work hard to provide effective support for the life of the school.
78. Accommodation is adequate to enable effective teaching of all subjects and to allow pupils to make very good progress. Classrooms are big enough to enable a range of activities to take place. The library provides a good base for extra work with pupils with special educational needs. The nursery unit and dining hall are housed in a separate building adjacent to the school and the accommodation in both has been improved since the time of the previous inspection. Attractive displays of pupils' work are used to good effect to create stimulating areas for learning and to celebrate pupils' achievements. They also allow pupils in different classes to share their learning with others in the school. Outdoor areas of the school have also been well-maintained and developed with the exception of the infant playground. This play area, which was formally a vehicular right of way, is in poor condition with many uneven surfaces.
79. Resources are satisfactory in range and quality and sufficient to support teaching and learning in most subjects. This is similar to the situation noted at the time of the previous inspection. The school has purchased a good range of books to support the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and books in classrooms are in good supply. The library, however, contains many books that are old and in poor condition and do not adequately support all subjects as, for example, music and physical education. The school has sufficient computers to teach information technology although these vary in quality and there is an in-balance in their distribution around the school. This contributes to below average attainment in the subject. There are few resources available for role-play in the



reception classes or to provide independent activities for children to manage their own learning. As a result, children have few opportunities to become responsible for their own learning. Teachers usually direct all their activities. Current levels of spending do not provide the school with the capacity to increase the amount or quality of its resources.

## **The efficiency of the school**

80. The school's level of efficiency is good and has been maintained since the time of the previous inspection. Financial planning is very good and is used effectively to support educational developments. The headteacher and governors work together to make careful plans based on projected pupil numbers and the level of funding available. The school's development plan is an effective means of identifying priorities and provides a long-term view of the intended direction of the school. Monies raised by the Friends of St Joseph's are used effectively to support visits to places of educational interest, which extend and enliven the curriculum.
81. The expertise of teachers is put to good use for the benefit of pupils' progress. For example, the expertise and qualifications of the headteacher are used to improve the quality of the teaching of swimming. When planning the curriculum and sharing their special skills in subjects such as music and drama, teachers improve the quality of the experiences provided for pupils. The time and expertise of the teacher who supports pupils with special educational needs are used very effectively to enable them to make very good progress.
82. Overall, satisfactory use is made of accommodation and learning resources. Good use is made of the school library as a base for teaching pupils with special educational needs. Organisation within the nursery does not yet make effective use of the newly created outdoor area in support of pupils' physical and social development, or in their knowledge and understanding of the world.
83. Day-to-day financial control and administration is very good. The headteacher monitors the budget carefully and provides very good financial information and guidance for the governing body. An efficient school secretary supports the routine administration, communication systems and internal organisation of the school and as a result the school functions extremely well.
84. By the age of 11, pupils attain standards that are well above the national average and they make very good progress. Their attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good. The school provides a very good quality of education and makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. As a result, the school provide very good value for money.
85. The ethos of the school is centred on raising standards within the values of the Catholic Church. As a consequence, governors and staff are in a good position to maintain levels of efficiency and value for money.

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

86. On entry into the nursery, many three-year-olds have little experience of early reading, writing and mathematics and some lack aspects of personal and social development that are typical for their age. Their knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development are below those of three-year-olds. Although formal assessments of four-year-olds' early achievements in their final term in the nursery indicate that their attainments in mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, personal, social, physical and creative development remain below those expected for their age, most four-year-olds make good progress towards the outcomes of learning for five-year-olds. They are ready for work in the National Curriculum in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Higher attaining children in the reception classes already work at the first level of the National Curriculum in reading. After a term in the reception classes, the physical development of many four-year-olds improves to the stage where they begin to work in the National Curriculum. At the time of the inspection, there were 74 children under the age of five in the nursery and in two parallel reception classes. Many children in the reception classes will not reach their fifth birthdays until the spring and summer terms.
87. When three-year olds join the nursery, their personal and social development are typical for their age and they make good progress towards the outcomes of learning for five-year-olds. Most children in the nursery leave their parents with confidence and are happy with the routines and rules of the class. When experimenting with the taste of snacks, such as slices of cucumber, they are aware that unwanted food should be placed in the litterbin and not returned to the plate. Some children are friendly with visiting adults and engage them in conversations about their own achievements. One girl explained that she was *very good in school* and to prove her cleverness explained that *I can hop*. Many aspects of children's progress in personal and social development are maintained at a good pace in the reception classes. Almost all children concentrate and persevere with tasks. Most respond with particular enthusiasm and enjoyment to the opportunities provided for role-play in lessons in drama. They express their feelings about the race in the story of *The Tortoise and the Hare*, and have no difficulty in demonstrating the movement of the tortoise. When provided with a free choice of activities, children in the reception classes work co-operatively in small groups. They discuss ways to tackle tasks such as building a wall, share equipment generously and take pride in their achievements. As a result of the very limited range of resources available for different aspects of role play, children's progress towards becoming independent learners is limited.
88. The teacher in the nursery works hard to improve children's personal and social development. All teachers of the under-fives have very high expectations of children's progress in this important area of learning. These are reflected in children's very positive attitudes and very good behaviour. A shortage of resources in the reception classes limits the situations available for the growth of independence. As a result, teachers organise too narrow a variety of experiences for active, independent learning. Resources for role-play and experimentation are in short supply. In the nursery, the methods chosen to encourage children to plan and review their own learning take up too much of the time available for direct teaching.
89. In their first term in the nursery, many children have few early experiences of reading and writing and their attainments in language and literacy are below those of many children of the same age. Towards the end of their first term in the nursery, children understand the importance of listening very attentively to stories and explanations about the work and to

instructions from their teacher. Although they do their best to answer questions when working in small groups, only a few children ask questions and several respond with actions rather than speech. Some children gain confidence and make steady progress in writing their own names without support from adults. In the reception classes, higher attaining children progress to writing their names accurately, average attainers sometimes reverse the shape of letters and lower attaining children copy their names from their teachers' writing. An interest in books is evident in the nursery when children sit in the library corner turning the pages of their favourite stories and *reading* the pictures. Many children in the reception classes make good progress in beginning to read. They enjoy telling stories from the pictures in storybooks. Higher attaining children, who work at the first level of the National Curriculum in reading, know a considerable number of simple words and letters of the alphabet. Other children of different abilities still prefer to read from pictures although average attaining children begin to recognise simple words and phrases.

90. All teachers of children under five have good understanding of methods for teaching the basic skills of reading and writing. In the nursery, children are provided with opportunities to record their ideas in meaningful activities. For example, they make marks to represent writing in appointment books at a dentist's surgery and record the outcomes of their activities in constructional play. Teachers in the reception class make good use of their skills by allocating the responsibility for reading to one teacher for a whole term. One half of the year group works with a teacher who concentrates solely on mathematics for several months at a time. The other half works with a second teacher whose efforts are devoted to ensuring that a modified version of the National Literacy Strategy meets the needs of younger children. Support staff play a valuable part in the teaching of reading. Realistic expectations of children's ability to read result in them gaining confidence in their abilities. Children who make slower progress in reading receive additional support and are observed with care before determining if they have special educational needs. Teachers provide homework, which allows parents to take an active part in teaching their children to read. Homework provides helpful support for children's reading in school.
91. Under-fives in their first term in the nursery are at a very early stage in counting and recognising numerals. Their attainments are below those typical for their age. Most children recognise up to three objects. Many are hesitant when singing rhymes containing numbers up to five, although most appreciate differences in the size of objects and talk readily about *a big knife* and *little bubbles*. Attainment in mathematics improves at a good rate in the nursery but is still low. In the reception classes, higher attaining children begin to recognise numbers up to five or seven and find one more than a number up to nine. Almost all average attaining children sequence a line of digits accurately from one to ten. They place the correct number of cubes against numerals ranging from zero to five. Several children are still at the stage of counting objects up to five with reasonable success. Most children answer questions related to size accurately and use the language related to shape and size in everyday activities. All children make good progress towards the learning objectives for five-year-olds in counting and recognising numbers and shapes.
92. As with literacy, work in mathematics in the reception classes is allocated on a termly basis to a single teacher. This provides opportunities for teachers to concentrate their efforts on either English or mathematics, to ensure that their understanding of a mathematical topic is secure and to raise children's attainments. The time available for mathematics in the reception classes is used well. Children are moved to the next stage of learning when their understanding of a topic is secure. Some of the resources provided for counting, such as adult dominoes, are too advanced for use by most three-year-olds. On-going assessments of children's attainments in the nursery provide the teacher with an easily accessible

measure of their progress. Too much emphasis is placed at this early stage on the recognition of numerals rather than counting and recognising sets of numbers and this limits pupils' understanding in this aspect of mathematics. Satisfactory planning in the reception classes results in suitable activities; these are not always developed to full advantage to extend children's learning.

93. Many children enter the nursery with very low levels of knowledge and understanding of the world. They make steady progress in the nursery in recognising the similarities between special events such as the millennium and taking part in activities such as making coconut sweets for Diwali and producing Diwali greetings cards. By handling, touching and exploring a range of natural objects, three-year-olds begin to appreciate the differences between seasons. From discussions and displays, they learn about the hibernation of hedgehogs during the coldest time of the year. When using computers, children in the nursery make good progress when operating controls on a keyboard and loading disks that support their learning in different areas. During their first term in the reception classes, the attainment of four-year-olds improves but remains below that typical for their age. They continue to maintain satisfactory progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding of the world. Steady progress in the use of computers is evident when children in the reception classes add to their existing skills by operating a wider range of controls. They select the correct keys to produce pictures and listen and sing to the pitch and pattern of music on screen. All children talk confidently about their families and themselves. They describe events in their lives such as the baptism of a baby and express their views on the locality.
94. Children's progress in knowledge and understanding of the world is supported by improvements since the last inspection to the quality of teachers' planning. An example of co-operative planning was apparent in activities to increase understanding of the season of autumn in the nursery. The topic was developed in the reception classes with activities, which involved children in matching suitable clothes to different weather conditions. Although activities are planned to increase children's understanding, sometimes teachers keep children inactive for too long on the carpet. On these occasions, opportunities are missed to organise activities that are more suited to the needs of four-year-olds and children's concentration deteriorates. The teacher in the nursery provides children with a suitable range of activities and resources to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world. Good use is made of informal discussions to allow children to talk about their lives and family events. Children explore the consistency of materials such as soap flakes blended with water, join things together like the carriages and track of a train and add, mix and fold the ingredients of cakes. There is very little equipment available in the reception classes for children to carry out their own observations, or to recognise and explore features of living things and of objects.
95. The physical development of many children who enter the nursery is well below that typical for their age. Three-year-olds make good progress towards the planned outcomes of learning and by the age of four they use a range of constructional materials with confidence. They work with growing skill and control with wheeled toys and climbing equipment, and become increasingly co-ordinated when playing with bats and balls. From opportunities to work in a carefully planned way in the school hall, the physical development of most under-fives improves at a rapid rate in the reception classes. In dance, children clap their hands in time to the music, maintain good balance when shaking their bodies and jumping up and down on the spot. They march with good awareness of one another's space, while at the same time carrying out actions. Most children in the reception classes eat their midday meals in school. They dress themselves quickly with coats, hats and scarves, change their shoes without help and a few tie their own shoelaces. They experience no problems when queuing to select their food. They manage to handle the cutlery safely and to balance food and drinks on a tray without accidents

while finding a place at the table.

96. The teaching of physical development is mainly good and accounts for children's good progress and the readiness of many four-year-olds to begin work in the National Curriculum. Teachers in the reception classes provide helpful demonstrations in dance to improve children's performances. They assess children's progress as they work and use the resulting information to encourage them to produce a greater variety of movements in time to music. A new play area, which has been built since the last inspection, provides a safe resource for children to use balancing and climbing equipment, and apparatus such as bats and balls. Opportunities are missed to use the outside area more intensively to provide a planned outdoor curriculum for activities in different areas of learning.
97. The creative development of most three-year-olds is well below that expected for their age on entry into the nursery. Although standards in creative development remain low, children make good progress by time they enter the reception classes towards the outcomes of learning for five-year-olds. Children in the nursery use a range of materials such as dough to make models of hedgehogs and sequins to produce Diwali cards. They use their imaginations to create a dentist's surgery in role-play and to bring small toys to life. Children in the reception classes, who listened carefully to the *Flight of the Bumblebee*, gave their own interpretations of what the music represented. *This animal moves very fast! It's a light animal.* They beat out a rhythm steadily on their knees and sing new songs with reasonable rhythm. There are too few opportunities for children to take part in role-play in a variety of different situations. Four-year-olds recognise and name most primary and some secondary colours and use red, yellow and blue to paint attractive paintings composed of blocks of colour.
98. Teachers' planning for creative development in the nursery is satisfactory. Sufficient materials are available for children to increase their experiences through a variety of activities. Expectations of children's ability to sing rhythmically and in tune in the reception classes are satisfactory. Too few attempts are made to raise standards by improving the quality of singing. Planning to allow children to use musical instruments is not always carried out. The limited range of materials available for different forms of role-play in the reception classes creates weaknesses in this important source of activity for the development of children's imagination, language and social development and slows their progress.
99. Improvements to the school's provision for children under five since the last inspection include the recent introduction of assessments of children's learning during their first term in the reception classes. Teachers now have information about children's early achievements to add to profiles of their development in the nursery. As assessments in the reception classes were still taking place during the inspection, it is too early to judge their effective use in planning children's learning. Planning has also improved since the last inspection. The co-ordinator attends planning sessions in the reception classes that allow her to be more aware of what four-year-olds are taught. This awareness is not developed fully as little time is available for the co-ordinator to check the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. The school's very good relationships with parents are established in the nursery and maintained in the reception classes. In this way, parents are enabled to become partners in their children's education. Planned changes to the curriculum for children under five leave teachers in a good position to maintain and improve provision.

## ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

### English

100. Pupils' attainment in English is a strength of the school and the high standards reported at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained and extended. A continuous and gradual improvement to the results of National Curriculum tests has been evident since 1996. The results of tests in English in 1999 show that standards reached by 11-year-olds at the expected level 4 were very high when compared with all schools nationally and in comparison with pupils in similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 5 was above the national average. The percentage of seven-year-olds reaching the expected level 2 and higher level 3 in reading and writing in 1999 was well above the national average. It was also well above the average of pupils in similar schools. This high level of attainment has been maintained at Key Stage 1 since 1996. The results of teachers' assessments of the speaking and listening of seven-year-olds were well above the national average. The school exceeded its targets for English and reaches the highest possible standards for all primary schools and schools of a similar type.
101. At Key Stage 2 in the 1999 tests, boys did better than girls in English. This result differs from the national trend. Although boys did better than girls in reading, girls' performance in writing was better than that of boys. No significant variation in attainment is evident between pupils from different backgrounds or ethnic groups. Pupils with special educational needs in reading and writing make very good progress in relation to the targets of their individual education plans. At Key Stage 1 in 1999, the performance of girls in English was very high when compared with the national average; the performance of boys was well above average. This has been the trend in the school for the past three years.
102. Inspection findings broadly reflect the results of the 1999 tests. The introduction and implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has had a very good impact on the learning of pupils of all abilities throughout the school and supports their very good progress in English. Literacy is developed very effectively across the curriculum. Throughout the school there are opportunities for pupils to take part in discussions and to talk to other pupils in a wide range of subjects. Pupils' skills in researching information allow them to work independently in science, history and geography. In history, for example, pupils improve their writing when they produce accounts of the differences between homes in the 1950s and homes today. Similarly, in geography the range of their writing grows when pupils record the effect of monsoon rain on the Indian sub-continent. In science, design and technology and geography pupils label diagrams and make good use of technical language. Pupils use word processors to draft their writing. This improves their spelling and punctuation.
103. Standards of speaking and listening are very high throughout the school. Pupils of different abilities listen attentively in class, follow instructions accurately and respond confidently to questions. Pupils in Year 6 are articulate, relaxed and confident when speaking to adults. When discussing their ideas and making judgements about a wide range of topics they demonstrate a high quality of clear, fluent language. In explanations of their preferences for different kinds of literature, for example, pupils use adventurous vocabulary to explain their choices of poetry, fiction or information books. Their conversations flow easily. Pupils in Year 2 reach standards above those expected for their age in speaking and listening. They talk confidently about their work, use appropriate vocabulary and discuss the plots of the stories they read in some depth.
104. Both higher and average attaining pupils in Year 6 read at a level above that expected for

their age. All pupils in Year 6 are fluent readers. They discuss the plot, characters and main events of fictional texts and offer interesting and evaluative comments about the styles of different authors. For example, pupils who read fictional accounts of events during the Second World War discussed how some authors managed to make aspects of such an unhappy time appear humorous. Pupils make informed choices about their reading material and have well-developed information and retrieval skills. Pupils in Year 2 read a very good variety of books confidently and with clear understanding. They use a variety of strategies to identify new words. Pupils discuss the characters in stories, such as *The Three Billy Goats* and know why the goats wanted to cross the bridge.

105. Pupils in Year 6 write for a wide range of purposes. The writing of higher attaining pupils is particularly lively and its meaning is conveyed with clarity. High attainers use personification effectively when writing poetry about the wind, for example, and much of their work is of a very high standard. They spell complex words accurately and use high levels of punctuation, which include commas and apostrophes, to create effects in their writing. The punctuation of average and lower attaining pupils is usually used consistently but at a level slightly below that of higher attainers. Some of the punctuation of pupils with special educational needs is accurate, but not consistently so. Most of the spelling of average attaining pupils is correct. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs spell common words accurately. The handwriting of all pupils is fluent, joined and presented with care. Most pupils in Year 2 spell many common words correctly. They write for a good range of purposes such as listing instructions for a nest for a hibernating hedgehog. All pupils retell well-known stories like *The Little Red Hen* in their writing and report everyday events when recording their news. They spell common words correctly and identify patterns in words such as *ill* and *fill*. Handwriting is generally tidy with clear, well-formed letters and the use of punctuation is usually accurate. Pupils with special educational needs carry out the same work as other pupils but their attainments are at a slightly lower level.
106. Progress in speaking and listening is consistently very good in both key stages. Pupils enter the reception classes with standards in speaking and listening that are typical for their age. They make good progress in Key Stage 1 through the good opportunities provided for speaking and listening in many different subjects. Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to develop and improve their skills. Their use of language across the curriculum widens and becomes increasingly lively and interesting.
107. Pupils throughout the school make very good progress in reading. Parental support for reading helps many younger pupils to develop and improve their skills at home. Their progress in school is ensured through the many opportunities provided to practise the skills of reading with adults. In Year 1, pupils learn to use the illustrations of stories and their knowledge of phonics to make sense of new words. They correct any mistakes with confidence and enjoy discussing their favourite stories. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress with additional support from the special educational needs co-ordinator in small groups outside the classroom. In Key Stage 2, pupils progress to reading a wider range of books, which includes poetry, stories and non-fiction. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make very good progress in reading accurately and expressively, and in tackling new words with confidence. They use contents and index pages quickly to locate information.
108. Pupils' progress in writing is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. They learn to use phonics when spelling unknown words and to structure their creative writing to show a beginning, middle and an ending. They learn to write clearly and neatly, placing letters in the right position in relation to each other. With additional support for their



learning, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in writing. In the literacy hour, they work in small groups but carry out the same activities as the rest of the class. They learn, for example, to write a recipe for a sandwich to satisfy the hunger of a giant. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 learn to identify and use adjectives and adverbs effectively in poetry. They know the correct tenses of verbs and use a dictionary to help with the spelling of difficult words. Older pupils in the key stage develop a good understanding of how to write play scripts and their work contains an outstanding range of expressive language. The range of their writing widens considerably. They begin to select words carefully to create particular moods or to define characters in their work.

109. All pupils have very good attitudes to the work in English. Most enjoy reading for pleasure and sharing books with adults. Many pupils borrow books regularly from the school and public libraries and sometimes use them for reference in homework on different topics. Pupils respond very positively to questioning. They show interest in their work and maintain very high levels of concentration during lessons involving the whole class. Most pupils are caring and supportive of one another. They carry out activities successfully when working together and are generous in the help they give to friends with difficulties in spelling and reading. Pupils listen very attentively during discussions and share equipment sensibly. Most work very hard and complete their work independently without direct support from their teachers. Their work is tidy and well-presented and pupils take pride in their achievements.
110. The quality of teaching is mainly good with very good teaching in Year 6 and excellent teaching in Year 3. Teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of the skills of reading and writing have a strong impact on pupils' learning. Their confident, well-organised implementation of the National Literacy Strategy ensures clear structure and achievable objectives for lessons in English. For example, in writing about the ancient Greeks in Year 3, the teacher explained the importance of collecting all essential facts and prioritising them before beginning to write. High expectations of pupils' attainment are evident throughout the school. As a result, teachers consistently challenge the abilities of all pupils by providing them with well-chosen tasks.
111. Following the school's recent review of the curriculum for English, teachers' planning shows clear progression for learning. Teachers make sure that activities are well-prepared so that pupils know what is expected of them. They have very good relationships with pupils and expect good behaviour and concentration at all times. As a result, lessons are brisk and purposeful and teachers create a very good atmosphere for learning throughout the school. Teachers know their pupils well, assess them as they work and make sure they do their best. Homework, which is set three times a week, covers reading, writing and spelling. It is effective in consolidating new learning and in extending pupils' progress. The quality of marking is consistently very good. It indicates how pupils can improve their work through helpful suggestions. Praise and evaluations of pupils' work are used frequently and effectively to provide encouragement.
112. The co-ordinator offers very clear direction for other teachers and provides strong support and effective training for them. Clear procedures exist for assessing and recording pupils' attainment in English. Teachers use the information gained from assessment very effectively to ensure pupils' progress. By checking the quality of planning, and of teaching and learning in the classroom, the co-ordinator is in a good position to lead future developments and improvements to the subject and to maintain very high levels of attainment. The school has a very positive ethos which impacts strongly on pupils' learning. Teachers make good use of different types of books to widen pupils' reading during the literacy hour. Classrooms and corridors contain displays of high-quality written work as examples of what can be attained. The range of books available is satisfactory and each

class contains an interesting selection from which pupils can choose. The library is organised with care, but many books, particularly those for older pupils, are old or well-used. A limited supply of information books restricts pupils' choice of materials for independent research.

## **Mathematics**

113. Pupils' attainments in mathematics have risen since the previous inspection. The results of National Curriculum tests in 1999 for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 show that the percentage reaching the expected level 4 and above was well above the national average. Almost all pupils attained at least the expected level 4 and a large number reached the higher level 5. Boys did better than girls at the higher level. Nearly a half of boys and over one fifth of girls attained level 5. From the low starting point recorded in formal assessments in the nursery, the school makes strong advances in raising pupils' attainments to a high level in mathematics. When compared with the results of pupils in similar schools, attainment in mathematics is very high. In this context, it is at the highest level possible. Results exceeded the targets set by governors for 1999 by ten per cent. Taking the years from 1996 to 1998 together, pupils' performance in mathematics was above the national average. Boys did better than girls. The results of the 1999 tests show a continuing rising trend.
114. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level 2 and above in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 was similar to the national average. The percentage reaching the higher level 3 was above the national average. Almost all pupils attained at least the expected level 2 and a significant proportion attained the higher level 3. This represents an improvement in attainment at the higher level since 1998 when the percentage of pupils reaching level 3 was close to the national average. The targets set by governors were not quite achieved. Pupils' performance in the tests was above average in comparison with pupils with similar backgrounds. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Attainment in test results at the higher level between 1996 and 1999 shows a rising trend.
115. Inspection findings show that by the end of Key Stage 2 almost all pupils reach the expected level of attainment and a large number achieve a higher level. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Almost all pupils in Year 6 have a firm understanding of the number system and work accurately in large numbers. They calculate mentally and in their exercise books using addition, subtraction and multiplication to four-figure numbers. Pupils convert improper fractions to mixed numbers and use decimal notation to two places. They name and begin to classify quadrilaterals using properties such as parallel and equal sides. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, understand many mathematical ideas. They work at a slower rate and with less accuracy, spending more time consolidating their learning at a lower level than other pupils. For instance, most have a basic understanding of improper fractions but take longer to make it secure. Higher attaining pupils have fast recall of number facts, which they use to solve problems. They have very good reasoning skills and recognise patterns and relationships in numbers quickly. Higher attainers draw diagonals on a polygon, recognise adjacent angles and incongruent shapes. They define shapes such as a trapezium, a kite, parallelogram and rhombus, using correct mathematical language.
116. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils have good understanding of number. They have fast recall of number bonds up to ten and sound recall to 20. They know that while addition can be done in any order, it is a useful strategy to put the larger number first and add on. Pupils recognise two-dimensional shapes such as octagons and describe them in terms of

sides, edges and corners. Lower attainers understand time to the half-hour. They use number lines or number squares to count on in small numbers up to 100. Pupils with special educational needs have an understanding of the same mathematical ideas, but work with smaller numbers, for instance, they count on to numbers up to 25. Higher attaining pupils have fast recall of addition within 20 and satisfactory recall for subtraction. They use mental strategies quickly to add units to tens and units beyond 20. They understand time to the quarter hour.

117. Most pupils make very progress in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress from the very good support they receive. From early skills in counting as under-fives, pupils expand their understanding of place value to include marking to three decimal places by the time they are 11 years old. In Year 1, pupils already understand how to count on in hops of two, three or five and count back within 20. Most have very good understanding of adding 10 more to a given number and quickly recognise the pattern. By the time they begin Key Stage 2, pupils develop the ability to multiply by ten or 100 and recognise that digits shift to the left by one or two places. Pupils learn to use mental strategies in Key Stage 1. By Years 3 and 4 they find different ways, including doubling, to multiply tens and units by tens and units. Pupils learn correct mathematical language from their earliest days in school. In Key Stage 2 they use it well to explain how they have worked out problems mentally. Pupils in Year 5 begin to use terms associated with probability, such as *possible* and *fifty-fifty*, and use this knowledge in Year 6 to place events on a 0 to one scale from *impossible* to *certain*.
118. Throughout the school, pupils use numeracy skills and mathematical vocabulary effectively to support their work in other subjects. In science they record the results of experiments as charts and graphs. In geography and history they use charts to illustrate findings. They read temperatures involving negative numbers and use time lines.
119. Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good. They thoroughly enjoy mathematics and are very keen to learn. Pupils in both key stages rise to the challenge of mental arithmetic and get real pleasure from answering questions correctly. Older pupils are confident when explaining how they have worked things out and are not afraid to get an answer wrong. Throughout the school, pupils concentrate on their work and try hard to keep their work tidy. Relationships in the classroom between pupils and with their teachers are very good. Pupils' behaviour is very good.
120. The quality of teaching is mainly good, with one third that is very good and one fifth satisfactory. Teachers give good priority to numeracy and understand their responsibilities towards ensuring that pupils become numerate. They have very good knowledge of mathematics, but at this early stage of its implementation their knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy is not yet totally secure. This is because the strategy has been in place for only a few weeks and teachers' training is not completed. Teachers plan lessons well. However, they miss some opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their work in mathematics. They give clear explanations of the work and make good use of examples and demonstrations. Most have very high expectations of pupils' performance and behaviour. They set interesting and challenging tasks that stimulate pupils and keep them motivated. Teachers have firm but friendly control that keeps lessons moving at a brisk pace, so that time is well-spent on teaching and learning. The quality of day-to-day assessment is high. Teachers check with skilful questioning whether pupils are ready to move on to the next stage of learning. In the very large proportion of lessons where teaching was strong, pupils' responses were also strong and they made marked progress in their learning.

121. The school development plan gives due priority to the establishment of the National Numeracy Strategy. A link governor has been appointed to support staff in their work and plans are in hand to continue and complete staff training. Although resources for mathematics are no more than adequate, they are being extended. The co-ordinator has supported colleagues very effectively during the school's recent implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Monitoring, both of the curriculum and teaching, has contributed to high standards. Assessment procedures are good. Teachers analyse the results of standardised tests to detect any gaps in their coverage of the subject. When the effective introduction and implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is complete, the school will have good capacity to maintain an upward trend in attainment in mathematics.

#### **Science**

122. Pupils continue to maintain the high standards in science recorded at the time of the previous inspection. This is reflected in the results of National Curriculum tests in 1999, when the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level 4 and the higher level 5 was well above the national average. Pupils' performance at the end of Key Stage 2 was well above average in comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. From a low starting point in the scientific aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world, the school continuously raises standards in science to even higher levels and exceeds its targets for the subject. Pupils' performance in science remained above average for the three years from 1996 to 1998. As was the case with English and mathematics, pupils' performance improved in 1999. It was particularly strong at the higher level, with 44 per cent of boys and 50 per cent of girls reaching level 5. At the end of Key Stage 1, assessments by teachers in 1999 show that pupils' attainment was very high when compared with all schools nationally. It was also very high when compared with the results of pupils in similar schools. All pupils achieved the expected level 2, but none achieved the higher level 3.

123. Inspection findings confirm that the attainment of pupils in Year 6 is above expectations for their age at this time of the school year, and pupils are on target to achieve standards well above the national average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 design and carry out their own investigations. They handle equipment safely, make informed predictions, record and analyse their results, and draw conclusions. In Year 6, for example, pupils perform their own experiments to test the solubility of a range of common solids. They observe the effect of ice on the temperature of water in a beaker, and plot their results as a graph. Pupils in Year 5 carry out a fair test to determine the strength of different plastic carrier bags, and assemble and re-wire an electric plug to further their understanding of electrical circuits. As a result, they understand the difference between organic and inorganic substances, and carry out experiments to determine the electrical conductivity of different materials. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 investigate the properties of different building materials, and identify the fruits and leaves of different trees by using a key.

124. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils recognise different sounds, and discover that rulers and rubber bands make different noises when they vibrate. Pupils sort common materials into those that are transparent or opaque, and observe their texture and rigidity. They carry out simple experiments to discover which materials change shape when pressure is applied, and investigate how far model cars travel when placed on slopes of different gradients. They investigate different sources of electricity, and create a simple circuit to illuminate a bulb.

125. Pupils make very good progress in science at both key stages. They progress from simple sorting of magnetic and non-magnetic objects in Year 1, to explaining why a break in a circuit extinguishes a light bulb in Year 2. They progress from classifying metals according to their magnetic properties in Year 3, to a detailed explanation of evaporation and condensation observed during an experiment in Year 6. The good emphasis placed on investigative science at both key stages ensures that both higher and lower attaining pupils make good progress. Pupils' investigative abilities develop from making simple observations in Years 1 and 2, to designing and carrying out detailed investigations in Years 5 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs receive very helpful support and make very good progress at both key stages. In Year 6, they receive special assistance as part of a small group, and this particularly helps their progress in conducting and recording the results of experiments.
126. Pupils' attitudes to work in science are very good at both key stages. Pupils are keen to make new discoveries and carry out investigations sensibly. They listen carefully to instructions, and work quietly and conscientiously in small groups. Pupils are very well behaved and most have very good relationships with each other and with their teachers. They share equipment and tasks sensibly, and co-operate well to produce reliable results.
127. The quality of teaching is mainly satisfactory in Key Stage 1, but an occasional good lesson is observed. Teaching is good in Key Stage 2. Most teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the subject but some teachers occasionally use incorrect scientific language when explaining ideas and activities. Lessons are generally well-planned, with clear objectives for pupils' learning and are related to the National Curriculum programmes of study. In Year 2, however, work is not always appropriately matched to pupils' age and ability. While teachers' expectations are often high, sometimes they are unrealistically high. On other occasions, expectations are too low for older, high attaining pupils. There is little evidence, for example, of more difficult tasks for older pupils and those of higher ability, as all the class usually do the same activity. This contributes towards all pupils achieving the expected level 2, but few or none reaching level 3, as shown by assessments by teachers at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999. Most teachers have suitably high expectations of pupils' behaviour, but occasionally allow too much chattering to occur during practical activities.
128. Teachers use a good range of methods and make good use of a variety of resources. The planning of activities such as planting bulbs in the school garden, and visiting the local cemetery to study trees and plants extends pupils' understanding of science. Teachers place strong emphasis on learning through investigative work, and make good use of detailed questioning to develop the skills of observation and analysis. The measurement and recording of observations assist pupils to develop their numeracy skills, but there is very little use of information technology to present the results of investigations in the form of tables, graphs and charts. Although teachers encourage pupils to become independent learners through practical investigations, there is little use of information books, CD ROMs or the Internet for individual research at Key Stage 2. Teachers occasionally provide homework in Key Stage 2 to consolidate pupils' learning. They assess pupils' work on a day-to-day basis, and use the information from assessment to plan appropriate work for pupils in Key Stage 2. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, and some add helpful comments which suggest how standards might be improved.
129. All requirements of the National Curriculum are met at both key stages. Topics are revisited so that pupils in mixed-age classes in Key Stage 2 cover all essential skills. A helpful policy and a detailed scheme of work ensure that knowledge, understanding and skills are developed in a logical progression. The co-ordinator monitors the quality of teachers' planning and the standard of pupils' work, but has not yet observed teaching in

the classroom. This is planned for the current academic year and places the school in a good position to continue to raise standards in science. There is sound provision for professional training to improve the quality of teaching. Pupils' skills are assessed regularly on an ongoing basis, and assessment tasks are set at the end of most topics. In addition to this good practice in assessing pupils' learning, the results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 are analysed thoroughly to determine areas of the curriculum in need of further improvement. The use of information gained from assessment and the analysis of the results of tests underlies the school's strong capacity to maintain the quality of teaching and learning in science.

130. Efficient use is made of a good range of resources for scientific investigations, though there are few suitable reference books for pupils in Key Stage 2. The previous report suggested that resources were not easily accessible. Access has been improved and resources are available on open shelves, sorted according to topics. Attractive displays of pupils' work such as, for example, parachutes, autogyros and kites in Years 4 and 5, help to stimulate pupils' interest in the subject. Work in science, such as studying the environmental effects of pollution in Year 6, and the variety and beauty of the living world in Year 3, makes a very good contribution to pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### **Information technology**

131. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in information technology is below the levels expected for 11-year-olds. Standards are at their highest when pupils are taught by a teacher with expertise in the subject in Year 5. There is, however, insufficient time and too few resources available in Year 6 to raise attainment to the levels expected by the end of the key stage. In Year 6, pupils load files to search and access information by using a database, for example, when researching information about life after 1930. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use the CD-Rom to access information about the ancient Greeks and the Vikings. Most pupils use computers effectively to draft and redraft stories and poems, but skills in all applications of information technology are not sufficiently developed. They control computers to achieve specific outcomes by giving a series of instructions, as for example, when entering commands to draw an 'L' shape on the screen.
132. Attainment in Year 2 is below the level expected for seven-year-olds. Pupils only use the mouse to control a simple word processing package, and a range of software and controlling devices. They know how to write sentences and short news items on the computer, to correct mistakes and to use the space bar and return keys. They use an art program to draw simple pictures in primary colours and to design and colour their initials. They write instructions with a programmable toy and use a word processor to write poetry and short stories. They create new files, use the caps lock and arrow keys. They have few opportunities to explore adventure games or to find out the consequences of different decisions.
133. Progress for pupils of different abilities in information technology is unsatisfactory throughout the school as a direct result of the limited amount of time allocated to direct teaching of the subject and the lack of opportunities for pupils to practise new skills. While pupils' progress improves in Year 5, and is good, it deteriorates again in Year 6 where the subject receives less emphasis. Pupils throughout the school make steady progress in the use of word processing to draft and redraft their written work. Slow progress in the efficient use of the keyboard accelerates when pupils learn the skills of touch-typing in Year 5. Pupils in Year 5 make good progress when they are introduced to the use of spreadsheets to plot the progress of the local football team. They learn to use cells, rows and columns and a formula to calculate running totals. Some sessions link well to music when pupils

use a package which helps develop composing skills. There are too few instances where information technology is used to record and handle data in other subjects. Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to use computers to control and monitor experiments and to investigate options in real or imaginary situations.

134. Pupils' attitudes to information technology are good, they are keen to use the computer and work with interest and enthusiasm. They respond positively to questions and are keen to offer suggestions. Pupils become excited when their work is successful and concentrate for considerable periods of time. They learn quickly from their mistakes. In Year 5, for example, when giving instructions, pupils realised that precision and accuracy are important if the required results are to be achieved. Pupils show pride in their work and are keen to explain how to use the CD-Rom.
135. Although training is planned to improve teachers' expertise, most teachers lack sufficient knowledge and understanding of information technology to raise pupils' attainment to the levels expected for their age. In the very small amount of direct teaching observed in information technology, the quality of teaching was good as it was undertaken by teachers who are skilled in the use of computers. The adoption of a new scheme of work provides a clear framework and good guidance for planning lessons. Until teachers' expertise improves through training, the quality of teaching remains inconsistent throughout the school. As a result, teachers miss opportunities to incorporate information technology into the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and provide too little time for pupils to practise their skills. Although there are occasions when computers are used to support work in different subjects, there are lengthy periods of time each day when computers are switched on but lie unused by pupils.
136. The curriculum provided for information technology is not sufficiently broad and balanced as all the applications of the subject are not taught in sufficient depth and this has an adverse effect on pupils' attainment. Improvements since the previous inspection lie mainly in the good leadership provided by the co-ordinator for information technology, who has recently provided a good quality policy and helpful guidelines for teachers' planning. The scheme of work is detailed and indicates clearly what pupils should know, understand and do. In preparation for planned developments to the subject in 2000, the co-ordinator has produced a clear action plan, which identifies deficiencies in teachers' expertise and the aspects of training needed to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The co-ordinator checks the quality of teachers' planning and offers informal support to colleagues. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom is planned for the next two terms and will provide the co-ordinator with useful information to raise attainment. Assessment of pupils' attainment is incorporated in the scheme of work and carries three statements of pupils' progress within each unit. New software has been purchased recently to support work in literacy and numeracy. There are now sufficient resources to support information technology. By raising the expertise of teachers in the subject and implementing the new scheme of work consistently throughout the school, the school has all the ingredients needed to improve its provision for information technology.

## **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

### **Art**

137. By time they are in Year 6, most pupils reach standards in art that are above those typical for their age. The school has maintained similar standards since the last inspection in 1996. A particular strength of art in Year 6 lies in work showing very finely observed drawings of plants with delicate colouring and shading. Very attractive watercolours of

landscapes in the style of impressionists such as Turner and Van Gogh are painted with good awareness of colour and with fine brush strokes. Pupils also use watercolours in similar scenes using different shades of a single colour to give depth and perspective to their work. Pupils in Year 2 use pastels effectively to produce work in the style of artists from different cultural backgrounds. Their attainment is typical for their age when they extend the understanding of Hinduism they gain in religious education to create Rangooli patterns with three colours and two lines of symmetry.

138. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress in art throughout Key Stage 1. The school has a very coherent scheme of work, which ensures that pupils cover all elements and techniques of the subject in each year group. This helps to promote pupils' progress. By the time they reach Year 3, pupils' progress accelerates. They use a variety of tools, techniques and materials with increasing confidence. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress in the development of the skills needed to produce detailed and effective observational work. In Years 3 and 4, pupils produce closely observed drawings of leaves, flowers and berries. Work in history provides opportunities for pupils to make careful drawings of the weapons, armour and dress of soldiers in ancient Greece. Work on line, colour and shape in Years 5 and 6 results in very effective observational work. Pupils' knowledge of the work of artists from different traditions and times grows at a steady pace throughout the school. From compositions in red, yellow and blue by the youngest pupils, knowledge of a variety of art expands to work by artists from Kenya, India, ancient Rome and Greece and includes the styles of artist as diverse as that of Monet and Turner.
139. Pupils gain considerable enjoyment from art. They work hard with confidence and enthusiasm while expending considerable effort on different activities. All pupils try their best to fulfil the specifications of the task. Their behaviour is very good and produces a calm atmosphere for learning. Pupils follow instructions from their teachers with care to good effect on the outcomes of their work. After finishing a printing activity in Years 3 and 4, pupils cleared away their work and washed their tables with very little prompting from their teacher.
140. Teaching in art is always at least satisfactory. In half the lessons it is good. A feature of good teaching lies in teachers' planning. It extends pupils' understanding of the subject by linking work in art with subjects such as history, mathematics and religious education. Teachers in Key Stage 2 have better knowledge of the subject than those in Key Stage 1 and this impacts on the progress made by older pupils. In a good lesson in Year 3, the teacher provided pupils with a wide variety of activities ranging from etching in wax, collage, constructing laurel wreaths and decorating plates made of clay. The success of the lesson arose from the very clear instructions provided by the teacher and high expectations that pupils would work hard and do their best. The use of an effective scheme of work is evident in teachers' planning and ensures that pupils' progress improves as they gain new skills throughout the school. The range of art that teachers introduce to pupils has a good effect on pupils' knowledge of the subject and on their cultural development.
141. The subject is led by a skilful and established co-ordinator who supports the expertise of colleagues through contributions to staff meetings, advice, ideas and help. An important feature of the co-ordinator's work is to evaluate the quality of art by visiting classrooms informally and discussing the strength of pupils' work in displays. The regular evaluation of art throughout the school places the co-ordinator in a good position to maintain and to improve standards in the subject. Although the subject has undergone a recent review to ensure progression in pupils' learning, it is ready for a more in-depth review to bring it in line with recent national recommendations. In addition to supporting pupils' cultural development, attractive displays of work to celebrate their achievements provide strong support for pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Through the many different experiences it



provides, the school fulfils its aims to lead pupils to a better understanding of their capacity for creativity. Funding for the subject is generous.

### **Design and technology**

142. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils reach standards in design and technology that are above those typical for their age. Pupils at Key Stage 2 work with a wide range of materials, which include mechanical parts to produce greetings cards and food to prepare for festivals. They are confident in the safe use of tools to produce bridges from framework, stiff and flexible sheet materials. Pupils develop the skills of designing to the point where they generate several ideas, consider the appearance and function of their products, list materials and the method of construction and evaluate their finished work with an eye to improvement. Pupils in Year 2 draw their ideas for designing musical instruments, list their selected tools and materials, and measure, mark, cut and shape tambourines to satisfy the requirements of their designs. When the work is finished to their satisfaction, they evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the product.
143. By working through comprehensive units of work, pupils of different abilities make good progress in design and technology. As they progress through the school, pupils refine the skills of designing and making and become adept at finishing and evaluating their work. From drawing simple plans for designs in Year 2, pupils who were studying the use of constructional materials in Year 3 used nets to produce the shape of a house and extended the process when producing packaging to contain toothpaste. When pupils in Year 4 constructed wind powered models they were allowed to select, build, test and evaluate an interesting variety of kites and windmills. They used the same method of working when designing and making board games from the best of four plans. Progress increases when pupils in Year 5 make models powered by electrical circuits. Pupils' choice of products widens considerably to include wheeled vehicles, sail boats, rockets, lighthouses and traffic lights. Similarly in Year 6, all pupils make good progress in using a growing range of tools and materials.
144. From the time that pupils begin to record their designs in Key Stage 1, pupils present their plans with care and attention to detail. In Key Stage 2, they persevere with tasks until satisfied with the outcomes of their work. They select and evaluate their finished products both critically and fairly.
145. Good planning lies at the basis of good teaching in design and technology. Teachers make activities more meaningful for pupils by combining the work with subjects such as science, mathematics and history. The use of mathematics is particularly effective in design and technology when teachers expect pupils to include their knowledge of shape, space, estimation and measurement in their work. Several teachers have worked closely with the co-ordinator to produce units of work that increase their own knowledge of the subject and to ensure continuity in the acquisition of skills. An example of this in Year 3, resulted in a unit based on the topic of building materials, which fulfils all requirements of the process of designing and making. Teachers use their lesson plans to evaluate the highlights of pupils' work.
- 146.

The co-ordinator provides good leadership for the subject that is informed by checking the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. This has led to providing support for other teachers in planning and teaching and in giving advice on suitable materials and tools. A recent review of the policy document and updating of the schemes of work place the school in a good position to maintain standards. There are sufficient resources for successful teaching and learning in design and technology that are easily accessible to teachers and pupils.

## **Geography**

147. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils reach standards in geography that are typical for their age. The school has maintained similar standards since the previous inspection. By the age of 11, pupils begin to appreciate the importance of location in understanding places. They have knowledge of how physical and human processes affect people's lives and activities. In a study of India, pupils develop a sound understanding of some of the social, economic and environmental problems of a Third World country. They compare the importance of climate and its differing impact on people's lives in contrasting parts of the world.
148. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in both key stages in the development of their knowledge, understanding and skills in geography. A significant proportion makes good progress. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make clear progress in developing the skills of mapping. The youngest draw simple maps of their route from home to school, with two or three features. By the time they are seven, they make maps of real and imaginary places, using pictures, and symbols with keys. Pupils distinguish physical features such as mountains, deserts, seas and marshes. Mapping skills are not developed as consistently in Key Stage 2. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 extend their knowledge of places in a detailed study of a contrasting country. They compare their lives with those of children in Kenya and show clear understanding of differences in lifestyle. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make good progress in their understanding of how people can both improve and damage the environment. Their study of a local issue, the extension of the Metro rail system to Sunderland, develops their ability to reconcile opposing views.
149. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They show a high degree of interest and answer questions enthusiastically. They complete their work accurately and methodically. Their behaviour is very good.
150. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good in equal proportions. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject and provide challenging work to interest and stimulate pupils. Their careful planning of fieldwork brings relevance to the subject. As a result, older pupils rose well to the demands of enacting a public debate for and against the Metro extension and gained an insight into the thinking of corporate business and the City Council. However, insufficient attention to detail in planning and control prevented the teacher from making the most of a very interesting activity when pupils' interest waned after the conclusion of the debate. In a lesson in Year 6, the teacher maintained pupils' enthusiasm throughout with activities picked carefully to match differing levels of ability. An effective mixture of strong whole-class and group teaching enabled all pupils to make good progress. Teachers ensure that pupils have chances to practise skills in literacy and numeracy skills in geography lessons. They provide pupils with opportunities to research from books and videos and to write factual reports and imaginary stories based on geographical facts. They develop pupils' skills in using graphs, charts and figures to illustrate their work.
151. Effective management of the subject gives the school good capacity to raise standards in

geography.

## **History**

152. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils attain standards in history that are typical for their age. A significant minority of pupils attain higher standards. The school has maintained these standards since the previous inspection. Eleven-year-olds have a firm sense of the past and of some of its similarities and differences from the present. They have sound understanding of the lives of people at different levels of society in Britain since the 1930s, their housing conditions, diet, health and changes in the role of men and women. They know of the national and local economic conditions that brought about the Jarrow March. A strength in pupils' knowledge of history lies in their awareness of some of the feelings and emotions of people in different eras. Pupils have begun to understand the impact of past generations on their own times.
153. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in acquiring knowledge, understanding and skills in history. Some make good progress. The youngest pupils develop their sense of the passage of time from understanding their own past, by examining, for instance, toys and photographs from babyhood. By the time they are seven, pupils develop a sound understanding of how to find out aspects of the past from a range of different information. They talk to their parents and grandparents, and visit Beamish Museum to make comparisons between the past and the present. In their study of Florence Nightingale, pupils learn of times beyond human memory from videos, books and artefacts.
154. As they get older, pupils develop an understanding of the distant past when studying life in ancient Greece and Roman Britain. Pupils extend their knowledge effectively of features of life in ancient times in art when they use a variety of techniques in painting, line drawing and collage. They make good progress in gaining knowledge of Viking culture and daily life in research with computer programs. Pupils develop empathy with ordinary people in the past. In one lesson, they gained a valuable insight into Victorian school days when they engaged in realistic role-play with a visiting drama group. This excellent provision extended and enriched pupils' perceptions of schooldays one hundred years ago.
155. Pupils' attitudes to learning range from some that is satisfactory in each key stage to an equal proportion that is very good and even excellent in Key Stage 2. Most pupils concentrate in lessons and show an interest in their work. The best responses occur where teaching is at its most effective and good relationships are established. For instance, in one lesson, the teacher's enthusiasm motivated pupils, who were thoroughly absorbed in the work and very keen to learn. In the unusual circumstances presented by a Victorian schoolroom a class acted out a Victorian lesson with total conviction.
156. The quality of teaching is mostly satisfactory, with one third that is very good in Key Stage 2. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and they are able to draw on a range of teaching methods and resources to bring the subject alive for pupils. They use a good balance of practical work, such as research and handling resources, with whole-class teaching. Teachers plan the curriculum and lessons well. A strength of teaching is the provision of visits and visitors to enrich and support the curriculum. A Viking storyteller takes pupils back to an era of epic sagas and a drama group develops pupils' understanding of the impact of World War 2 on family life in Britain. Teachers ensure pupils benefit from first-hand experience at museums such as Beamish and Arbeia Roman fort. They have high expectations of pupils' performance and behaviour and set interesting, challenging work. In a lesson where good relationships were not firmly

established, the teacher's need to constantly re-assert control lost the flow of the interesting and challenging task of greeting one another as the Romans did, in Latin.

157.

Teachers ensure that pupils have chances to practise the skills of literacy and numeracy in history lessons. They require pupils to write in a variety of styles, from first-hand accounts of events to factual reports. They introduce the youngest pupils to sequencing events before progressing to time-lines and the construction of bar charts to illustrate research. Teachers link history to work in other subjects imaginatively. This helps to bring realism and understanding to the subject, when, for instance, pupils make models of Viking longships in design and technology lessons.

158. The effective management of the subject gives the school good capacity to raise standards.

### **Music**

159. Pupils reach standards in music that are typical for their age. In Year 6, they identify the characteristics of different styles of music when investigating rock and boogie rhythms. They sing two contrasting syncopated rhythms as an ostinato accompaniment to the Limbo Rock. When pupils learn new songs, they follow the correct notation on a musical score, and practise varying the dynamics of their singing by observing the musical signs for crescendos and diminuendos. Pupils in Year 2 sing in time to a beat, and clap out a rhythm correctly. They sing simple songs from memory, and use percussion instruments to accompany their singing and to represent different sounds.

160. All pupils often enter and leave assemblies to an interesting variety of recorded music. Although they sing a variety of traditional and modern hymns with confidence and enjoyment, too many pupils pitch the notes inaccurately, and their diction and phrasing are barely satisfactory. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 frequently sign to the words of the songs; this does not help them to improve the quality of their singing.

161. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in music at both key stages. In Key Stage 1, they learn how to listen and then discuss the feelings evoked by different pieces of music. Pupils in Year 1, for example, compared the changing moods represented by fast and slow tempos in music by Stravinsky and Kabalevsky. They listened to contrasting rhythms and copied the different rhythmic patterns. Pupils in Year 2 used a xylophone, a wood block, a swanee whistle and Indian bells to express different moods in the story of the *Hungry Caterpillar*. At Key Stage 2, pupils make steady progress in identifying a range of instruments and a variety of music from different times and places. In Years 3 and 4, they listen to African music, and construct and play their own African drums. In Year 3, they chose different instruments to beat out the rhythm of the names of Greek gods. Pupils use a growing variety of percussion instruments to compose and perform their own music.

162. Pupils enjoy music. They listen carefully to their teachers and join in sensibly with the work. They co-operate well when singing together, and concentrate carefully on their tasks. They behave well when playing musical instruments, and show appreciation of one another's efforts.

163. Teaching is at least satisfactory at both key stages, and occasionally good. Most teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is satisfactory and they have taken part in training to develop their ability to teach music. Teachers record ongoing assessments of pupils' skills as part of their evaluations of lessons. As a result, they usually plan their work with clear objectives and in awareness of the next step of pupils' learning. Teachers use a variety of methods for teaching the subject, but make little attempt to improve the quality of singing during lessons. When leading assemblies, teachers sometimes provide interesting

insights into the music played and the composers. Occasionally, they miss opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of different pieces. Teachers make very good use of a series of recorded radio programmes to raise pupils' attainment. They make good use of a wide range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. Pupils are managed well.

164. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership for the subject by offering support to other staff and checking the quality of pupils' singing during assemblies and concerts. She makes good use of her specialist skills to teach music to both reception classes. There is a sound policy document, and the use of a commercially published scheme of work ensures that pupils develop musical skills in a logical order. The school has a good selection of recorded music, and a good range of percussion instruments and recorders that allow many pupils to take part in performances. Opportunities to introduce pupils to different styles of music during dance are often developed well. Music is also used well to help pupils develop their spiritual experiences during collective worship and at Mass. At least 30 pupils in Years 3 and 4 extend their interest in music by learning to play the recorder at a lunchtime club. Similarly, several pupils have classical guitar lessons in small groups with a visiting teacher. Pupils sing at concerts and at carol services, and regularly perform carols in a local shopping centre.

### **Physical education**

165. By the time they are in Year 6, most pupils reach standards that are typical for their age in physical education. These standards have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection. All pupils swim a minimum of 100 metres confidently by the end of Key Stage 2. Of the pupils who left the school in 1999, 95 per cent could swim at least 25 metres. Pupils understand the effect of exercise on their bodies, and are aware of the need to warm up before strenuous activities and to cool down afterwards. They run and skip while bearing in mind their own and other pupils' safety. They learn to control their movement, and to co-ordinate their hands and feet as they travel in time to music. Pupils in Year 2, for example, lift their knees and maintain their balance as they skip in time to the music of *Peter and the Wolf*.
166. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 2, though progress in some lessons is occasionally good or very good. At Key Stage 1, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Pupils steadily acquire the skills required for gymnastics and for a variety of games such as football, netball, short tennis, and hockey. In Years 5 and 6, for example, pupils display good balance when jumping and landing, and make good progress in developing co-ordination when bouncing a large ball with alternate hands. Pupils develop satisfactory control when using space and equipment to travel in gymnastics. In Year 3, for example, they develop a smooth sequence of movements when hopping, jumping and pulling themselves along a bench. By time they reach Year 4, most pupils perform a forward roll satisfactorily, and a few advance to a backward roll. Pupils throughout the school combine actions to form a routine in dance. In Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils developed a series of movements to represent characters in a circus.
167. Pupils' attitudes to work are good at both key stages. They behave well, and concentrate on the tasks set. Most pupils listen carefully to their teachers. They follow instructions carefully and obey the rules for safety. Pupils work sensibly in pairs and in small groups. They enjoy swimming and try hard to improve their own standards. When boys and girls work together co-operatively during lessons, and learn the principles of co-operation and fair play, the subject makes a good contribution to their social development. Particularly good levels of effort and concentration were seen when a group of pupils in Year 3

performed a sequence of movements in gymnastics.

168. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1. It is never less than satisfactory at Key Stage 2, and occasionally good or excellent. This is an improvement to the teaching of physical education from the time of the previous inspection. Teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the subject, which is apparent in the confident explanations and instructions they provide for pupils about the work. Lessons are planned carefully to provide pupils with a logical sequence for the development of skills. Teachers make effective use of informal day-to-day assessments of pupils' learning to plan activities that improve their performance. Accurate records are kept of pupils' progress in swimming, and an end-of-term assessment takes place for awards. More formal assessments of pupils' skills take place at the end of Years 2, 4 and 6. Teachers provide good role models for pupils by dressing in suitable clothing. High expectations of behaviour and attainment influence pupils' attitudes and effort. The pace of lessons is usually brisk, and appropriate resources are well used. Good use is often made of pupils' expertise to demonstrate good practice. In the best lessons, teachers have very good relationships with pupils. They communicate strong enthusiasm for the subject to pupils and their high expectations are reflected in pupils' performances.
169. A helpful policy, and scheme of work, ensure that pupils learn all necessary skills in a logical order. A good variety of games and activities covers all aspects of the National Curriculum. The co-ordinator monitors the quality of teachers' planning and observes pupils at work during extra-curricular sessions of games. As the subject is not currently prioritised for review, no time has been given to check the quality of teaching during lessons. Provision for training teachers to improve their skills is satisfactory. There are sufficient resources for effective teaching and learning which are easily accessible to pupils. The hall provides suitable accommodation for gymnastics and dance, as does the playing field for team games. The school extends its programme of physical education for older pupils during the summer term. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils take part in athletics and develop the techniques of running, jumping and throwing. In Years 5 and 6, they negotiate obstacle courses and develop orienteering skills in the school grounds. Pupils in Year 6 also have the opportunity to experience a range of outdoor pursuits on a residential visit to an outdoor education centre in the Lake District.
170. Swimming forms part of the curriculum for physical education in Years 4, 5 and 6 when pupils have a swimming lesson every week for a term. Both girls and boys have access to all extra-curricular activities. They compete against teams from other schools in football, netball and athletics. The school's football and netball teams make good use of opportunities to improve their performance by practising at lunchtimes. The school has forged good links with local professional football, cricket, rugby and basketball teams, and this has resulted in professional players visiting the school to offer coaching and advice. The range of sporting activities provided by the school helps to develop the confidence, ability and self-esteem of pupils at all levels of attainment.

**The inspection of this school included a focussed view of swimming which is reported below.**

171. Pupils attend a local swimming pool to develop their skills. Pupils' attitudes to swimming are very good. They enjoy their lessons and try very hard to improve their standard. Nearly all pupils swim 25 metres confidently by the end of Key Stage 2, and some swim over 100 metres. 95 per cent of pupils who left the school in 1999 could swim at least 25 metres.

172. All pupils have a swimming lesson every week for one term in Years 4, 5 and 6. Pupils travel by coach to the local university swimming pool that is only two miles away from the school. Little time is wasted in travelling to and from the pool. The competition-sized heated indoor pool provides good facilities both for beginners and accomplished swimmers. Changing facilities are good, and are supervised by the class teacher and a female parent helper. The school has exclusive use of the pool during swimming lessons.
173. Lessons are well planned, with clear objectives for pupils' learning. In each lesson, pupils are divided into three groups based on their ability to swim. Each group of pupils makes good progress. Competent swimmers are trained effectively by the headteacher who holds a swimming teacher's certificate and life-saving certificates. The class teacher coaches developing swimmers efficiently. Both groups follow suitable programmes to develop their swimming based on the National Curriculum Resource Pack for Swimming and Water Safety.
174. The school makes good provision for non-swimmers. They have their own instructor - a parent helper with life-saving qualifications - who joins pupils in the water to instruct and assist them. He helps pupils to develop their confidence in the water, and develops early water skills in a logical order. He instructs pupils how to rest, float and adopt support positions, and teaches basic arm and leg movements first with, and then without, a float.
175. Pupils' skills are assessed on an ongoing basis, and there is an end-of-term assessment for swimming awards. Accurate records are kept of pupils' attainment and progress. Swimming forms part of the physical education curriculum for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. The provision meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school does not have suitable facilities to operate an extra-curricular swimming club, but individual pupils can join a local swimming club. There are no competitive inter-school swimming galas held in the Sunderland district, but local swimming clubs organise their own galas.



· **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

· **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

176. A team of five inspectors inspected the school over a four-day period for a combined total of 19 days. Before the inspection, the registered inspector held a meeting that was attended by 30 parents. An analysis was made of 104 questionnaires completed by parents. During the inspection, 61 lessons were observed, together with other activities such as daily assemblies, registration periods and extra-curricular clubs.
177. All classes were observed during lessons in literacy and numeracy. A sample of pupils from each year group was heard reading aloud, and discussions were held with pupils about their work in subjects across the curriculum. Behaviour in the classroom, playground, around and outside the school was observed, and informal discussions with pupils took place at lunchtime. Pupils' work was examined during lessons and in addition, the work of pupils of different ability in each year group was scrutinised.
178. Discussions were held with members of the governing body, the headteacher, all teachers, some of the non-teaching staff and parents. All teachers were given feedback about the quality of their teaching during the inspection. The school's policies and planning documents, information relating to the governing body, lesson plans, individual education plans, assessment information, financial details, information for parents and attendance records were read. Arrangements for child protection and health and safety were examined.

## DATA AND INDICATORS

### 179. Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y6	263	0	46	30
Nursery	51	0	1	N/a
Unit/School				

### 180. Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	11.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	22.7

#### Education support staff (YR - Y6)

Total number of education support staff:	1
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	33

#### Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	1

#### Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of education support staff:	1
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	33

Average class size:	26.3
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### 181. Financial data

Financial year:	1998-1999
	£
Total Income	449,036
Total Expenditure	451,666
Expenditure per pupil	1,724
Balance brought forward from previous year	-2,628
Balance carried forward to next year	7,914

Number of questionnaires sent out:

239

Number of questionnaires returned:

104

(43.5%)

**Responses (percentage of answers in each category):**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	49	48	4	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	57	41	2	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	30	54	16	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	39	57	3	1	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	42	54	4	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	57	42	0	1	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	34	54	7	5	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	49	44	2	4	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	61	35	4	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	54	43	2	1	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	65	30	3	2	0

NB: Percentages are rounded to nearest integer; sum may not = 100%

Figures exclude nil responses.

**12 (12%) parents made additional comments****Strongest points in order:**

- The school is good in helping children to be polite and to behave well both in an out of school.
- Children get a good education at the school.
- Parents have every confidence in staff.

## **Points from the meeting for parents**

- Parents are very satisfied with the attainment and progress of their children.
- Parents are very happy with the attitudes and values which the school promotes.
- Generally, parents are well-satisfied with the range and quality of information which the school provides.
- Parents are very pleased with the effort the school makes to help and guide individual pupils.
- Parents feel that homework plays a valuable part of their children's learning.
- Parents believe that the school does all it can to ensure good behaviour; they are happy with the way children behave and recognise the importance of regular attendance.
- Parents believe that they have every opportunity to assist the school in all sorts of ways.
- Parents feel they are able to raise issues with the school and are confident that appropriate action will be taken.