

INSPECTION REPORT

St. Lawrence's R. C. Primary School
Newcastle Upon Tyne

LEA area: Newcastle Upon Tyne

Unique Reference Number: 108509

Headteacher: Miss M.B. Lamb

Reporting inspector: Mr. R. A. Robinson

Dates of inspection: 1 – 4 November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706912
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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Voluntary aided
Type of control:	Local Education Authority
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St. Lawrence's RC Primary School Headlam Street Byker Newcastle Upon Tyne NE6 2JX
Telephone number:	0191 265 9881
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Cunningham
Date of previous inspection:	3 June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Robert Robinson, Lead Registered Inspector	Mathematics	Attainment and progress
	Design and technology	Teaching
	Physical education	The efficiency of the school
	Special educational needs	
Mary Le Mage, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
		Attendance
		Partnership with parents and the community
		Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
Lesley Clark, Registered Inspector	Under fives	The curriculum and assessment
	Science	Leadership and Management
	Art	
	Music	
Ralph Walker, Team Inspector	Equal opportunities	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
	English	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
	Geography	
	History	
	Information technology	

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Pupils make excellent progress at the school.
- Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with the national average in English, above in mathematics and well above in science. In comparison to similar schools, pupils' attainment is well above the national average in English and mathematics and very high in science.
- The quality of teaching is good for children under the age of five and very good for other pupils at the school.
- The headteacher and governing body provide outstanding leadership and management of the school.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent due to the extremely skilful management of pupils by the staff of the school.
- The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are excellent.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- The school gives excellent value for money.

Where the school has weaknesses

There are no key issues; however, the following weaknesses were noted during the inspection:

- I. Some activities for children under the age of five are too formal for their stage of development.
- II. The governing body does not have a written financial plan for the future beyond the present year.

St Lawrence's R.C. Primary School is an excellent school with an abundance of outstanding features. The strengths of the school far outweigh the weaknesses. No Key Issues were identified in this inspection but the governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses will be addressed. The action plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made excellent progress in addressing the weaknesses pointed out in the previous inspection in 1996.

- III. Pupils' attainments by the end of Key Stage 2 have improved most significantly in English, mathematics, information technology and science.
- IV. The progress made by children under the age of five has improved from sound to good, and pupils now make very good progress at Key Stage 1 and at Key Stage 2. Overall pupils make excellent progress.
- V. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are now excellent.
- VI. The senior management team and co-ordinators monitor and evaluate their areas of responsibilities most effectively.
- VII. The school improvement plan for the current year is an excellent document.
- VIII. The school has used the high surplus of funds held at the last inspection to effect significant improvement in standards.
- IX. The nursery provision has been improved following the refurbishment of the unit.

The excellent leadership and management of the school identified in this inspection provide clear opportunities to enable the school to maintain the present high standards.

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>Very high</i> A*
			<i>well above average</i> A
			<i>above average</i> B

English	C	A
Mathematics	B	A
Science	A	A*

<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

Inspection findings agree with the performance of pupils by the age of 11 in the national tests for English, mathematics and science. Standards in information technology are above the national expectations at the end of both key stages. Compared to similar schools, standards are well above average in English and mathematics and very high in science. Pupils make excellent progress in music and very good progress in art, design and technology, geography, history and physical education. Children by the age of five make good progress, though their attainment is below the level expected of their age in personal and social development, in language and literacy, in mathematics, in knowledge and understanding of the world, in physical development and in creative development.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
English	Good	Very Good	Very Good
Mathematics	Good	Very Good	Very Good
Science		Very Good	Very Good
Information technology		Very Good	Very Good
Other subjects	Good	Very Good	Very Good

The quality of teaching is very good overall: 16 per cent of lessons observed were excellent, 43 per cent were very good, 24 per cent were good, 17 per cent were satisfactory. The teaching of children under the age of five is good. The teaching of English, mathematics, information technology and science is very good at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The teaching is very good in all other subjects except in music, where it is excellent.

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

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Excellent behaviour; this has a significant impact on pupils' learning.
Attendance	Satisfactory; supported by very effective school-based initiatives.
Ethos*	Excellent commitment to enabling pupils to achieve the highest possible academic standards within a caring Christian community.
Leadership and management	Excellent educational direction for the school from governors, headteacher and staff.
Curriculum	Very good; pupils are given an outstanding range of educational experiences.
Pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs are supported most effectively and make very good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Excellent provision in all aspects has made a significant impact on each child's personal development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The school is well staffed by well-experienced, exceptionally well-deployed teachers and classroom assistants. Accommodation and learning resources are very good and used very effectively.
Value for money	The school gives excellent 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	What some parents are not happy about
X. Standards are high and children make very good progress. XI. The school is very approachable and listens to parents' views. XII. Parents are kept very well informed about the curriculum. XIII. Their children are taught right from wrong and the values and attitudes of the school have a most positive effect on them. XIV. Children's behaviour at the school is exceptionally good. XV. Children are very happy at the school.	XVI. No parents expressed any significant

Parents at the pre-inspection meeting expressed emphatic support for the school and they considered themselves fortunate to have their children at the school. Inspection evidence agrees whole-heartedly with the parents' views.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

There are very good systems in place to maintain the quality of education provided and there are no key issues for action by this school; however, in the context of the school's many strengths, the following minor points for improvement should be considered in the governors' action plan:

XVII. Plan introductory and plenary activities to keep the attention of all children under the age of five.
(Paragraphs 16, 25, 59, 75, 76)

XVIII. Develop the strategic role of the governing body further to maintain the high standards at the school by formalising in the school improvement plan the allocation of finances for at least two years ahead based upon expected pupil numbers, anticipated staffing costs and estimated funding.
(Paragraphs 58, 68)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

St Lawrence's Roman Catholic Primary School is situated close to the centre of the city of Newcastle upon Tyne in a predominantly council-owned housing estate in Byker. The school is situated in an area of very high unemployment and social deprivation, and there are many single parent families. It serves the local Roman Catholic community in the Parish of St Lawrence. No pupils are learning English as an additional language. Attainment of the majority of pupils on entry to the nursery is well below the level expected of three-year-olds. At the time of the inspection, there were 24 children under the age of five in the reception class.

There are 221 pupils at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2: 119 boys and 102 girls. In addition there are 17 boys and seven girls in the nursery who attend full time and two boys and two girls who attend part time, either for morning or afternoon sessions each day. Pupils are admitted to the school in accordance with the governors' admission policy, which gives priority to Roman Catholic children. Ninety-two pupils are eligible for free school meals at the present time; this figure is above the national average. Sixty-three pupils are on the register of pupils with special educational needs; this is above average. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The school aims to provide a learning environment where every child feels valued within a school which upholds Gospel values and the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. It seeks to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that provides challenge and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school aims to promote good parental, parish and whole community involvement in the life of the school. The key priorities for 1999 are as follows:

XIX. implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy.

XX. continuation of development work aimed at raising children's self-esteem.

XXI. continued implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.

XXII. development of the role of the governing body.

XXIII. improvement of methods for school review, self improvement and professional development.

XXIV. continued implementation of the information and communication technology development plan.

Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	19	14	33

National Curriculum Test/Task		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Results				
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	13	11	19
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	27	25	33
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	82(94)	76(89)	100(97)
	National	82(80)	83(80)	87(85)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	12	18	13
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	26	32	27
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	79(94)	97(97)	82(97)
	National	82(80)	83(84)	87(85)

¹ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	11	20	31

National Curriculum Test		English	Mathematics	Science
Results				
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	6	8	10
	Girls	16	16	20
	Total	22	24	30
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	71(63)	77(60)	97(54)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	6	8	11
	Girls	16	16	17
	Total	22	24	28
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	71(63)	77(57)	90(57)
	National	68(65)	69(65)	75(72)

¹

Attendance

	Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:	Authorised Absence	School National comparative data	% 6.8 5.7
		Unauthorised Absence	School National comparative data	0 0.5

1

1 Exclusions

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

1 Quality of teaching

	Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
		Very good or better	59
		Satisfactory or better	100
		Less than satisfactory	0

1 **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

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

1 **Attainment and progress**

2The 1999 National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds indicated that:

- the performance in English is in line with the national average and well above average when compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds.
- the performance in mathematics is above the national average and well above average when compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds.
- the performance in science is well above the national average and very high when compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds.

1The findings of the inspection show that by the age of 11:

- the performance of pupils in English is in line with the national average.
- the performance of pupils in mathematics is above the national average.
- The performance in science is well above the national average.

1The National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 1999 indicated that:

- the performance of pupils in reading was in line with the national average and well above average when compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds.
- the performance of pupils in writing was below the national average and above average when compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds.
- the performance of pupils in mathematics was in line with the national average and above average when compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds.
- teacher assessment in science shows pupils to be below the national average level expected for seven-year-olds.

1The findings of the inspection show that by the age of seven:

- the performance of pupils in all aspects of English and mathematics is above the national average.
- the performance in science is well above the national average.

1The inspection findings concur with the results of the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2. The differences at Key Stage 1 are the result of differences in groups of pupils; the previous cohort included a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The national tests in English, mathematics and science by the end of Key Stage 2 over the four years 1996 to 1999 show standards to have risen significantly. In English, standards have risen from well below the national average in 1996 to be in line with the national average in 1999; in mathematics over the same period of time, standards have improved from very low in comparison to the national average to be above the national average; in science standards have risen from well below to well above the national average in 1999. The performance of boys and girls over the period 1996 to 1999 indicate that girls' performance is consistently better than boys in English, mathematics and science; however, the difference between the performance of girls and boys has narrowed over the four-year period. The school has analysed carefully, together with advisers from the local education authority, the results of specific tests for each year group; these indicate that there are no significant gender issues and pupils make similar progress relative to their prior attainment.

2Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average. Children make good progress in all their areas of learning and on transference to school continue to make good progress in the reception class. Their attainment has improved but by the age of five it is still below the nationally agreed desirable learning outcomes in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development. Although children play together more confidently, their concentration is quite limited. They enjoy listening to stories and some begin to recognise initial letters and sounds. Most cannot write without assistance. Most children have mastered some number rhymes though very few understand number in relation to quantity. They discover interesting facts about their world and become more observant of seasonal change. Children develop a sense of time as they learn the sequence of days. They attain standards in singing which are broadly average for their age, as they begin to sing in tune and remember different songs. Children become better co-ordinated as they explore large-scale play equipment and use crayons, scissors and paintbrushes to create pictures.

3In English, pupils by the end of Key Stage 1 speak confidently and clearly when answering questions. They read fluently with reasonable accuracy and sound out unfamiliar words correctly. Pupils write short simple accounts and stories, and have an understanding of sentences and use full stops and capital letters appropriately. Pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 discuss the characters in a story and explain their ideas clearly. They express their views well. They read fluently and with expression. Pupils talk about their favourite authors and relate simply details of stories they have read. They search for information in books using the contents page and index. In their writing, pupils use paragraphs and they write for a wide range of purposes. They improve their writing by drafting and editing. The presentation of pupils' work is of a very high standard.

4In mathematics, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils write numbers correctly up to 100. They sort objects according to two criteria using a Carroll diagram and interpret Venn diagrams. Pupils find missing numbers in a sequence up to 100 and split numbers into tens and units. They recognise and name right angles. They draw triangles, rectangles, squares and hexagons correctly. They use signs for 'greater than' and 'less than' in their written work. They enter information into a data-handling program. Pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 find out more about football teams by producing a graph to represent teams and the numbers of home wins. They convert whole numbers and fractions into improper fractions. They measure lengths to decimal parts of a centimetre. Pupils find the average value of a set of numbers.

5In science, pupils by the end of Key Stage 1 carry out experiments to make a rainbow and know that water can split light to make a rainbow in a similar way to a prism. They understand how different growing conditions will affect growth; for example, pupils know what will happen if cress seeds are planted in cotton wool, kitchen roll, sand and soil. They explain how sound travels along a 'string' telephone. They illustrate their neat accounts of investigations with lively illustrations. Pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 know how the eye works and incorporate correct scientific language in their writing. They understand food chains and how plants receive energy. They know the differences between solids, liquids and gases. They demonstrate how sound waves are produced and provide demonstrations using guitar strings. They understand that the auditory nerve connects the ear to the brain.

6In information technology, pupils by the end of Key Stage 1 are confident when using the keys of computers, such as the return and delete keys. They use the 'mouse' to click and drag an object on the monitor screen. They write simple sentences using a bank of words on the screen and add their own words and punctuation. Pupils program a floor robot to move forwards and backwards. They write and play music they compose using a program on the computer. Pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 re-size and re-shape pictures and text. They use scanners and digital cameras. Pupils search for information on CD-ROMs and access the Internet.

7The opportunities for developing skills of reading and writing and of speaking and listening across the curriculum are excellent. There is a strong emphasis on learning appropriate language in all curricular areas; for example, in mathematics pupils learnt the name 'irregular' for naming a shape and the meaning of 'improper' fractions. The development of literacy skills is central to the teaching of other subjects; for example, in a history lesson, pupils' understanding of illustrators, authors and captions was consolidated. Pupils' presentation of work is consistently of a very high standard in written work in all subjects. Pupils use

their mathematical knowledge very well in other subjects, particularly in design and technology, geography and science. Information technology is used very effectively to support learning in other subjects; for example, in history, pupils made a multi-media presentation, in design and technology, they used computers to switch lights on and off in models of Anderson shelters they had made to link to a history project, and they use CD-ROMs to access information and to import text and graphics into on-going work in the subject.

11

12 Children enter the school at the age of three with levels of attainment that are generally well below what is typical of pupils of this age and by the time they leave the school their attainment is, overall, above the national average; this shows that pupils make excellent progress during their time at the school.

12

13 Children under the age of five make good progress in personal and social development, language and literacy, in mathematical development, in knowledge and understanding of the world, in physical development and in creative development. Children with special educational needs make very good progress because of the early identification of their difficulties and the very effective help they receive from teachers and classroom assistants. The excellence of assessment procedures enables teachers to plan high quality curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs that move their learning on at a rapid pace. In addition, the outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development builds up, in particular, their self-esteem.

8Pupils make very good progress at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematics, science and information technology. This is the result of the very high standard of teaching, the excellent assessment procedures, which are used very effectively, and the recent focus and changes to the curriculum of these subjects. The excellent implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy are having a most positive impact on pupils' progress at both key stages. The very good progress seen has yet to impact fully on raising standards further in English at the end of Key Stage 2. The attainment of the present Year 6 in the national tests in 1996 at the end of Key Stage 1 was well below the national average in reading and in speaking and listening, and below in writing; over time at Key Stage 2 these pupils have made very good progress and their attainment is now in line with the national average in reading and writing and above average in speaking and listening. In addition, this group of pupils has a quarter of pupils with special educational needs. The very good progress is confirmed in the lessons seen. The support from experienced and capable classroom assistants and the non-class based teacher is particularly instrumental in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards achieving the targets set out in their individual educational plans. Pupils make excellent progress in music and very good progress in art, design and technology, geography, history and physical education.

9Since the previous inspection standards have risen outstandingly by the end of Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics, and science. There is an excellent breadth and balance to the curriculum and this enables pupils to make excellent progress in music and very good progress in all other subjects. The school is extremely well placed to maintain the present high standards.

15 **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

10Children under the age of five, in the nursery, learn to follow instructions and to recognise signals such as 'Izzy wizzy let's get busy' which indicate the start of activity time. They begin to relate to adults in the class and a few relate to other children. Many very young children find it hard to sit still and to listen to a story for more than a few minutes though a few older children concentrate well when they work alongside an adult, chopping vegetables with great perseverance, for instance. They are confident when they join the reception class because they are used to being alongside older pupils as they come into the main school each day. Children are still very immature for their age when they enter the reception class. They tend to shout out answers to questions and wriggle when they have to sit still for too long. Their co-operative and social skills have developed well, though, and they play and chat together as they work on their tasks, often far more interested in that than in listening to their teacher. Children take on responsibilities from an early age. In the nursery, children take turns to sort out the straws and milk for playtime and in the reception class they take charge of their own work and keep it neatly in their named folder.

11Pupils at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have very good attitudes to their work throughout the school. In all classes, the pupils listen attentively and are eager to answer questions, doing so in a sensible and respectful manner. They are well motivated, concentrate hard and work well together, co-operating in a mature and sensible fashion. Pupils persevere well in their tasks, often for extended periods. They discuss and explain their work to each other; for example, pupils investigated the effect of heat on various foods and clearly found it interesting and talked about their findings with the minimum of fuss. Pupils' exceptionally high quality of presentation of assignments throughout the school reflects their interest and pride in their work. Nearly all of the Year 6 pupils attended a homework club prior to the national tests in 1999; this is a measure of pupils' interest in their work and their determination to succeed.

12The pupils are excellently behaved and achieve exemplary standards of behaviour in assemblies. The youngest children in the school quickly learn the high standards of behaviour that are expected of them and respond accordingly. The Roman Catholic ethos of the school has a most positive effect on behaviour and attitudes. Relationships in and out of the classrooms with other pupils, with teachers and with other adults are very good. Pupils have extremely high respect for the staff at the school and even pupils with behavioural difficulties want to please their teachers. The pupils know the difference between right and wrong. The school's very effective system of rewards and sanctions is understood and the pupils respond well to it. Parents rightly state that pupils behave exceptionally well at the school.

13Pupils' personal development is excellent and they interact well with each other and with adults. The pupils are encouraged to take increasing responsibility as they move through the school; examples exist in their returning of registers, help at lunchtime and help with younger pupils. They respond well to these opportunities. They are also encouraged to show initiative for their own learning and again they respond well. Individual pupils display a sense of self-worth and confidence and it is clear that they feel valued by their teachers and other staff. Older pupils are confident and seek ways to help their teachers during lessons.

14Pupils with special educational needs are integrated extremely well into classes and they work collaboratively with other pupils. They generally join in whole class lessons and then work in small groups with other pupils with help from classroom assistants when appropriate. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are helped by very skilful consistent teaching to learn to control their behaviour. Members of staff value the achievements of pupils with special educational needs and this helps to raise their self esteem; for example, pupils with balance difficulties enjoy working with staff to improve their co-ordination by walking along a line and negotiating obstacles; pupils are praised for good effort, much to their delight. Boys and girls relate to each other very well.

15In the previous inspection, pupils' behaviour was described as excellent; it remains so. Pupils' attitudes to their work and opportunities for personal development have been significantly improved. The school is well placed to maintain these strengths.

21 **Attendance**

16Attendance at the school is satisfactory and is in line with the national average. The school has thorough procedures for following up recurring absenteeism and well-structured, effective initiatives exist to encourage attendance. Parents report their children to be enthusiastic to attend the school, and punctuality at the beginning of all sessions is good. The efforts expended by the school to promote good attendance and punctuality contribute positively to the standards attained. This is an improved situation from the time of the last inspection.

22 **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

22 **Teaching**

17The quality of teaching is very good overall. It is good for children under the age of five and very good at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The very good teaching plays a significant part in enabling pupils to make excellent progress from the time they enter the school at three years old to leaving at eleven years old.

18The quality of teaching is excellent in 16 per cent of lessons, very good in 43 per cent, good in 24 per cent and satisfactory in 17 per cent of lessons. The teaching of English, mathematics, information technology and science is very good at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The teaching of music is excellent; teaching is very good in all other subjects.

19The quality of teaching of children under the age of five is good. In the nursery, the teacher has very good subject knowledge and understand very well the needs of children of this age. They provide interesting short activities, such as taking customers' orders and washing up the dishes in 'the café'. This develops pupils' personal and social skills as well as their linguistic awareness. The use of the nursery nurse is very good so that pupils are busily and purposefully occupied in a range of activities, carefully planned to cover each of the desirable learning outcomes each day. In the reception class, the teacher plans a suitable range of activities to enable children to make good progress as they grow older; for example, work on plant development and growth prepares children very well for their later scientific studies. The work is very well planned and leads well into the early stages of the National Curriculum. The early introduction of some aspects of the literacy hour and the National Numeracy Strategy is having a beneficial impact on learning when children work in their groups on different activities. The teacher has not found ways, however, to ensure that all children are attentive during more formal activities such as introductions and conclusions to lessons.

20In lessons, which are very good and or better at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, teachers have an excellent knowledge and understanding; they handle the content of each subject confidently and flexibly. They have extremely high expectations of all pupils including those with special educational needs. Members of staff expect pupils to use correct language appropriate to the subject. Planning is thorough and provides often very purposeful opportunities to practise literacy, numeracy and information technological skills. Activities are detailed in planning for different levels of pupils' attainment. Lessons are very well organised with a stimulating introduction, a relevant activity session and a plenary time to consolidate and extend learning. Teachers and classroom assistants provide very effective help to pupils with special educational needs to enable them to take a full part in lessons. Teachers have most effective methods to obtain high standards of behaviour through excellent rapport with pupils and the high pace of interesting lessons. Members of staff use learning resources very well; for example, a cardboard box was used during a role-play activity to represent the size of a chimney that climbing boys had to clean. Teachers' high quality questioning and examination of pupils' work provide information of pupils' attainment. Teachers pick up on common mistakes very effectively and then explain clearly the problem to the whole class. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously; marking is of particularly high quality at Years 4 to Year 6 and contains challenging questions and evaluative comments. Homework consolidates learning at school and provides more practice; for example, additional science homework prior to the national tests made a most significant contribution to the very high standards pupils' achieved.

21Where teaching is good, teachers have good understanding of the subject matter. They challenge pupils well; for example, in a history lesson, pupils were encouraged to develop their understanding of Guy Fawkes and why bonfire night is celebrated. Planning is matched effectively to the level of understanding of pupils with clear objectives and appropriate activities used to consolidate knowledge and understanding. Where teaching is satisfactory pupils are suitably involved in activities though opportunities are missed to develop further understanding. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of the pupils though sometimes teachers expect them to sit for too long on the carpet area. The lesson content is satisfactory though not stimulating.

22Teachers plan extremely carefully for pupils with special educational needs and take into account the targets included in their individual educational plans. The excellence of teachers' knowledge and understanding of subject content, the help given by capable classroom assistants and the management of pupils enable pupils with special educational needs to make very good progress.

23The school has implemented most effectively the national strategies in literacy and numeracy. Teachers' excellent knowledge and understanding of English and mathematics enables them to use the strategies extremely competently; this has resulted in lessons with a clear structure in which pupils make very good progress. Classroom assistants follow the detailed planning exceptionally well and this provides the means for them to use their time efficiently helping pupils with special educational needs during small group activities

and avoiding the necessity to sit through whole class teaching sessions to gain an understanding of the focus of the learning. Teachers develop literacy, numeracy and information technology extremely skilfully in other areas of the curriculum; for example, in a history lesson pupils searched for information to provide evidence of the frequency of children's deaths in infancy during Victorian times by interrogating a set of data of a gravestone survey on the computer.

24In the previous inspection the quality of teaching in nine out of ten lessons was satisfactory or better with almost two out of ten lessons judged to be very good; one in ten lessons was unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved substantially, as in this inspection, there is no unsatisfactory teaching and almost six out of ten lessons are very good or better with a significant number of excellent lessons. The major contributory factors to the much higher quality of teaching are the excellence of the teachers' knowledge and understanding, their very high expectations of pupils and their most effective methods for the management of pupils. The school has the capacity to maintain the outstanding strengths in the quality of teaching.

30 **The curriculum and assessment**

25The school provides a very good curriculum, which in terms of its breadth, balance and relevance to pupils, whatever their ability, race or gender, is excellent. It fully meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. The provision for children under the age of five is good and meets their needs. The time allocated to the curriculum is in line with that recommended nationally for both key stages and very efficient use is made of that available.

26The curriculum throughout the school promotes pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development very well. Policies and schemes of work, which are informative and well considered, are in place for all subjects and there are planned developments, based on the nationally recommended guidelines. Personal, social and health education, including sex education and drugs awareness, are taught through the curriculum as appropriate in, for instance, English and science. Other aspects of the curriculum, such as 'circle time', encourage personal and spiritual growth through sharing and reflecting.

27There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those under the age of five. Pupils with special educational needs participate equally as other pupils in all aspects of the school curriculum. The requirements of the school's policy for special educational needs, based on the national requirements of the Code of Practice, are fully met. Members of staff work most effectively together to provide these pupils with similar curricular experiences to other pupils with appropriate help as necessary. The early identification and high quality of intervention when pupils have difficulties enables pupils with special educational needs in most cases to remain in the lower stages of the special needs register or to move off the register. High quality individual educational plans are written for pupils on the special needs register and the progress of pupils towards their targets is reviewed each term and new challenges are set appropriately.

28The planning of the curriculum overall is very good. The curriculum for children under the age of five is very well planned, using the nationally agreed desirable learning outcomes well. The curriculum is broad and provides very well for children to learn through practical experiences as well as beginning the more formal education of learning the skills of literacy and numeracy. The work is very well planned to take account of the needs of children of ages of three, four and, nearly, five years, with planned progression into the early stages of the National Curriculum as children become five years old. The short-term planning in the nursery is detailed for each area of learning and suitably different in the afternoons to provide for the needs of full-time pupils as well as give similar experiences to part-time pupils in the afternoon to those experienced by full-time pupils in the morning. Teachers keep careful records of children's progress and compile folders of children's work to chart their development. These are then shared with parents.

29At both key stages, teachers' planning takes into account the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy and provides well for pupils to become literate and numerate; although a greater proportion of time is allocated to these subjects, others are not neglected as a result. The very good planning provides for excellent use of literacy and very good use of numeracy across the curriculum. Information technology is also used very well indeed to support other subjects and so provide pupils with a fully rounded education. The long-

term and medium-term plans are devised to assist the systematic development of pupils' knowledge and skills throughout the school and this is having a considerable effect on pupils' attainment. Each curricular file is prefaced by the school's mission statement followed by a response to the findings of the previous inspection and an evaluation of progress since then as well as future plans. Medium-term planning is consistently very good; it is detailed and thoughtful and builds on previous lessons. A very good feature is the section which clearly shows where the lesson fits in terms of the medium-term planning and the long-term objectives. This ensures that teachers are focussed very precisely in what they teach and in what they want pupils to learn.

30The provision for extra-curricular activities is good and activities such as football or country dancing enhance the school's curricular provision. The school takes part in competitive sport. Visiting artists work closely with pupils and broaden their educational experience, demonstrated in the construction of the stained glass window, based on pupils' ideas which they saw realised in glass. The school has very close links with a national orchestra and is currently engaged on a 'Music for the Millennium' project.

31Assessment procedures are excellent for pupils, including those with special educational needs. Children under the age of five are assessed on entry to the nursery and teachers use the information very well to plan for the children's needs. Pupils are assessed initially when they join the reception class and teachers continue to monitor their progress regularly. These records are used well to plan what to teach next and this is linked to individual target setting. Formal testing, such as the local education authority's baseline testing and the national standardised tests, is used appropriately throughout the school to record pupils' attainment. In addition, formal reading and mathematics tests as well as optional standardised tests at Key Stage 2, enable teachers to record pupils' attainment closely.

32The school has developed excellent additional systems for assessment. Key assessment tasks are set for English, mathematics, science and information technology and the results levelled against the criteria of the National Curriculum. These are used very well to inform planning and to set targets for individual pupils. Teachers use their own informal checklists and notepads meticulously to identify strengths and weaknesses. Written assessments, in the weekly planning, highlight areas for development and are used for future planning. Pupils are involved in their own self-assessments. They select work for their Profile Books and write comments on their progress at the end of each term. These are then given to the parents at Parents' Consultation evenings and parents add their own written comments for their children to read the next day. As well as giving a real focus to parents' evenings, the system involves parents and pupils very closely in assessment and review which is highly effective. This system is taken one stage further as pupils at Year 6 are involved in setting their own targets and revision questions in preparation for the national standardised tests, as the school has shared with them the teacher assessments of their level of attainment prior to this. The school's subject based portfolios give a very clear idea of progression; it is characteristic of this school that it has plans to develop this further in line with the local education authority's new orders.

33The school has greatly improved its curriculum and assessment since the last inspection and is in an excellent position to continue maintaining the very high standard of provision.

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

34The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. This outstanding feature of the school provides the foundation upon which all other aspects of the school are built.

35The provision for pupils' spiritual development is excellent. A caring Catholic ethos permeates the daily life of the school and has a significant impact on each child's spiritual and moral development. There is a real sense of community in the school. Worship is a significant experience for pupils in the school, mutual respect and trust, and prayers, both in assemblies and in other contexts, play a very large part in developing pupils' understanding of religious experience and its relationship with our daily lives. Pupils have written prayers for world peace and have collected money for the refugees of Kosovo. Acts of worship are extremely well planned and are excellent in quality. Pupils benefit greatly from the spiritual involvement generated and from the commitment and excellent model of the teachers. Pupils are quiet and attentive and participate fully in prayer, singing and reflection. Prayers from the 'prayer wall' are selected each day as part of the junior assembly.

Pupils are helped to focus on spiritual and moral issues through consideration of happiness and peace in the world, for example, this was handled excellently by referring to symbols in the new stained-glass window which had been created by a local artist using ideas and designs pupils had developed. In assemblies, appropriate sections of the Bible are read and considered, and pupils are challenged to think about their part in the promotion of happiness and peace in the world. A year group in turn attends a weekly mass in church, which is led by the pupils. Teachers of children under the age of five are very good at helping children to see themselves in a positive way and to appreciate the needs of others. Most Year 2 pupils receive the sacrament of Reconciliation and first Holy Communion. Teaching generally embodies clear values and many opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on their own and other people's lives and beliefs. Teachers receive and value pupils' ideas. The school values and respects the uniqueness of each individual. Excellent support is given to pupils who are bereaved or become separated from a parent through the 'Rainbows for All God's Children' programme.

36An understanding of moral values is promoted excellently in the school, and pupils, from the youngest to those at Year 6, are aware of the differences between right and wrong. Moral values are very well promoted through the high standards set by teachers in their everyday relationships with pupils and with one another, and through discussion in assemblies and classrooms. Values like honesty, fairness, truth and justice are integral to the ethos of the school. The discipline policy is positive, and aims to develop sharing, caring and respect for others. The curriculum is structured so that pupils receive equal opportunities to develop and succeed. Moral understanding is based firmly on Christian principles.

37The provision for pupils' social development is excellent. Children under the age of five learn to work and play together and to share resources without squabbling. Teachers help pupils to relate effectively to adults and other pupils and to take responsibility for their own actions. The introduction this year of 'circle time', a time when teachers and pupils join together in confidential discussions, has had a significant impact on raising self-esteem and helping pupils respond more sensitively to others. Older pupils have the opportunity to attend a residential camp. Pupils in all classes have duties and responsibilities, sometimes beyond the classroom. These responsibilities are taken seriously; Year 2 pupils, for instance, are responsible for the whole infant area and recognise that they are expected to set a good example to the younger pupils. Year 6 pupils have a range of school-wide responsibilities, including looking after younger pupils. This term they have worked out their own rota for supervising and organising games in the infant yard. Children under the age of five are fully integrated into the life of the school. Older pupils often help other pupils with using computers. All pupils are encouraged to be responsible and take initiative if they see something around the school that needs doing: tidying, picking up litter, holding doors open and so on. 'Good service' certificates are awarded in assembly to pupils who have made a particular contribution to the welfare of the school. One older pupil reflecting on his time at the school has written: 'All of the teachers were very kind to me and they have helped me to grow up to be a sensible person. I have learnt a lot from them all.'

38The provision for pupils' cultural development is excellent. The cultural awareness of children under the age of five is developed through being involved in whole school activities; for example, special religious services or seeing the work of older pupils in the school. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities, including a variety of sporting activities for both girls and boys. There are an extensive range of visits organised for every class, particularly in relation to work in geography and history; pupils have visited, for example, Newcastle airport and quayside, North Shields fish quay, a toy museum, a farm, and Year 6 have visited a museum where they viewed a photographic exhibition about Pakistan. The school facilitates in partnership with the parish church arrangements for a residential visit for older pupils. Year 6 pupils have also benefited from being able to extend their computer skills in literacy and numeracy at a local study centre after school. There are many visitors to the school, including artists and musicians, who enrich pupils' experience. The quality of provision for art, music and drama in the school also contributes significantly to the development of pupils' creative experience. Pupils' understanding and appreciation of their own culture and of other cultures is also well addressed through subjects of the curriculum, through resources and through visits; for example, pupils study aboriginal art; and they develop an understanding of the beliefs and traditions of a range of religions. Pupils are given opportunities to learn music from other traditions; for example, Key Stage 2 pupils sang an African song, in parts, with obvious relish and enjoyment during a music lesson.

39There is overwhelming support from parents for what the school is doing. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained very high standards of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development and has made improvements to the arrangements for developing initiative and decision-making, and developing pupils' understanding of their own culture and that of others. The school is well placed to maintain the highest standards in this aspect of school life.

45 **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

40The provision for support, guidance and pupils' welfare is excellent and has improved since the time of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with similar provision and the school points out in the prospectus 'it is of paramount importance that the uniqueness and individuality of each child are preserved and respected. These beliefs are particularly important for pupils whose needs are the greatest, being disadvantaged or disabled in some way'; this is achieved in practice. The quality of care of children under the age of five is excellent.

41Members of staff at the school interact very well with pupils, giving very good support to their physical and emotional needs. Considerable help is provided for pupils who have suffered the loss of a carer in any circumstance. The effect this has on the pupils' personal development and behaviour contributes positively to the pupils' progress. The monitoring of academic progress and of personal development is excellent; the 'All About Me' book each pupil compiles provides a clear view of each pupil's achievements. Parents of pupils with special educational needs appreciate the school's care and concern for their children. The school makes very good use of the local authority's support services and seeks advice from appropriate agencies and health care professionals. Parents are very satisfied with the care and attention their children receive at the school.

42The measures taken to promote discipline and good behaviour are excellent. Extremely skilful management of pupils by the staff of the school is the cornerstone of this provision. Awareness of bullying is raised regularly and pupils are confident in their ability to deal with such behaviour in a proper manner. Pupils with behavioural problems are provided with very effective guidance from staff and encouraged to play a full part in the life of the school. Parents value the work of the school and strongly agree that standards of behaviour at the school are exemplary; parents at the pre-inspection meeting considered that pupils' behaviour at the school is 'perfect'.

43The school's procedures for recording and monitoring attendance are excellent. The headteacher monitors attendance registers vigilantly each week. Certificates are presented at special assemblies for excellent and very good attendance as well as for improved attendance of targeted pupils. A recently introduced 'pass' system has resulted in pupils having fewer hours absence for medical appointments. The initiatives taken by the school have resulted in an improvement in attendance. Parents are fully aware of the procedures.

44The school's policy and procedures for child protection are effective. The school takes very good care of its pupils in respect of safety standards employed when handling equipment and general care and maintenance of the building. The integration of children into the nursery is achieved with care and sensitivity, as is the transfer from the nursery to the reception class. Care is also taken to make transfer to secondary school as comfortable as possible for the older pupils. 'Circle time' provides excellent opportunities for pupils to discuss in confidence matters of importance to them with their fellow pupils and teachers.

50 **Partnership with parents and the community**

45Since the last inspection, the school has maintained the very good partnership it has with its parents and with the community.

46Parents are extremely supportive of the school and are very appreciative of its aims and values, and their support has a positive effect on the pupils' progress. The school brochure is informative, comprehensive and reassuring. There is regular contact with parents by a variety of means including reading diaries, newsletters, the 'All About Me' book and open evenings. Parents receive an annual report on their child's progress; this comprehensive document is almost entirely jargon-free, gives a very clear picture of the pupil's attainment and indicates targets for future development.

47Parental involvement in children's learning is very good. Parents are made to feel very welcome and close links between the nursery and the main school enable a supportive transfer from one to the other. Each class teacher has an annual workshop to inform parents of what is to be taught, the type of homework which will be set and ways in which they can support their children's learning. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are consulted at the point of initial decision to place a pupil on the special needs register and are kept very well informed of their children's progress and about details of individual educational plans and targets. A number of parents help voluntarily in school, including running some extra-curricular sports activities, to enhance the curriculum for groups of pupils. The numbers of parents engaged in these activities is low but the school seeks every opportunity to involve parents in their children's education.

48The school's links with the local community are very good. The Parish of St Lawrence's contributes funding to the school and members of the church significantly enhance the spiritual development of the pupils. Visitors to the school enrich the curriculum; for example, pupils worked with an artist to create a stained glass window to celebrate the millennium. Extensive use is made of the local environment to enhance the curriculum, particularly in history, geography and art. Local businesses support the school with donations of resources and by hosting visits. The school contributes to its community by charitable fundraising for local and international organisations and by inviting parishioners to musical events.

54 THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

54 Leadership and management

49The leadership and management of the school are excellent. The school is run, seemingly effortlessly, by the highly efficient, quietly purposeful headteacher and a most capable governing body, led by four astute governors in their roles as chair, vice-chairs and parish priest, whose shrewd judgements support the headteacher in giving excellent educational direction to the school. The deputy headteacher and staff give high quality support so that the school is motivated by one common purpose; to educate pupils so well that they can leave the school confident, literate and numerate, well-equipped to shape a better future for themselves. This excellent educational direction is upheld by a strong Christian faith, which permeates every decision and never allows the headteacher, staff or governors to become complacent or indeed satisfied that they have achieved their aim.

50The governing body is highly informed, very well organised and plays a full part in developing educational strategies. It has the expertise and breadth of experience to offer constructive criticism, for it is both detached and intensely involved. The governing body is undergoing changes due to current reorganisation. It is characteristic of this governing body to approach this as an opportunity to select carefully and to train governors so that members are well qualified to carry out their duties. It is a mark of the high esteem in which the members of staff of the school are held that governors asked them to assist with developing their expertise, to their mutual benefit. The governing body is very self-critical, which is a strength. It has high expectations of the teachers, strong links with the parish, and takes a leading part in new educational developments within school, such as in information technology. The headteacher works in close partnership with the staff and the leadership of the governing body to debate issues and to formulate policies, such as the provision of a non-class based teacher to provide for the needs of both lower and higher attaining pupils. This has resulted in much higher attainment for pupils.

51Teachers share the curricular responsibilities and manage their subjects most ably and efficiently. The special needs co-ordinator ensures very good provision is available for pupils on the special needs register. The policy for special educational needs is based on the Code of Practice and meets statutory requirements. The caring Christian environment apparent at the school results in a high level of support for pupils with special educational needs. The governing body is kept informed of the progress of pupils with special educational needs and takes a close interest in it.

52The school improvement plan is a very good working document, methodically organised according to subject and with excellent evaluations of the progress the school has made since the last inspection. Every minor

criticism in the last inspection report has been heeded and innovative changes made which have helped to raise educational standards substantially. The document is truly a development plan, building on and improving current practice. Long-term future plans are not so precisely documented. Both the headteacher and governing body regard the school development plan as crucial in supporting educational change, linked to what is financially achievable.

53The headteacher offers strong support to curriculum development and is very well informed about classroom practice. A high priority has been to raise the quality of teaching in all classes and in this the leadership has largely succeeded. Thoughtful and sensitive incorporation of the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy has supported teachers and raised the standard of teaching in all classes by raising teacher expectation. The headteacher is aware of improvements to be made in the reception class, guided by her own very high standards and sensitivity to the needs of children. The headteacher monitors the planning and undertakes planned but informal classroom observations. These are then discussed in full with the class teacher. The headteacher believes firmly that teachers have to find their own style of teaching and takes the views of the staff seriously. Each co-ordinator has responsibility and time set aside for curriculum monitoring and their findings are incorporated into the school improvement plan. This in turn has influenced the current initiative to undertake 'self improvement' based on national guidance of self-analysis and evaluation.

54A considerable strength of the school is the democratic and harmonious nature of the leadership and management in which the staff and governors work in partnership. Their consistency of approach is a notable feature of the school and contributes to the secure, industrious and pleasant atmosphere. In addition, parents' views are carefully considered and acted upon; an example of this is the workshops held at the beginning of each school year for parents in which the school shares with them their expectations of their children and through which all work together as a team, knowing what they hope to achieve. The ethos for learning is excellent. Not only are the leadership and management concerned with high attainment, they are concerned with future adults. The headteacher has daily contact with pupils in a pastoral role. Initially undertaken as a means to manage behaviour, the headteacher's lunchtime supervision is now a discreet presence and pupils welcome the freedom to come up and chat. This mirrors the excellent ethos within classrooms and the relationships between staff and pupils. Parents, pupils and governors know that the school is special and that it changes their lives.

55There are equal opportunities for all pupils and a commitment exists to involve pupils in the smooth running of their school through increasing responsibilities, as they grow older. Very good use is made of school assemblies to promote the values of the school and to provide a common sense of purpose, supported by Christian faith. All statutory requirements are met.

56The leadership and management have developed exceptionally well since the last inspection, when the present headteacher was newly appointed. Characteristics noted in the previous report, of 'quiet, purposeful and considerate leadership', are still true. The targets for improvement have been fully implemented and the school has improved immeasurably. The progress the school has made since the last inspection is excellent. Standards of attainment have improved significantly in English, mathematics, information technology and science; from entering the school at three years of age to leaving the school at eleven pupils make excellent progress overall. The school has improved assessment procedures and these are now excellent. Teaching has improved to a very high standard. The senior management team and the curriculum co-ordinators fulfil their roles most effectively and are guided by an excellent school improvement plan for the current year. The large financial reserve at the time of the last inspection has been most efficiently used to benefit the pupils of the school. The present financial reserve has been allocated to maintain the present staffing level during the current year. The nursery has been refurbished and resources for children under the age of five are very good; the progress of children under the age of five has improved and is now good. The outstanding strengths in the leadership and management of the school, the very high standard of teaching and the excellent provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development provide the school with excellent capacity to maintain the present high standards.

62 **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

57The school is very well staffed. In addition to a full complement of class teachers, one member of staff plays

a supporting role at Key Stage 1, regularly taking small groups of pupils for work in literacy and numeracy. This arrangement, highly valued by teachers, means that children receive more intensive and focused teaching. It has a significant impact upon the quality of pupils' learning. The school has a stable and highly experienced staff, who have a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the national curriculum subjects. Co-ordinators have very good levels of expertise and play an important role in the guidance of all subjects. Support staff are well trained and play a valuable part in supporting children's learning. They work closely with teachers. Special needs children are particularly well supported throughout the school both by teachers and support staff. The headteacher is correct in seeing the stability, enthusiasm and dedication of the teaching and non-teaching staff as a continuing strength of the school. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are excellent. There is a well-formulated policy for staff development. Members of staff have job descriptions, which are negotiated and revised each year. The headteacher discusses annually with teachers their own professional needs and targets for development, which are agreed upon. High levels of support and opportunities for additional professional training are provided both for developing individual requirements and for promoting whole school initiatives linked with the school improvement plan. There has been intensive and most effective training for literacy, numeracy and information technology.

58Accommodation is very good. In addition to carpeted classrooms, there are work areas adjacent to the classrooms, two libraries, a music room and a very large hall. There is a separate nursery building, which has been completely re-furnished since the last inspection. There are two large playgrounds with grassed area surrounds, and a nearby communal playing field. The hall floor covering has been improved and original classroom door curtains have been replaced with doors. A rolling programme has been agreed for renewing furniture and decorating the building. The school building is kept very clean and high quality displays enhance the learning environment.

59Learning resources in all curriculum subjects are very good, and very good use is made of visits and visitors to extend the range and quality of learning experiences offered to children. The current ratio of books to pupils is very good, as are resources for information technology; and both are very well used to develop pupils' skills in reading and using computers, and applying these skills to developing knowledge and understanding in other subjects of the curriculum. The school has been successful in its bid for national funding for the development of information and communication technology, and has received additional resources by this means, including computers and networking to allow access to the Internet. Very good links have been made with outside agencies, such as a local study centre and national environmental groups, to offer yet other learning opportunities to pupils. There are two libraries, one for Key Stage 1 and one for Key Stage 2; both are well stocked and used by pupils.

60The outdoor physical provision for children under the age of five is very good. The large-scale play equipment is of a good quality and greatly benefits pupils' physical education. The rooms are spacious and well equipped and the resources for learning are very good. This is an area which has improved considerably since the last inspection.

61The very high standards noted in the last inspection report have been maintained and built upon. The school reviews and evaluates its provision continually and seeks to improve upon present provision wherever it can.

67 **The efficiency of the school**

62The quality of financial planning is good. The headteacher keeps the governing body well informed of the school's current financial position. Governors analyse the previous and present years' spending very carefully. There is succinct suitable guidance for the roles of the headteacher, the finance committee and the governing body. The governors have an excellent school improvement plan for the current year, which includes detailed information about initiatives and cost with appropriate arrangements for evaluating the success of developments. The school has, however, no detailed documentation to show planned use of expected funding past the present year except for information communication technology which provides such details up to the year 2001. Additional grants for school improvements, staff development and pupils with special educational needs are identified and used well; for example, money has been very well spent to update the nursery building and on improving the quality of resources for children under the age of five.

63The deployment of teaching and other staff is excellent. The deputy headteacher is a non-class based teacher with a full timetable to assist in the teaching of music and of pupils with special educational needs; the arrangements are an important factor in the excellent progress pupils make in music and the very good progress pupils with special educational needs achieve. Classroom assistants are deployed most efficiently through precise timetabling to provide high quality help for pupils with special needs to enable them to take a full part in lessons. Learning resources are used very well. The purchase of additional resources is linked to weaknesses found in the curriculum through the analysis of the answers pupils make in the national tests; this ensures excellent cost effectiveness of available funding to assist teachers to raise standards. Very good use is made of the local area to enhance the curriculum, and the costs of educational visits are kept to a minimum through the use of public transport whenever possible. The accommodation is very effectively used. High quality teachers' displays are used extremely effectively to enhance learning.

64The quality of day-to-day administration is very effective and results in unobtrusive support for the headteacher and staff. Finances are kept in good order by the school administrator and through the monthly visit of a financial technician from the local authority; this results in very good procedures for the checking of the accounting system and the provision of accurate and up-to-date financial information for the headteacher and governors. There has been no recent financial audit.

65There are significant strengths in teaching, pupils' attitudes and behaviour, and the management of the school. In terms of the educational standards achieved by the pupils, their progress, the outstanding quality of education provided and the effectiveness with which resources of staffing, accommodation and learning resources are used, the school provides excellent value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

71 AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

66Children are admitted to the nursery at the age of three when they attend either full time or part time depending on the number on roll. They transfer to the reception class in the September of the year in which they will be five. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below that expected of children of this age in all areas of learning. Children are taught in the nursery by a teacher and a nursery nurse and in the reception class by a teacher with part-time additional support. The very good transition arrangements from home to nursery and from nursery to the reception class ensure that children feel emotionally and socially secure.

67Children under the age of five make good progress in both the nursery and reception class. Their attainment improves considerably though it is still below the nationally agreed desirable learning outcomes in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development at the age of five.

68In personal and social development at the age of five, children attain standards below those expected of their age, though they have made good progress since entering school. In the nursery, children learn to follow instructions and to recognise the signals which indicate the start of different activities. They begin to relate to adults in the class and a few relate to other children. Their concentration is quite limited. Many very young children find it hard to sit still and to listen to a story for more than a few minutes, though a few older children concentrate well when they work alongside an adult. They learn to select and put on the right coloured aprons for painting. Children feel secure with the nursery routines. They are confident when they join the reception class because they have joined in weekly activities with the reception class teacher. They are used to being alongside older pupils as they take their lunch with their teachers in the main school hall and attend special services or come to dress rehearsals for school performances. Children are still very immature for their age when they enter the reception class. They tend to shout out answers to questions and wriggle when they have to sit still for too long. Their co-operative and social skills have developed well, though, and they play and chat together animatedly. The quality of teaching is good in both classes. There are clear expectations of children to make good progress and behave well. Children feel valued and want to do their best for their teachers. The beginnings of good working habits are established as children learn to work independently. Teachers and support staff work very well indeed as a team and are supportive and constructive when dealing with children.

69In language and literacy, five-year-old children attain standards that are below those expected of this age group. Children's progress is good. Most children have a limited vocabulary and many do not talk fluently. Nursery children find it very hard to answer questions and tend to usually volunteer what is uppermost in their minds or else echo their teachers' words. Children in both the nursery and the reception classes talk increasingly loudly and demandingly in their conversations with each other, showing their immature control of language. In the reception class, they begin to read out loud with their teacher, remembering some words and the sounds of some initial letters. Although many children cannot write their names unaided, they can recognise their names. From an initial low starting point, where most nursery children cannot look up and down and across a page to see all the pictures on it, children learn that print carries meaning. By the reception class, they interpret some words and pictures, observing, for example, that 'the parrot comes next to eat the passion fruit.' The quality of teaching is good overall in both classes. Teachers have good strategies for teaching children how to read and to remember details. The quality of story reading in the nursery is very good indeed and the teacher's dramatic rendition holds the children spellbound. A sensitive response to children's needs ensures that children learn to concentrate well during the introductory session. Teachers use talk well to stimulate responses from children, teaching them a wider vocabulary. The early introduction of some aspects of the literacy hour in the reception class is having a beneficial impact on learning when children work in their groups on different activities. The teacher has not found ways, however, to ensure that all children are attentive during more formal activities such as introductions and conclusions to lessons. The resources are very well chosen to aid children's development, for example, the children use wipe boards and chunky pens with delight to practise writing their letters. Lower attaining pupils are well taught by support staff.

70In mathematics, children make good progress, though the standards they attain are below those expected of

five-year-olds. In the nursery, they begin to understand simple mathematical language such as 'on' or 'beside'. They know the names of numbers but many do not know what they mean. On entry to nursery they do not know the names of shapes such as circle or star. Reception children begin to recognise numbers up to ten, learning to sequence orally with their teachers' help. Some begin to understand how to combine different numbers to make five though others find this difficult. Using an information technology program, some children discover number combinations up to ten, delighting in their successes. By the age of five, they have mastered some number rhymes and songs and this is good progress for most children who do not know many such rhymes when they start nursery. Reception children learn, through looking at their house numbers, that numbers carry meaning and that the position of numbers is important. The quality of teaching is good and teachers devise tasks which children can complete successfully whilst providing sufficient challenge for higher attaining children. The work is well planned and in both classes practical equipment is used well to help pupils to understand; in the nursery, for example, children come out to remove the 'sticky teddy' as each one 'falls off the wall'. In the reception class, questioning does not always ensure that children remain focussed on learning, though the practical activities are well planned and appropriate for each level of attainment within the class. Lower attaining groups are well taught by support staff.

71Children's standards of attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world are below those expected of five-year-olds. They make good progress and are intrigued that there is so much of interest to them in their world. Nursery children learn that different vegetables, chopped and cooked in water to make soup, will soften and taste 'different'. Reception children discover that cress grows from seeds and that they need water and light in order to grow. They record the changes in the weather and know that a windy day is good for drying washing. They develop a sense of time as they work out how old they are or work out the sequence of the day or the days of the week. The quality of teaching is very good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class and prepares children well for later scientific and historical studies. Teachers in the nursery plan a wide range of activities; in the nursery, for example, children take turns to feed the goldfish and report on any changes in their growth. In the reception class, the teacher skilfully uses rhymes and stories to enable pupils to identify the different parts of the bulb they have planted. The children's education benefits from the very good resources and from the well-planned learning environment in the nursery.

72In physical development, children make good progress, though overall their attainment is below that expected of five-year-olds. They enjoy physical exercise and playing outside on large wheeled toys. The good progress children make is seen clearly when reception children come over to the nursery to play outside. Although they still find it difficult to control fully their movements, and they cheerfully run over teddies and dollies with their bicycles, they co-operate well in pairs and groups to co-ordinate riding in a 'traffic jam' or waiting patiently at the 'bus stop' for the 'bus'. Older children begin to move a beanbag with their foot with some accuracy whereas others play quite erratically as they lose concentration quickly. Children use scissors and pencils safely and appropriately, well supervised by adults. Some cut out items to be stuck in sequence on 'Mrs Mopple's washing line' very carefully indeed, ensuring that pairs of socks are glued alongside each other. The quality of teaching is good and enables pupils to make good progress. The fenced, outside nursery play area is used very well by both classes, for personal and social development as well as physical, as in the outdoor café where nursery children sampled the soup they had made. Teachers plan an appropriately wider range of physical activities in the hall for reception children, who learn to express feelings such as fear through dance movements as they go on 'a bear hunt'.

73In creative development, five-year-old children attain below average standards overall though their singing is close to the standards expected nationally of children of this age. They make good progress as, with adult support, they learn to create colourful pictures using different textures of paint. Through painting one hand red and the other yellow, nursery children learn that the two colours mixed together will produce orange. They find it difficult to apply the paint evenly and to remember to colour each hand separately and differently. Older children in the reception class mix different shades of brown, orange and yellow to paint autumn trees. They are very reliant on adult support. Children learn songs and rhymes quickly and they sing them with evident enjoyment as they perform the actions. They pitch the notes accurately and recognise when to begin singing after the introductory music. The quality of teaching is good overall and some very good lessons were observed in the nursery where children were encouraged to sing their responses to the morning register and to be creative through tactile experiences. The quality of teaching of music in the reception class is excellent, with high standards expected of children's behaviour and responses. Children's work is both celebrated and valued and members of staff are concerned to foster children's creativity.

74 Children under the age of five receive a very good curriculum which is both broad and balanced, based on the nationally recommended areas of learning. The planning in the nursery is very good and different activities are organised for children of different ages. Support staff in both classes are involved fully so that their time is used most efficiently and effectively. Teachers keep very detailed assessments of what children know and can do and records of their attainment in accordance with the nationally agreed areas of learning, are kept and used well to determine what children should be taught

75 The outdoor physical provision for children under the age of five is very good. The rooms are spacious and well equipped. These factors have a marked impact on children's progress. Parents are made to feel very welcome and close links between the nursery and the main school enable a supportive transfer from one to the other. The findings of this inspection show significant improvement on those reported previously and indicate the school is well placed to continue to improve the provision for children under the age of five.

81 THE CORE SUBJECTS

81 English

76 The 1999 National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds indicate that the performance of pupils in English is in line with the national average and well above the average of pupils from similar backgrounds. The National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 1999 indicate that the performance of pupils is in line with the national average in reading and below the national average in writing; in comparison to schools with pupils of a similar background, pupils' performance is well above the average in reading and above average in writing.

77 Inspection findings judge standards to be in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 2 and to be above the national average at the end of Key Stage 1. Inspection evidence concurs with the result of the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2; the differences at Key Stage 1 reflect differences in the composition of class groups; the group of pupils tested in 1999 had a significantly greater number of pupils with special educational needs than in previous years and the present year group. Standards by the end of Key Stage 2 have risen over the four-year period 1996 to 1999 from below the national average in 1996 to be in line with the national average. Over the three-year period 1996 to 1998, the performance of girls was close to the national average and boys' performance was below the national average. The school has monitored the performance of girls and boys carefully and found that, in addition to there being a much higher percentage of boys with special educational needs than girls in some classes, girls and boys are making similar progress in relation to their prior attainments.

78 Pupils' speaking and listening skills are above the national average at both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils listen attentively and speak out confidently and clearly. Pupils talk enthusiastically about stories they have read. They think about what they are saying and make valued contributions to whole-class discussions. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed good skills in discussion, listening carefully to the teacher and to other pupils' contributions, and in expressing their own ideas relevantly and well. They explore ideas confidently and speculate very well using their existing knowledge and understanding as a starting point. Pupils have good knowledge of technical terms and use them very effectively in class discussions in science, for example.

79 Pupils reading skills are above average by the end of Key Stage 1 and in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils by the end of Key Stage 1 read fiction and non-fiction texts with understanding. They can read aloud accurately and with fluency. Higher attainers read confidently and with expression. Lower attainers read largely word by word. Pupils can use strategies, including phonics, to work out words they do not recognise immediately. Most understand differences between a storybook and an information book. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils read a short passage of non-fiction and pick out key pieces of information. Higher attainers read aloud accurately, fluently and with appropriate expression; they express preferences and discuss a favourite book well. Average attainers are accurate and fluent, and discuss character and plot satisfactorily. They cite the names of authors they enjoy reading. Although reasonably accurate, the fluency of low attainers is affected by limitations in sight vocabulary and by the difficulty they have in working out words they do not recognise. The majority of pupils know how to use the contents page and index to find information

in a book and recognise the value of searching for information from several books.

80Pupils' writing skills are above the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and in line with the national average by the end of Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils compose simple texts with clearly formed sentences, very well-formed handwriting, accurate spelling and some use of full stops. They can compose contrasting sentences using the present and past forms of the verb accurately, and write an interesting first-person imaginary story about going on holiday 100 years ago. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils present their work clearly and neatly with sound levels of spelling and punctuation, including use of paragraphs. Use of punctuation for direct speech is developing but is not yet secure for many pupils. They can improve the quality of their writing through drafting and editing. They write effectively for a range of purposes and readers. Pupils write sensitive accounts imagining themselves as evacuees; they write factual accounts, descriptions, poems, stories and posters about the rain forest with well chosen vocabulary.

81Pupils' progress is very good at both key stages. The very good progress seen in the lessons is the result of the high standards of teaching of the literacy hour and changes to the curriculum. The attainment of the present Year 6 pupils is known by the school to be overall in line with the national average as there are a quarter of pupils in the class with special educational needs. An analysis of the present Year 6 national test results at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1996 show that their attainment was then well below the national average in reading and in speaking and listening and below the national average in writing; their attainment is now in line with the national average in reading and writing, and above the national average in speaking and listening. This indicates that these pupils have made very good progress over time and supports the very good progress seen in lessons at Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs also make very good progress at both key stages; the help they receive from teachers and classroom assistants during the individual and group activities is particularly beneficial. The progress of higher attainers is similar to other pupils. No differences were observed in the overall progress made by boys and girls.

82During Key Stage 1, pupils make very good progress in developing their ability to sit still and listen attentively and to express their understanding and ideas confidently and clearly. They develop knowledge and understanding of letters and words so that they can read and understand simple texts independently and write short pieces which communicate meaning clearly. Skilful management of pupils leads to orderly and purposeful classrooms where children feel secure. High expectations by teachers encourage children to give of their best. At both Year 1 and Year 2, pupils make very good progress in consolidating and extending knowledge of letter names and sounds, the alphabet and understanding the construction of specialist texts, such as recipes. Pupils during Key Stage 2 make very good progress. Pupils develop skills in discussion both in whole class and in small group situations; and they express their ideas thoughtfully, using a wider range of vocabulary, including specialist terms where they are appropriate. They read more widely and in greater depth both for pleasure and for study. They develop skills in book and CD-ROM information retrieval. They communicate new knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways, including very effective word-processed pieces of work. They develop confidence and skill in writing in a variety of forms and styles and in improving the quality of their writing through careful drafting and editing. At Year 3, pupils develop their understanding of rhyme in poetry and in reading aloud expressively. During Year 4, pupils extend their understanding of structure and language in instructional text. At Year 5, pupils further their skills of focussed reading by analysing characters' actions and feelings with close reference to the text. During Year 6, pupils develop a deeper understanding and use of inverted commas for direct speech and understanding of the purposes for punctuating writing. Higher attaining pupils progress very well in analysing a demanding text and in the planning a story. Lower attainers improve their basic skills and begin to communicate ideas in writing effectively though the structure of the writing remains simple.

83Pupils' progress throughout the school is greatly enhanced by teachers' excellent planning to consolidate and extend pupils' literacy skills in other subjects. In history, pupils write imaginary stories and factual accounts and produce posters and menus as part of an historical study. In geography, pupils design travel brochures and pen letters to the press about environmental issues. In science, pupils report both in note form and continuous prose. In mathematics, pupils produce tables to detail results of investigations. Pupils' skills in gaining and communicating information improves greatly by the use of information technology; accessing information, text and illustrations from CD-ROMs and presenting information in a variety of ways using text and graphics, for example. Year 6 pupils learn how to create a multi-media presentation of information gained from various sources.

84Pupils' response in lessons is very good. Behaviour is excellent and pupils are intent on learning. Pupils are interested, listen attentively and they are keen to answer questions. They engage in discussion keenly and express opinions enthusiastically. They respond warmly to the literature they study, including the reading and writing of poetry. In reading, pupils are very supportive of one another and suggest sensitively correct letter sound to partners, for example. Pupils like expressing their ideas in writing and take pride in producing outstandingly well-presented work.

85The quality of teaching is very good at both key stages. Key features in the teaching are the exceptionally high level of knowledge and understanding of the subject, extremely high expectations of pupils and excellent management skills in creating order. Teachers have a wonderful rapport with pupils and exceptional ways of motivating them; for example, in one lesson the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject, whilst reading poetry, percolated through to the pupils and resulted in much enjoyment with pupils making very good progress. The pace of lessons is very good and resources are used very well, so that opportunities for maximising pupils' learning are taken well. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good, and pupils show respect for, and have confidence in their teachers. Planning for the literacy hour is excellent and includes clearly defined and appropriate objectives and well-devised activities to promote learning; very good links are made to other subjects and to the use of information technology. Questioning and discussion skills are high so pupils are constantly stimulated and challenged. There is very good assessment of pupils' learning and this is used well both to re-direct activities in the lesson as well as to influence future planning. Teachers are responsive to change and willing to self-evaluate their own practice.

86The leadership of the subject is excellent. There are clear and consistent principles of practice across the school and this has a marked effect on progress. High standards of display demonstrate the value given to pupils' work. The National Literacy Strategy has been embraced enthusiastically by the teachers and is very well established in the school. Excellent assessment procedures are in place to monitor pupils' progress and the information is used very well to influence practice. Challenging targets are set to help pupils improve their writing and pupils at Year 6 are given specific guidance to improve their skills of self-evaluation. There is very effective curriculum development and the co-ordinator's progress report indicates clearly how the developmental points noted in the last inspection report have been addressed. Improvements since the last inspection in the quality of teaching, curriculum and assessment and, in particular, pupils' attainment are excellent. The school is in a most favourable position to improve standards further.

92 **Mathematics**

87The 1999 National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds indicate that the performance of the pupils in mathematics is above the national average and well above the average of schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 1999 indicate that the performance of the pupils in mathematics is in line with the national average and above the average of schools with pupils from similar backgrounds.

88The findings of the inspection show that the performance of pupils is above the national average at the end of both key stages. The national test results at the end of Key Stage 2 concur with the inspection findings. The differences between the inspection judgement and the national test results at the end of Key Stage 1 are accounted for by variations in groups of pupils; the cohort tested in 1999 included a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than the present Year 2 class and, although, in 1999 all pupils gained the level expected of their age (Level 2) few achieved the higher level (Level 3). Pupils' attainments in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 have risen each year since 1996 from being very low in 1996 to above the national average in 1999. Girls have outperformed consistently boys in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 since 1996 though the differences have been reduced over the four-year period. The school monitors the standards of pupils closely, in conjunction with advisers from the local education authority; the analysis of specific tests at the end of each year indicate that there are no significant gender issues and that pupils make similar progress relative to their prior attainment.

89By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils investigate features of other individuals, such as colours of eyes, hair, socks

and shoes, and then answer questions related to the data. Higher attaining pupils use overlapping circles to classify information; for example, they surveyed pupils' preferences of types of weather and categorised 'sun', 'snow' or 'either'. Most pupils find half of numbers up to twenty, and add and subtract accurately within 20. They split shapes into quarters. Pupils state the number of corners and sides of triangles, squares, hexagons and pentagons. They make a tally chart and transfer the information into the form of a bar chart.

90By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils construct their own surveys and present information graphically with careful choice of appropriate labelling and numbering of the axes. Pupils calculate the percentage of a given amount. They divide four-digit numbers by two-digit numbers. Lower attaining pupils understand the methods of calculation similar to other pupils though the accuracy of their work is less secure. Most pupils measure lengths to decimal parts of a centimetre. Higher attainers calculate the area of a garden and then determine the percentage of the whole that is lawn, path, patio and pond. Pupils produce line graphs of the lengths of rivers in the British Isles to assist their learning in geography.

91Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make excellent progress overall and very good progress is apparent in many lessons at both key stages. During Year 2, lower attainers build up a firm understanding of place value and of addition and subtraction within 20. Higher attainers begin to exchange tens when adding and subtracting two and three-digit numbers. Most gain a deeper understanding of using data to obtain information; for example, pupils found out the different ways they travel to school. Pupils increase their mathematical vocabulary. During Key Stage 2, pupils build upon the very good progress they have made at Key Stage 1. Pupils at Year 3 collect information independently to make pictograms of the ways parents travel to work and they then they analyse and interpret their data. At Year 4, they improve the accuracy of their calculations and begin to multiply and divide three-digit numbers by single digits. At Year 5, higher attainers learn to read numbers beyond 10,000 and lower attainers consolidate and become more accurate when calculating using the four rules of number. Pupils during Year 6 begin to use correct symbols in their drawing of shapes; for example, they showed correct symbols to denote parallel lines of a rhombus.

92Pupils' attitudes to their work and their personal development are very good; their behaviour is excellent. Pupils take immense pride in their work throughout the school and this is evident in the outstanding presentation of their mathematical assignments. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, concentrate particularly well and engage in class activities with intense interest. Their behaviour is generally impeccable and this has a most positive impact on the progress they make. Pupils explain willingly their methods of calculation in order to help other pupils. They show extreme care and concern for their teachers. Pupils enjoy and accept challenges in investigative mathematics. Older pupils keep records of their performance in tests. Nearly all the Year 6 pupils attend the homework club prior to the national tests, as they want to do their best.

93The quality of teaching at both key stages is very good. Excellent teaching was observed at Year 2 and in most classes at Key Stage 2; most of the very good lessons seen incorporated a number of outstanding features. Teachers have excellent knowledge and understanding; they are most effective at questioning to move pupils' learning forward. They provide an excellent blend of direct teaching and pupil participation. Teachers make mathematics lessons fascinating. They have exceptionally high expectations of pupils' work and a determination that all pupils will succeed. There is emphatic concentration upon pupils' understanding and use of correct mathematical language. Planning is very good and opportunities are provided for the very good use of mathematical skills in other curricular areas such as in science, design and technology, history, geography and physical education. Teachers provide experiences to develop pupils' cultural understanding; for example, pupils studied and used a Chinese number square. Teachers raise pupils' self-esteem through praise. Lesson organisation is excellent and there is a high pace of learning. Teachers have a superb relationship with pupils and provide activities to stimulate and excite pupils. Resources are used most effectively to assist teaching and learning. Classroom assistants support pupils with special education needs in an exemplary manner. The assessment of pupils' work is very good particularly at Year 6 when marking includes evaluative comments and suggestions as to how pupils can improve. Time is spent very effectively introducing homework during lessons and the homework club held prior to the Key Stage 2 tests makes a most positive impact on standards.

94The leadership and management are excellent. There is a very good scheme of work that is an extremely useful document enabling teachers to plan lessons which build upon previous learning and to provide details of

assessment opportunities. Assessment procedures are excellent and are used particularly well to raise standards; for example, the previous year's national test papers are analysed thoroughly to identify ways that the curriculum can be improved in order to raise standards, and pupils' attainments are monitored throughout the school with targets set for individuals. The National Numeracy Strategy is used most effectively to enhance the school's excellent provision for the subject. Learning resources are very good and excellent value for money is achieved by purchasing resources to link to ways of developing areas of weakness found from analysis of answers to previous test papers.

95The school has made outstanding improvements since the last inspection. There have been tremendous improvements in pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2; in 1995, only three out of ten pupils reached the level expected of their age (Level 4) or above and few achieved the higher than expected level (Level 5), whereas in 1999 almost eight out of ten pupils reached Level 4 or above and three out of ten Level 5. Teaching is now very good and four out of ten lessons are excellent compared to the last inspection when teaching was reported as 'sound and often good'. Weaknesses have been addressed in the use and application aspects of the subject. Learning resources have been improved. The staff at the school is sufficient in number and has outstanding experience and this provides evidence that the school is excellently placed to maintain the present very high standards.

101

Science

96Overall standards of attainment in science are well above average. By the time pupils leave school, the attainment of the majority of pupils is well above the national average and most others attain above the national average. This is confirmed by the most recent 1999 test results in which 97 per cent of pupils reached the level expected of their age or better. Their attainment is very high in comparison to similar schools. Taking the three years' results from 1996-98 together, pupils' performance in science was well below the national average compared to all schools including those schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The 1998 teacher assessments of science at the end of Key Stage 1 indicate that pupils' attainment was well above the average expected of seven-year-olds; however, in 1999 standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were below the national average due to a significantly higher proportion than normal of pupils with special educational needs. Taking the three years' results from 1996-1998 together, pupils' performance has improved considerably, particularly at Key Stage 2, with girls performing slightly better than boys. Inspection evidence confirms the 1999 results at the end of Key Stage 2, that pupils' attainment is well above average. Inspection findings show that pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 are well above the national average; this concurs with the 1998 teacher assessment. During the inspection there was no discernible difference between the attainment of boys and that of girls.

97There are many reasons for the marked improvement in standards. Analysis of standardised tests revealed that pupils' low performance in science was due to poor use of language rather than lack of scientific understanding. Teachers now place greater emphasis on pupils' learning of scientific facts expressed in the correct terminology. Science displays in classrooms highlight key facts and whole school science displays are designed to catch the pupils' attention and to give them additional information as well as giving clear indications of progress throughout the school. Teachers received additional training and improve their subject knowledge and expertise. Members of staff have very high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and this raises the standard of pupils' performance. Improved assessment, including individual target setting and tracking sheets, has further contributed to raising standards. The head teacher monitors the teaching and the co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning; both monitor pupils' work. Additional book resources, specifically for Year 6 pupils, have been purchased to improve pupils' vocabulary and to prepare them for encountering similar questions stated in different ways. The increased amount of homework set for Year 6 pupils has had a most positive impact on consolidating previous learning.

98By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a very good understanding of electricity. They know how to make a simple circuit, adding a switch to light the bulb, and use language such as 'pathway' correctly. Their graphic illustrations show a very good understanding of the dangers of electricity. Pupils write logical and precise accounts of planting cress. They clearly understand that different growing conditions will affect the pattern of growth. Pupils use their own words and pictures to explain what they have observed and so their books are an individual record of what they have learnt. They know how to present information in charts, clearly setting out

the changes which occurred to materials when they were heated and noting, for example, that chocolate, unlike other substances they tested, hardened as it cooled.

99By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is well above average as almost all pupils have a very good grasp of scientific principles, which they express in suitably technical terms. They understand that scientists need to magnify micro-organisms by many thousands of times in order to examine them for purposes of research. Pupils explain clearly how the eye works, incorporating words such as cornea, retina, image and optic nerve in their detailed but succinct accounts. Pupils show a very good understanding of the importance of accurately labelled diagrams to help convey understanding and to demonstrate results. They present their findings concisely in tabular, as well as report, format, devising headings to clarify the stages and conclusions of their practical investigations.

100Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make excellent progress overall; from an initial very limited knowledge and understanding of physical and chemical processes when they enter school, they learn a considerable amount through experimental and investigative science. Very young pupils learn technical terms such as 'root' and 'shoot' so they can talk about what they observe when they remove the hyacinth bulb from its "dark, dark cupboard". They discover that cress will grow on wet cotton wool which they carefully shape to the initial letters of their names. By Year 2, pupils write precise and logical accounts of the steps they take to grow cress, showing they understand that different growing conditions such as sand or soil will affect the pattern of growth. Pupils during Key Stage 2 learn where plants receive energy, and how this is obtained and used. At Key Stage 2 pupils discover that when they shine a torch on water 'the water splits the light to make a rainbow'. They begin to understand how light travels and why shadows form. Pupils build on previous learning and gain an understand of reflection and refraction as they learn how light can be scattered or bounced off surfaces. Older pupils work out scientific answers to questions such as why a window is not made from steel, giving precise explanations using the correct technical terms.

101Pupils of all ages enjoy investigative science and work quickly and carefully. They are very keen to learn and volunteer sensible suggestions on how to make tests fair. In one lesson, pupils watched very intently with a mixture of fascination and revulsion, noting the different pouring qualities of tomato ketchup, black treacle and milk, commenting on their viscosity. They use technical vocabulary very well and eagerly anticipate what is going to happen in their practical investigations. Pupils work very well on their own and in groups, and with minimal fuss, record observations. They are capable of working extremely quickly, particularly if they think they will have to miss some playtime to finish off their work. Pupils take pride in their written work and try to use neat handwriting. The behaviour is excellent and pupils quickly become fully involved, both asking and answering questions.

102The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. The best lessons were seen at the end of both key stages. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge at both key stages and are concerned to develop pupils' wider scientific knowledge. A key feature of their approach is to develop simultaneously pupils' skills in literacy by providing supplementary reading material to support pupils' work in science. For example, at Year 3, information sheets give valuable additional facts about the movement of the sun and moon in relation to other planets. At Year 6, supplementary information on the origins of penicillin, to be read outside class, add another dimension to pupils' understanding of germs and set it in the context of scientific research. Teachers have exceptionally high expectations of pupils' understanding. Whilst they prepare suitably supportive worksheets to enable lower attaining pupils to understand and to work quickly, they nonetheless expect all pupils to record what they have learnt neatly and individually, using lively, labelled diagrams to support their explanations. Teachers give much thought to clear presentation to help pupils to record succinctly. They encourage pupils to find out information and then to use it in another context such as a story. Lessons are very well prepared and the content is very interesting. Teachers present material quite formally, insisting on correct usage of scientific vocabulary both in their questions and in pupils' answers. The pace of lessons is very well judged and teachers have very high expectations that pupils will complete their tasks within a stated time.

103The leadership and management of the subject provide excellent educational direction for the subject. The curriculum is very good indeed for it is carefully planned so that, by Year 6, pupils piece together their previous knowledge and learn to express it concisely using correct terminology and thus indicating a very precise understanding. The curriculum provides pupils with a very good basis in scientific principles and knowledge.

This improves pupils' performance in the national standardised tests because of the enormous amount of material they have covered during their time in school. Topics are revisited periodically and covered in greater depth. The excellent procedures for assessment aid further the good teaching and are used to check what pupils know and understand so that future lessons build on this. Pupils' self-assessment is a key factor in determining individual targets. The resources for science are very good. Standards in science have improved significantly since the last inspection, particularly at Key Stage 2. The school is in an excellent position to maintain this standard of education.

109 **Information technology**

104Pupils' attainment by the end of both key stages is above national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils enter information, such as the height, weight and age of pupils in the class, to produce graphs and pie charts. They use the skills of click and drag to make a repeating pattern. They use a word-processing program to write a poem, using the 'return' key to insert line breaks, and print out their own work. They use the digital camera to take photographs of their friends and insert them, with the teachers' help, into a short descriptive passage. They program and operate a floor robot and can move a marker around the computer screen. They represent a simple musical composition in graphic score using an appropriate program.

105Pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 use word-processing programs in sophisticated ways to create text in various formats and import graphics, which they move, re-size and re-shape. They create a multi-media presentation of their work in history involving a series of screens with buttons for navigation, and using text, graphics, text-boxes, sound and animation. They use digital cameras and scanners to enhance their presentation of graphics. They use computer control to switch lights on and off in models of Anderson and Morrison shelters they are designing and making in design and technology. They use CD-ROMs to access information and to import text and graphics into on-going work. They are just beginning to access the Internet, which has only very recently been installed in the school.

106Pupils make very good progress throughout the school. The very good progress they make at Key Stage 1 is maintained at Key Stage 2 effectively. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress too. A good foundation of skills in information technology and positive attitudes are made in the nursery and reception classes. Teachers at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 build on and develop knowledge, understanding and skill very well through excellent planning and consistency of approach. Very good attention is given to the development of specific skills and to opportunities to practise and apply them. Teachers build information technology into their subject plans so that pupils clearly appreciate how information technology contributes to their learning. A detailed and well-thought out scheme of work ensures that knowledge, understanding and skills are developed in a sequential way and that a balance between different aspects of the subject is maintained. As an example, at Key Stage 1, pupils develop simple skills in programming a floor robot; at Key Stage 2, they use a control box with the floor robot to develop more complex series of instructions and operations.

107Pupils are very enthusiastic about information technology and explain keenly and confidently what they are doing. They sustain concentration very well and co-operate well with their peers when working in small groups. More capable pupils help others readily without teacher instruction to do so. Pupils work hard to achieve high quality in their work, and are rightly proud of their achievements. Older pupils show responsibility and initiative. They are confident in using information technology to support their ongoing work in other subjects and operate programs effectively. They enjoy working on computers and their behaviour is of the highest order. Pupils appreciate the value of using information technology to enhance the quality of presentation of their assignments.

108The quality of teaching overall is very good. Teachers have excellent knowledge and understanding of using information technology to support other subjects. Members of staff are enthusiastic about the subject and have worked extremely hard to develop their own skills. Teachers have very high expectations of what their children can do and provide good opportunities for pupils to develop and refine their skills. Teachers give pupils opportunities to use CD-ROMs to gather information in history, geography, art and music; pupils also have a chance to use word-processing and graphics packages and data-base programs to communicate information in English, history, geography and mathematics in the form of block graphs, posters, poems,

descriptions, and stories. Although the Internet has only just been installed in the school, teachers are already making use of it, helping pupils to find out about weather and events around the world. From the teaching seen, the excellent planning and the regular use of computers in classrooms and the very clear organisation, instructions and support given, it is clear that provision is very good. In one instance of direct teaching, the teacher explained very clearly the way data was collected and how information could be used, and developed the computer activity to extend pupils' historical investigative skills.

109The leadership and management of the subject are excellent. The co-ordinator is extremely capable and has played a major role in the development of a detailed four-year plan that has enabled the school to receive national funding. An excellent scheme of work supported by nationally recommended material has been put in place this year. A link with a local football club's study centre has enabled Year 6 pupils to benefit from additional use of computers for developing literacy and numeracy skills. Developing and improving assessment procedures are currently in hand to bring them in line with the other core subjects. Resourcing of the subject is very good. A network system has just been installed to give staff and pupils access to the Internet. A good range of software is available to develop all aspects of the subject. The school has made great strides in information technology provision since the last inspection in significant enhancement of resources, in development of knowledge and expertise and in planning. The school is excellently placed to build on its current standards.

115 OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

115 Art

110Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress. The varied and colourful displays of pupils' art indicate the importance the school attaches to this subject, which the school celebrates in its infant and junior 'art galleries'. Younger pupils learn to blend two colours to create a third. They learn careful control of both paint and brush when they paint multi-coloured squares for Joseph's coat. Their lively self-portraits show sensitive mixing to create lifelike skin tones. Older pupils examine Holbein's portraits and with lively use of different materials, produce portraits of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, using collage to suggest luxurious clothing or to highlight distinctive features. Pupils learn that emotions can be expressed through art; for example, in a physical education lesson, Year 2 pupils discovered how colour can convey feeling. Older pupils' paintings, based on Picasso's Guernica, are moving depictions of grief with their dull colours, sharp-edged outlines and agonised facial expressions. The innovative use of information technology to support art contributes to the high quality of art within the school and to very good progress. Observational drawing is of a high standard as shown at Year 3's drawings of bridges across the Tyne, with their careful attention to detail and perspective.

111Pupils enjoy art and are keen to talk about different techniques which have interested them. Pupils at Year 4 carefully and enthusiastically explained the different steps they followed to produce high quality silk paintings of an underwater landscape, where subtle combinations of greens, yellows and mauves suggested depth and movement. Pupils give opinions about their work and that of others, commenting supportively. At Year 2, pupils reflected on how 'dabs of orange' suggested 'the sea is moving from side to side.' They treat books and materials very carefully.

112The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and involve pupils well in questioning and assessing their work so as to modify or improve what they have done. They use information technology very well as an additional resource; for example, different pictures by Matisse are accessed so pupils have a wide range of pictures using a 'cut out' technique to examine and from which to learn. Pupils use the CD-ROM to research work by other artists. Activities are prepared imaginatively so that pupils learn to use the techniques of other artists rather than imitations of particular pictures. For example, in a lesson on Monet, Year 2 pupils used pastels to create a picture of 'the sea and the sky' using 'little dabs of colour' which they then smudged and blended. Teachers use technical language so that pupils, from a very early age, use precise terms to explain specific effects.

113The leadership and management of the subject are excellent. Displays throughout the school are of a high

standard and assist teaching and learning. The curriculum is very well planned to give pupils progressively wider experience of different skills and techniques. Much of the work is linked to other subject areas; for example, clusters of different sized materials such as sequins, paper clips and buttons grouped artistically in hundreds give a visual impression of quantity. This aids mathematical understanding. In history, pupils produced the backdrop to the display on the Second World War using a sophisticated sponging and printing technique to suggest camouflage. Year 4's crayoned depictions of Egyptian wall paintings show a good sense of scale and proportion. The school has purchased additional library resources and pictorial materials and updated the scheme of work to improve on the minor weaknesses identified in the last inspection, making it extremely well placed to continue to improve.

119

Design and technology

114Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress. Pupils during Key Stage 1 gain experience of using a variety of fasteners, staples and glue, when they construct models using recycled materials. They learn more about food technology when they make jam sandwiches and popcorn. They begin to understand the reasons for washing hands before food preparation. Pupils find out how to embellish their tie-dyed T-shirts by using computers to print their names on special paper, which they transfer onto their garments. They develop a deeper understanding of the design process when they make several different alternatives for the colouring of a fabric; this happened when pupils prepared a cloth suitable for the biblical character of Joseph. Pupils during Key Stage 2 investigate and evaluate products with lever and linkage systems in order to learn how they function. As part of an historical topic about the Second World War, pupils find out how to make strong constructions using triangular corner strengtheners when they make models of Anderson air-raid shelters. They appreciate the constraints of devising menus for a week using a typical week's ration allowance at the time of the Second World War. Pupils practise their mathematical skills when they weigh ingredients in food technology and measure pieces of wood and card.

115Pupils are extremely well behaved. They show enjoyment in the constructions they make and are very proud of their achievements. Pupils with special educational needs are delighted when they realise that the rotating discs they make with particular numbers written on them, when combined together, will act as an aide-memoir in mathematics lessons. They know that adult supervision is required when some equipment, such as the hot glue gun, is used.

116The quality of teaching is very good at both key stages. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding; they explain clearly and provide opportunities for pupils to realise that the initial designing stage often takes time and that changes may have to be made to their plans. Links with other curricular areas are made explicit; for example, pupils were told that they would be re-writing a set of unclear instructions the following week and so were given real purpose for writing. Teachers have high expectations of pupils to use tools correctly and to be aware of safety issues. Members of staff give pupils autonomy to work things out for themselves. Planning is good and links very well to developing skills in other curricular areas, particularly to developing literacy, information technology and numeracy skills. Lessons are organised well and support staff are used very effectively to help pupils with special educational needs. The management of pupils is very good and high expectations of behaviour are achieved. Learning resources are very good and used efficiently. Questioning checks pupils' understanding well and additional help is given as necessary as a result of the teachers' evaluations.

117The leadership and management of the subject are excellent. The well-qualified and experienced co-ordinator has worked with the staff to introduce most effectively a nationally recommended scheme of work and amend it to suit the needs of the school to ensure that the high standard cross-curricular links are maintained. Careful planning at the early stages of the National Curriculum ensures that the curriculum builds on the learning of children under the age of five most effectively. The school has addressed the weaknesses successfully and maintained the strengths detailed in the last report. The provision of learning resources, including safety equipment, is now very good. With the improvements to the scheme of work and the high quality of teaching and leadership of the subject, the school is well placed to improve standards further.

118Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress. Pupils at Key Stage 1 begin to compare and describe some of the physical and human features of different localities, comparing, for instance, the seaside with Byker. They find out how to locate places on a map and globe, interpret aerial photographs and use secondary sources to find information. They learn methods to simply classify features of the town and the countryside. They begin to make simple evaluations of environments they prefer. They increasingly use specialist language of the subject. Pupils during Key Stage 2 extend their understanding of places through study of the quayside and fish quay at North Shields, for instance, and of the rain forests of Brazil. They develop skills in making maps and plans and use co-ordinates and four-figure grid references. They improve their skills in interpreting and collating information from a range of secondary sources. They increasingly use information technology to gain access to additional information sources, such as CD-ROMs and the Internet, and to present evidence and information in the form of spreadsheets, word-processed posters, descriptions, poems and factual accounts. They develop their understanding about proposed changes in a locality, by studying a proposal to build a new swimming pool in Byker with a library attached and considering the advantages and disadvantages. Year 6 gain a deeper understanding of rivers, by investigating the River Tyne from Newcastle to the mouth of the river, by using maps and aerial photographs to sketch a section of the journey and by examining different patterns of land use on the banks.

119Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and respond very well to the activities that they are set. Their behaviour is excellent and pupils sustain concentration very well. They work well co-operatively. They enjoy the many visits they make, examining both geographical and historical aspects of Newcastle. Pupils delight in communicating new knowledge in extremely neatly produced accounts which include extremely well-presented diagrams and tables.

120The quality of teaching is very good. It is based on excellent knowledge of the subject, and on very close attention to detail in planning. Management of pupils is excellent with teachers exercising firm control yet creating an encouraging climate for learning. They have very high expectations of the children and challenge them very well in discussion and in the learning activities. There is very good use of resources in the school, and of visits, to give pupils plenty of opportunity of firsthand geographical experiences. Assessment is good and is used well in subsequent planning. Particular attention is paid to the development of specialist subject language and to the use of information technology as an integral part of lessons; for example, pupils used the Internet to find out about weather conditions in Spain and created labels to affix to their sketches of the route of the river Tyne.

121Leadership and management are excellent. There is an excellent scheme of work supported by national guidance. There are very good resources including books, maps, atlases, globes, CD-ROMs and Internet access, and many visits are made to local areas. Very good links have been made with national environmental agencies; currently the school is involved with a particular group in a project to develop a garden area in the school grounds, using the children's ideas as the basis for what is actually created. The co-ordinator carefully monitors the progress of the subject. Since the last inspection, good practice has been maintained and has been developed further through use of information technology in the classroom, long-term curricular planning including geography-led topics, improvements of resources and development of links with outside bodies. The school has an excellent capacity for improvement.

122Pupils' progress, including those with special educational needs, is very good. At Key Stage 1, pupils learn about the passage of time by comparing old and new washing equipment, toys and other artefacts, and by constructing simple time-lines. They begin to develop their knowledge and understanding of earlier times by study of events and people from the past; for example, pupils studied Guy Fawkes and gained an appreciation of how traditions like bonfire night on November the fifth relate to specific events in our history. They develop an understanding of how we can learn about the past from examination of secondary sources, including books, photographs and artefacts. They gain skills in communicating new knowledge; for example, pupils at Year 2

wrote an imaginary first- person narrative of a day at the seaside 100 years ago, drawing upon ongoing work comparing the seaside today with that of the late Victorian age.

123Excellent displays at Key Stage2 together with work in books show that pupils develop a good understanding of the Victorian period, the Tudors and the Second World War. As well as developing their factual knowledge and understanding, pupils, in imaginative letters and in drama, express empathy with the Victorian children who had to sweep chimneys and with evacuees who had to leave their homes and live with strangers in the 1940s. Pupils develop their understanding of the difference between primary and secondary sources, and their skills in using a range of sources, including books, CD-ROMs and the Internet, to search for information. Year 6 pupils communicate in relation to an increasing number of aspects of historical events, through writing autobiographies, imaginary biographies, imaginary letters and stories and creating pages for a multi-media presentation using information technology.

124Pupils enjoy history and are well motivated to learn. Their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils engage in lively debate such as about rationing in the Second World War. They engage in the activities with real interest and enthusiasm; for example, some Year 1 pupils were so caught up in the story, they began asking the teacher questions of their own, and Year 2 pupils thoroughly enjoyed their trip to the seaside and were interested in exploring the objects in the 'treasure chest' to inform them what a holiday 100 years ago would be like. They show empathy with children from earlier times such as the plight of young children employed to clean chimneys in Victorian times.

125The quality of teaching is very good at both key stages. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan a variety of well-focused and stimulating learning activities. Lessons are very well resourced and very good use is made of visits to museums and other places of historical interest. Management of lessons is excellent with pupils being stimulated to think and work hard. Very good attention is paid to developing pupils' language and information technology skills through history. A wide range of writing tasks is provided, enabling pupils to communicate historical knowledge for a range of purposes and to a variety of readers. Assessment in classes and of pupils' progress over time is good. Homework is used well to enable pupils to develop the range of sources they use and to consolidate knowledge and understanding.

126Leadership and management are excellent. An excellent new policy and scheme of work is in operation and good use is being made of nationally recommended materials. There are very good resources for the subject and they are very well used. Very good use is made of visits to museums and other places of historical interest. Very good use is made of information technology both for gaining information through CD-ROMs and the Internet and for communicating information through graphs, word-processing and multi-media. Although there is good assessment of pupils' work, there are currently no formal procedures for recording progress in the subject. Display in the subject is excellent. The subject has maintained its good standards since the last inspection and has developed a new scheme of work, adopted nationally recommended materials to help with planning and assessment, and improved resources and their use, demonstrated in visits and use of information technology. The school has excellent capacity to review, evaluate and improve provision still further.

132 **Music**

127Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make excellent progress. They come into school knowing few rhymes and songs and leave with an above average understanding of musical composition and instrumentation and a well developed understanding of musical elements. At the age of five, pupils learn how sounds are produced, and through imitation, develop their listening skills as they echo their teacher's singing. At Year 1, pupils develop a rhythmic sense as they begin to hear the difference between long and short rhythms and select appropriate instruments to play these. Some begin to recognise that the rhythm is 'the beat'. At Year 2, pupils make very good progress in hearing and identifying the difference between two and three beats in a bar. They learn about different instruments and how these can be shaken or beaten in time to the music and so point up the rhythm. They discover how to 'carry the music in their heads'. At Key Stage 1, pupils' singing develops very well so that, by the end of the key stage, pupils learn to pitch notes accurately and to articulate the words clearly.

128By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils sing songs in parts, maintaining different rhythms against each other. They learn how to use an echo to develop a song, using dynamics and tone very well to indicate the difference. Their aural memory has developed extremely well so that they begin to identify the pattern of variations in Aaron Copland's 'Appalachian Spring'. At Key Stage 2, pupils learn about different eras of music, starting with the twentieth century and working backwards to Renaissance music so that, by the time they leave school, they have a very good knowledge of music. This enables them to make excellent progress because of their highly developed listening and appraising skills. Through singing songs from other cultures, they learn different singing techniques as in their very precise rhythmic articulation of an Irish folk song or in projecting a sonorous sound in an African folk tune.

129Pupils behave impeccably in their music lessons. Very young pupils are enchanted as they listen to their teacher sing, watching her in wonder. Younger pupils concentrate really well as they try to play their instruments in the right place. They listen to each other very well indeed. There is real joy in their singing and in their rhythmic responses. Older pupils are also enthusiastic about music. They listen very well and suggest many different ways of improving the quality of singing, suggesting, for example, that 'a faster tempo' or varying 'dynamics' or 'singing in a round' would enliven a particular song. The quality of their singing is far above average in its tunefulness and expressive joy. Pupils become quickly absorbed in their lessons and notice subtle changes in music, tone or rhythm instantly.

130The quality of teaching is excellent throughout the school. Although there is little time allocated to music, through very good planning, excellent pace, excellent subject knowledge and passionate interest in the subject, the teacher ensures that this subject is vital to pupils. Expectations are very high of pupils to concentrate and to learn quickly, remembering what they have been taught so there is no loss of time. The planned development of skills from reception to Year 6 is matched by a suitable approach to each different age group so as to draw out the best in each, seemingly tirelessly. The teaching is excellent in its clarity and precision. An engaging sense of humour and concern to involve pupils in all aspects of music ensuring that they feel their opinions are valued mark this out as outstanding teaching.

131The leadership and management of the subject are outstanding. The co-ordinator is extremely capable and is responsible for most of the teaching of music in the school. The provision for instrumental tuition is currently under review. Some pupils have the opportunity to learn string and woodwind instruments under the local education authority's scheme; however, the school is concerned that all pupils should be given the opportunity to learn to play the recorder as was the case in previous years before the constraints on timetabling and finances curtailed this provision. There are plans to form an extra-curricular activity, to supplement the tuition older juniors receive in school. Music has continued to develop well since the last inspection and the school has the capacity to maintain the excellent standards.

137 **Physical education**

137

132Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress. During Key Stage 1, pupils practise a variety of movement to music in their dance lessons. Increasingly they express their feelings dramatically; for example, pupils at Year 2 gained an appreciation of how feelings are related to colours and created dances that showed their interpretation of the colours blue and yellow. Pupils begin by working individually to produce a sequence of movements and extend this to working with a partner. At Key Stage 2, they build on the good progress they have made previously to develop a series of actions, working in partnership in a large group to convey emotions such as fear and caution. In games lessons, they improve their skills of sending and passing balls in small and larger group situations, moving in different directions and ways. Older pupils practise shooting a ball into a basket ball net and dribbling and passing balls to one another; their record cards indicate very good progress over a three-week period. They gain a sense of enjoyment and personal satisfaction in working to improve their own performance. During the annual residential visit to Holy Island, organised by the parish church and facilitated by the school, most older pupils experience a range of adventurous activities. Pupils with special educational needs make excellent progress in lessons supported by well-trained classroom assistants in order to develop the control of their bodies; for example, a small group of pupils from Key Stage 2 worked for a short period of time developing their skills in walking along a narrow line and negotiating obstacles in order to improve their balancing techniques.

133The inspection of the school included a focussed view of swimming which is reported below. The provision for swimming is good. It was not possible to observe any swimming lessons during the inspections as swimming is timetabled for the spring and summer terms. Standards of attainment by the age of 11 are above the national expectations. Almost nine out of ten pupils can swim 25 metres by the end of Key Stage 2 and four out of ten pupils swim above this standard with higher attainers capable of swimming at least 800 metres. Lower attainers, the majority of whom are pupils with special educational needs, are developing confidence in water and have a structured curriculum to assist their learning. Pupils have opportunities to take part in swimming activities during Year 3 and Year 5 for a full term in each of these years. The school supplies information to parents of their children's attainments and, as necessary, recommends how their children can improve. The school provides very good opportunities for the raising of pupils' self esteem by making presentations at special assemblies of award certificates and badges for all levels of attainment. The school transports pupils to the nearest pool by private hire coaches organised by the local education authority; however, the school plans to use a pool situated within walking distance which will open early next year. The present pool is of appropriate size with a separate pool for pupils learning to swim. Changing facilities are adequate for girls though, because of the gender of the staff, there is no direct supervision available of boys, who change in an area inaccessible to the general public and teachers. The pupils are taught by suitably qualified swimming instructors and are accompanied to the pool and at the poolside by teachers and classroom assistants. The school encourages pupils to take part in a swimming gala with other schools. The school is responsible for the costs of the pool hire, entrance fees and the instructors' fee, all of which are funded entirely from the school's delegated budget. The local education authority pays the transport costs. The provision provides good value for money.

134Pupils enjoy physical education lessons. Pupils' behaviour is excellent; they listen attentively to their teachers and act promptly on instructions. Boys and girls work well together. They are very well motivated and the standard of their dress for lessons is most appropriate. Pupils take responsibility from an early age to get out and clear away equipment safely. They have very good relationships with their teachers and are confident to approach teachers with relevant suggestions and to volunteer to act as a helper. Older pupils record their own performance over time on their 'challenge' cards.

135The quality of teaching is very good at both key stages. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and use the subject exceptionally well to provide for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils; for example, they encouraged pupils to beat their previous best performance of throwing and catching, resulting in pupils having plenty of practice of ball skills and ample energetic exercise. Planning is succinct and members of staff achieve the learning objectives. Teachers organise lessons well and ensure safe practice. Teachers expect high standards of behaviour, though occasionally do not pick up on pupils speaking whilst they are instructing. The pre-organisation of groupings enables time to be used efficiently. Teachers give very effective evaluation of pupils' performance and older pupils are encouraged to assess and record their own achievements. Members of staff encourage pupils to take part in a good range of out of school activities such as country dancing, football, athletics and swimming galas.

136The leadership and management of the subject are excellent. The co-ordinator has worked together with other members of staff to produce a good scheme of work which provides most effectively a clear pathway of learning for pupils throughout the school, although it does not detail planning for outdoor activities. The school provides a very good range of additional experiences by involving 'experts' to assist in the teaching of basketball, soccer, rugby and tennis. Teachers are keen to improve their knowledge and experience; for example, members of staff have participated in games training and some teachers have received additional training in athletics. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved and there is now a good scheme of work to guide teachers' planning. Standards have improved and the good provision for swimming and extra-curricular activities has been maintained. The school is well placed to continue to enable pupils to make very good progress in the subject.

143 SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

144 A team of four inspectors inspected the school, one of whom was a lay inspector. The equivalent of 14 inspector days was spent over a four-day period making observations of 60 lessons or parts of lessons. Inspectors also observed pupils at the beginning and end of the day, and during assemblies, break-times and lunchtimes. Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised. In all, 46 hours were spent observing classes, listening to pupils read, sampling pupils' work and talking to them. A range of documentation supplied by the school was studied and 95 questionnaires returned by parents were analysed. Prior to the inspection, meetings were held with the staff, the headteacher and the governing body. A meeting for parents was attended by 18 parents.

144

145 DATA AND INDICATORS

145 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	221	0	63	89
Nursery Unit/School	26	0	0	13

145 Teachers and classes

145 Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	9.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	24

145 Education support staff (YR – Y6)

Total number of education support staff:	4
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	57.5

145 Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	26:1

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

Total number of education support staff:	1
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	30

Average class size:	31.5
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145 Financial data

Financial year:	1998
	£
Total income	329,153
Total expenditure	333,044

Expenditure per pupil	1,500
Balance brought forward from previous year	23,723
Balance carried forward to next year	19,832

Number of questionnaires sent out: 182
 Number of questionnaires returned: 95

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	52	47	1	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	66	33	1	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	50	44	6	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	51	47	2	0	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	55	44	0	1	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	68	32	0	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	51	45	3	1	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	53	46	0	1	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	70	30	0	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	73	26	1	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	71	27	1	1	0

Parents at the pre-inspection meeting expressed emphatic support for the school and they considered themselves fortunate to have their children at the school.