

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **St Mary's RC Primary School**

North Shields

LEA area: North Tyneside

Unique Reference Number: 108618

Inspection Number: 190972

Head Teacher: Mr J P Murray

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Reporting inspector: Kari Manning  
20267

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706915

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

Type of control: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Farringdon Road  
Marden Estate  
North Shields  
Tyne and Wear  
NE30 3EY

Telephone number: 0191 200 8812

Fax number: 0191 200 8922

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr J Sanders

Date of previous inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> April 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<b>Team members</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
K Manning, Rgl	English Design and technology Art	Special educational needs Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management
L Buller Lay Inspector		Equal opportunities Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
G Halliday	Mathematics History	Curriculum and assessment Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
C Taylor	Geography Physical education Science	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development The efficiency of the school
	Information technology Under-fives Music	

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## **MAIN FINDINGS**

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

- Many pupils reach high standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good and they have positive attitudes towards each other and their work.
- Teaching is good or better in almost three-quarters of lessons.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' learning are very effective.
- A very good range of after-school sports and clubs enrich the curriculum.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.
- The ethos of the school reflects its aims and is evident in all its work.
- There is a strong partnership between the school and parents.

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

- Governors are not fulfilling all of their statutory obligations to the school. They are not monitoring finances closely enough and are not sufficiently involved in planning school development.

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

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

The school has tackled successfully all of the key issues identified in the previous report. The present deputy headteacher is far more involved than the previous holder of the post in making decisions about how the school needs to develop and in monitoring the curriculum. Her role is defined clearly; with a greater emphasis on the school's partnership with parents and an involvement in after-school activities. Inconsistencies in standards at the beginning of Key Stage 2 no longer exist. Teachers ensure that there is progression in what is taught and that pupils in the Year 3 class progress at the same rate as others in Key Stage 2. The provision for information technology and design and technology is much improved. Resources have been bought and teachers have had training. Teachers now use appropriate schemes of work to plan lessons and more time is given to both subjects. Teachers have worked hard to improve the school's procedures for assessment. They have successfully identified ways of assessing and recording pupils' attainment in all subjects and worked out how best to use the results from standardised tests to plug gaps in teaching and learning. Policies have been written for health and safety and sex education. Teachers have reviewed their planning to ensure that they now provide work for pupils of different ability. This is done well in English and mathematics lessons.

Teachers will continue to review policies and schemes of work over the next year. They are

constantly revising and updating systems for planning and assessment. With the additional support provided by governors the school is in a good position to be able to continue to raise standards and improve the quality of provision.



## Standards in subjects

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

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

These figures show that more pupils than in most other schools reached the expected level 4 in English and mathematics. Far more pupils than in most other schools reached the expected level 4 in science. Pupils in St Mary's RC Primary School do as well as pupils from similar schools in all three subjects. However, more pupils than in similar schools reach the higher level 5 in English and mathematics and far more reach the higher level in science.

## Quality of teaching

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

Most of the teaching is good or better. One per cent is excellent, 11 per cent is very good and 60 per cent is good. The remaining 28 per cent is satisfactory. There is good teaching in every class and there is more good teaching than at the time of the previous inspection.

*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 Attendance Ethos*	Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is very good. Attendance is satisfactory and is similar to the national average. The school has a very positive ethos. It is rooted in the Catholic faith, a commitment to high achievement, equality of opportunity and positive relationships, which allow all pupils to do their best.
Leadership and management	The headteacher, supported by a capable team of senior managers, gives clear educational direction for the work of the school. Governors are not fulfilling all of their statutory obligations to the school.
Curriculum	The planning and content of the curriculum are good. The school uses assessment very effectively to plan the next stage of pupils' learning. A very good range of after-school sports and clubs enrich the curriculum.
Children with special educational needs	The school provides pupils with special educational needs with carefully planned work and support, and reviews their progress regularly with their parents.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development Staffing, resources and accommodation	Very good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Provision for their cultural development is good. Sufficient staff. Arrangements for professional development are good. Accommodation is satisfactory and there are enough resources to teach the curriculum.
Value for money	In relation to high standards attained by pupils, the quality of education provided and the amount of good teaching, the school provides good value for money.

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

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

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

- Parents are happy with the progress their children make.
- They are very happy with the values the school promotes and which they share wholeheartedly.
- Parents feel that the information they get about their children and school events is good.
- They are pleased with the amount of homework their children receive.
- Parents are satisfied that their children are expected to behave well.
- Parents are happy that their children look forward to going to school.
- They find it easy to approach teachers and the headteacher with questions or concerns.

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

Inspection findings confirm that parents are right to believe that the school enables their children to achieve high standards of work and good behaviour. The school's aims, values and policies have a marked effect on pupils' attitudes to learning and personal development. Parents are given a wealth of information about events and the curriculum and during the inspection, several parents were seen chatting easily to teachers and the headteacher. Pupils receive regular and useful homework and parents are encouraged to play their part whenever possible.

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## **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

- **Governors and headteacher should:**

### **Ensure that governors fulfil their statutory obligations to the school by**

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- being clear about their roles and responsibilities
- having training to help them carry out their duties effectively
- taking greater responsibility for setting the budget and then monitoring spending more regularly and thoroughly
- having a long-term view of spending and planning for school development
- becoming more involved in monitoring the curriculum and the quality of teaching.

*(paragraphs 46, 52-54, 60, 61, 63 of the main report)*

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Characteristics of the school**

- 1 St Mary's RC Primary School is situated in the Marden Estate, Cullercoats. It is a Roman Catholic denominational school, built thirty-five years ago. A nursery unit was established three years ago. In considering applications for admission to the nursery, governors give priority to Catholic and other families who live close to the school. In allocating places to the reception class, precedence is given to baptised Catholic children who live in the parishes that make up the school's catchment area. Following this, Catholic children from nearby parishes and the brothers and sisters of children already at the school are offered places.
- 2 There have been few changes to the school population since the previous inspection. Pupils continue to come from a variety of backgrounds and homes, which include council owned and owner occupied property. No pupils have English as an additional language and only a very small number belong to ethnic minority groups. The number of pupils who have free school meals is below the national average.
- 3 There are 104 boys and 113 girls in the school, making this an average sized primary school. In addition, 28 boys and 24 girls attend the nursery part-time and are taught by a teacher and nursery nurse. The school has decided to fix class sizes to a maximum of 33 and 30 in the reception class. It is also the policy of St Mary's to have pupils from only one year group in each class. Pupils are taught in seven classes. Four pupils have statements of their special educational needs, which is close to the national average. A further 26 pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is also similar to the national average.
- 4 Children are admitted to the reception class in the September of the academic year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection, most of them were seven four-year-olds in the reception class and most of these have been to a nursery or playgroup. Their attainment on entry to the reception class is above average in language, literacy, numeracy and personal and social development.
- 5 The school aims to be a caring and stimulating place to learn. It intends to do this in a Catholic setting where pupils experience Christian values alongside values of respect for others. The uniqueness of each individual is celebrated and all members of the school community are encouraged on their individual Faith journey so that they can grow in a genuine relationship with God in Jesus Christ and pass on that faith to future generations. Educational aims are that children will have a well-planned and organised curriculum and be expected to achieve high standards. In order to do this, teachers and governors will have opportunities for training and professional development. Other aims are to promote the involvement of parents, the parish and local community in the work of the school. Current targets for development are to review some of the school's policies and look at procedures for assessing and recording what pupils know and can do. Other priorities for development are to improve the teaching of music, history, geography and religious education.

## Key indicators

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

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	8	17	25

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	16	16	17
	Total	24	24	25
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	96(94)	96(94)	100(97)
	National	82(80)	83(81)	87(84)

<b>Teacher Assessments</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	16	17	16
	Total	24	25	24
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	96(94)	100(94)	96(97)
	National	82(81)	86(85)	87(86)

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

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	13	14	27

<b>National Curriculum Test Results</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	9	10	12
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	22	22	25
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	82(85)	82(77)	92(81)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

<b>Teacher Assessments</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	9	11	12
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	22	23	25
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	82(92)	85(92)	92(100)
	National	68(65)	69(65)	75(72)

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

2 **Attendance**

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:	Authorised	School	%
	Absence	National comparative data	4.6
	Unauthorised	School	5.7
	Absence	National comparative data	0
			0.5

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2 **Exclusions**

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

2 **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	13
	Satisfactory or better	100
	Less than satisfactory	0

## 2 PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

### 2 EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

#### 2 Attainment and progress

- 6 The results of National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 show that more pupils than in most other schools reached the expected level 4 in English and mathematics. Far more pupils than in most other schools reached the expected level 4 in science. The proportion of pupils who reached level 5 was well above average in English and mathematics and very high in science. The school exceeded the targets it had set for raising standards in English and mathematics.
- 7 Over the past three years, test results have fluctuated in English, mathematics and science but have remained above the national average. This year's results show a marked increase in the number of pupils who reach the higher level 5 in all three subjects. In the three years 1996 to 1998 girls performed better than boys in English and mathematics. Boys did better than girls in science. When compared with similar schools, pupils' results are average in English, mathematics and science tests. Almost every parent who completed the questionnaire or attended the parents' meeting was unanimous in their praise of pupils' attainments.
- 8 The results of National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 show that far more pupils than in most other schools reached the expected level 2 in reading and writing. All pupils reached the expected level in mathematics. Teachers' assessments show that the number of pupils who reached the expected level 2 in science was above average. The proportion of pupils who reached level 3 was very high in reading, mathematics and science and far more pupils than in most schools reached this level in writing.
- 9 Over the past three years, test results have remained at similar levels in reading and writing. They have fluctuated in mathematics but in all three subjects they have remained above the national average. This year's results show an increase in the number of pupils reaching the higher level in reading, writing and mathematics. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls in English and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, pupils' results are above average in reading and writing, well above average in mathematics and average in science.
- 10 Inspection findings are that many pupils in Key Stage 2 achieve levels that are above expectations for their age in English and science and well above this in mathematics. In Key Stage 1 pupils reach levels that are well above expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. This is a result of good teaching and the effective use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to plan work that is challenging for all pupils. In both key stages pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. In Key Stage 1 they read and write daily and count and use number in many practical activities and in the day-to-day life of the school. Pupils in Key Stage 2 read in many situations and write in almost every subject, whether it is directions about how to use a computer program in information technology or their thoughts about art and artists. They use their numeracy skills to create charts and graphs in science and to measure temperature in geography.
- 11 Inspection findings are that pupils' attainment in information technology is in line with expectations for seven-year-olds and above expectations for eleven-year-olds. The strength in both key stages is that pupils have good basic computer skills. Pupils also use



their information technology skills, such as word processing, in other subjects, for example, to draft and publish work in English.

- 12 The majority of children enter the nursery with attainment that is typical for their age. They make good progress in the nursery and reception classes and before they are five, most children have achieved the desirable learning outcomes for young children. Assessments of pupils' knowledge and skills when they enter the reception class show that their speaking skills, their reading and writing skills, and their personal and social skills are above what is expected. Assessments of their listening skills and their use of number suggest that they are in line with most children of this age.
- 13 Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils In Years 1 and 2 make good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The progress they make during literacy and numeracy lessons is particularly marked as a result of greater emphasis on reading and writing and on mental mathematics. In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress is most marked in literacy and numeracy lessons and when being taught by the science teacher. Pupils with special educational needs make steady progress in both key stages. They benefit from good teaching that specifically targets their individual needs. Higher attaining pupils in all year groups make good progress, as a result of work that is challenging. Although pupils in both key stages make steady progress during information technology lessons, their rate of progress is limited because they do not get to use computers regularly enough. There are no differences in the rate of progress of boys and girls.
- 14 In geography, history and music pupils make good progress throughout both key stages. In geography and history pupils increase their skills of researching by using resources such as photographs and objects. In music they benefit from specialist coaching and the talents of teachers who give their time for lunchtime clubs. In art and design and technology pupils make steady progress. In both subjects they use a widening range of techniques to produce pictures and models of a good standard. Pupils' progress in physical education varies. They make steady progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2.

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

- 15 Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are as good as at the time of the previous inspection. The warm, friendly ethos of the school has been maintained and results in pupils who are happy to be in school. Teachers need do no more than continue to promote the values they do in order to maintain these high standards.
- 16 Pupils' attainment and progress are influenced by their positive attitudes to learning. This is a similar picture to the time of the previous report. Children under five settle into the nursery quickly and develop good personal and social skills. They are independent enough to choose their own activities and tidy away after they have completed a task. Most children play alongside others and share equipment and are beginning to form special friendships with other children in the nursery. In all other year groups, pupils have good attitudes towards their work. They are keen to join in discussions and to do practical and investigative work. Pupils think carefully about the questions they are asked, and are keen to contribute answers. They concentrate well, and most sustain concentration for a good length of time when working individually or in small groups. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to learning as a result of the additional support they get and because of teachers' high expectations that they will do well.
- 17 Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is very good. This is consistent with the

previous report and with parents' views. Pupils are clear about the standard of behaviour expected and how they behave is strongly influenced by the good relationships they have with teachers and their desire to do well and please. A noticeable feature of the ethos of the school is that all staff and pupils like and respect one another. As a result, pupils listen attentively to what teachers say and try hard to follow instructions and finish their work. Lunchtimes are pleasant, social occasions when children chatter with one another and the *dinner aunts* and playtimes are a time that pupils look forward to without worries of being bullied by others. Visitors to the school are treated with courtesy and respect. Pupils are proud of their school and consequently there is no litter or graffiti.

- 18 The quality of relationships in the school is good. Pupils trust and respect their teachers and try to be like them. They look up to the headteacher and parish priest and are confident enough to engage in conversation with them about lunch, sports or activities involving the Church. Children also trust the *dinner aunts* to help them if they are hurt at lunchtime and to look after them if they are unwell. Pupils have good relationships with one another. They form easy friendships with others and are always interested in what other pupils say and do. This was evident when pupils in the Year 2 class applauded others spontaneously for writing good poems.
- 19 Pupils' personal development is good. Throughout the school, pupils take appropriate responsibility for getting out materials they need in lessons and handle books and equipment carefully. Children in the nursery and reception classes know that they have to finish the task and then put things away tidily. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are keen to take on jobs such as holding doors open and taking registers back to the office. Many pupils show increasing self-discipline as they get older and work efficiently when unsupervised. Older pupils make good progress in developing their independent learning skills as they are expected to find things out for themselves. Many pupils help with administrative and other tasks around the school. Older pupils often help younger ones, for example, during wet playtimes, pupils in Year 6 play games with younger pupils. Pupils participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities including the choir, rhythm band, clarinet group and sports. Many pupils take part in the annual pantomime or the nativity play, and perform to parents and to the rest of the school at class assemblies. This increases their confidence and helps to develop their performance skills. Pupils learn to contribute to the wider community by carol singing and by raising money for a variety of charities.

## 2 **Attendance**

- 20 Attendance is satisfactory. Levels of attendance have improved since the time of the previous inspection and are in line with the national average. The increasing trend of absence owing to family holidays during term time, which was noted at the time of the previous inspection, has continued. This is hindering the schools capacity for further improvement. Punctuality continues to be good. Pupils arrive at school on time and there is a prompt start to lessons.

## 2 **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### 2 **Teaching**

- 21 Most of the teaching is good or better. One per cent is excellent, 11 per cent is very good and 60 per cent is good. The remaining 28 per cent is satisfactory. There is good teaching

in every class and there is more good teaching than at the time of the previous inspection.

- 22 A strength of the teaching, which underlies the good progress pupils make, is the thorough knowledge that teachers have of the subjects they teach. Staff in the nursery and the reception class know how to develop the early skills of language, literacy and numeracy and ensure that activities planned for children under five are practical and interesting. As a result, children are often absorbed in their work, particularly when Clive the naughty caterpillar is involved. In Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers' knowledge of the National Curriculum is evident in the technical language they use in subjects such as English and science and in the clear explanations they give to pupils about their work. Particularly good use is made of a specialist teacher to teach science and this is a significant factor in the high standards achieved by pupils in Key Stage 2. In addition, teachers are familiar with the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and use the guidelines well to plan work that is challenging for higher attaining pupils and appropriate for those with special educational needs linked to difficulties in reading, writing or mathematics.
- 23 Teachers' planning reflects their high expectations of what pupils can do. As new schemes of work and national guidelines for teaching have become available, the quality of teachers' planning has improved and is now good. Furthermore, as teachers continue to adapt recommended schemes and review their planning procedures, the quality is likely to continue to improve. Teachers' planning for literacy and numeracy lessons is detailed. Activities are matched carefully to schemes of work and as a response to criticisms in the previous report; teachers ensure that pupils of different abilities are given work at the appropriate level. Teachers continue to plan well for pupils with special educational needs. In all subjects, they are given additional support with reading and writing. They also get time to work in a small group with their class teacher and make good progress during these lessons.
- 24 In the best lessons, teachers have adapted to other subjects the style of having a whole-class session, followed by pupils working on practical tasks and then a plenary. Pupils benefit from this format because they know how long they have to complete work and as a result concentrate their efforts. This happened in a science lesson, when pupils in the class in Year 4 tried hard to test two types of switch and circuit in the time available to them. The reception class teacher has successfully adapted the literacy and numeracy hour format to meet the needs of four-year-olds. They have short periods of sitting on the carpet, which means that they do not lose interest.
- 25 Teachers have improved the procedures and usefulness of assessment since the previous inspection, when assessment was identified as an area for development. They are now very good. Their strength is that teachers assess only what is necessary to make accurate judgements about pupils' attainment and determine gaps in teaching or learning. On a day-to-day basis, teachers constantly ask questions to determine what pupils know and to develop their thinking. They make good use of praise to encourage pupils to try harder and to let them know when they are doing well. As a result, pupils are confident enough to ask their own questions and to admit when they are stuck. A strength of teachers' assessment is that work and homework are marked regularly and that teachers make useful comments on pupils' work. This helps pupils understand what they need to do to improve. The comments in homework books are sometimes aimed at parents and provide useful advice about how they can help their children at home. Homework is given regularly and is a factor in the above average standards of attainment in Key Stage 2. There are appropriate systems for checking and recording what children can do in the reception class. In addition, the teacher uses an approved test to get a starting point of what children know to plan activities that are interesting.

- 26 Teachers manage pupils well. There is very little need for firm discipline, although teachers deal with any incidents of poor behaviour quickly. On the whole, the good relationships and positive ethos of the school ensures that pupils respond by behaving well.
- 27 There is very little that teachers need to do in order to continue to improve the quality of teaching. They now need to look at their colleagues teaching in a more formal and systematic way in order to share their strengths with others.

## 2      **The curriculum and assessment**

- 28      The curriculum is rich and varied and successfully promotes pupils' intellectual, physical, moral and social development at all key stages. While the school meets all of its statutory requirements regarding the curriculum, it goes beyond this to ensure that pupils have many opportunities to engage in sports, music and cultural events in addition to their daily lessons. Parents' views that this is a feature of the school's success are justified.
- 29      Children under five in the nursery and reception class spend their days engaged in a wide range of lively and interesting practical activities that help them develop creative skills and gain a greater knowledge about the world. At frequent times during the day children get together with their teachers to read books and learn about numbers. Each day they have the opportunity for more robust play outside. In all of these activities, additional emphasis is given to the development of language and social skills, which results in children who are confident and articulate and ready for their work in the National Curriculum.
- 30      In Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum provides a good balance of practical tasks and investigative work in subjects such as science and mathematics, creative work in the form of drama, poetry, art and music and physical activities in sports and gymnastics. Pupils in Key Stage 2 learn to swim and have opportunities to widen their experience of adventure activities through a residential visit. Older pupils are taught about the misuse of drugs, how to be healthy and pupils in the Year 6 class are given the opportunity to talk about sex and growing-up. At the time of the previous inspection, the school did not have a policy for teaching either health or sex education. Both of these have now been written and are used to plan work that links with science and physical education. All pupils are taught religious education and have the chance for quiet prayer and reflection on their own faith each day. A strength of the school is the wide range of additional sports and clubs that teachers provide. These take part at lunchtimes and after school, with something going on every day. The clubs are very popular with pupils of all ages. They are also a contributory factor in why standards are above average in singing and sports. The curriculum helps prepare pupils for the next stage in their education.
- 31      The curriculum is planned thoroughly and the quality of planning has continued to improve since the time of the previous inspection. The amount of time given to information technology and design and technology has increased. One aspect of information technology that was missing, control technology, is planned for later this year. In order to continue to improve the curriculum, more opportunities need to be planned for pupils to use computers to support their learning in other subjects and more software is necessary to ensure that communication technology is more freely available. Both literacy and numeracy lessons are planned in far more detail, as a result of teachers' using the frameworks from the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The additional time given to reading, writing and using mathematics results in high standards in these subjects and is having a beneficial effect on standards in other subjects too. Although not set out as specific aspects of the school's curriculum, teachers take great care to ensure that there are many opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral and social development in lessons and assemblies.
- 32      All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. As a response to criticisms in the previous report, teachers ensure that work for higher attaining pupils is challenging. Sometimes this involves more difficult work, such as investigations and explorations, at other times pupils are given more control of their own learning. Pupils with special educational needs have individual targets, which ensure that they move forward at their own pace. The co-ordinator of this aspect of the school's work has recognised that these need to be even

more specific if they are to match the work done by other pupils in literacy and numeracy lessons. This puts the school in a good position to be able to make the changes necessary to help these pupils make the same good progress in whole-class lessons as they do when working in a small group with their teacher.

- 33 The quality of teachers' assessments and the way they are used to plan work has improved tremendously since the last inspection and is now very good. Teachers looked hard at the systems they were using and have streamlined them so that they only gather and record information that is useful. This means that far less time is spent on completing checklists and records. Teachers assess what children in the reception class can do in the autumn term and use the information as a starting point for planning work. They are tested again at the end of their year in reception class to see how much progress they have made and to determine whether any have special educational needs. In both Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils' attainment is assessed regularly. Teachers take care to ensure that the information they get from tests and observing pupils is used to plan work at appropriate levels. Pupils with special educational needs are assessed regularly; at least once a term. This helps ensure that they too have work at the right level. The senior management team analyse the results of National Curriculum tests and share their findings with teachers. By analysing test results, the school is in a good position to be able to set targets for raising standards and to identify any gaps in teaching or learning.

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## **Pupils' spiritual, moral,**

### **social and cultural development**

- 34 The provision made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is as much a strength of the school as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Much of this is reflected in the ethos of the school, which shows a commitment to equality of opportunity, high expectations of how pupils will behave and, above all, warm and friendly relationships between staff, pupils and parents.
- 35 The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Pupils in all key stages have time for quiet reflection and prayer at some time each day. During assemblies, prayers, hymns and stories from the Bible help pupils think about their relationship with God and their own faith. What makes the provision for spiritual development so good is the way that teachers try to incorporate it into lessons and the everyday work of the school. In the nursery and reception classes, children are encouraged to believe that everyone is special. Teachers plan many opportunities for them to wonder at the marvel of nature, for example, as plants grow and babies change into toddlers. Pupils in both key stages have been thinking about the approaching millennium and its religious significance. They have created a large display in the hall and those in the Year 6 class have written poems about their millennium hopes. Older pupils are taught that everyone in the school is part of a team, which can achieve great things by working together. They also have many planned opportunities to attend mass in church.
- 36 The school's provision for pupils' moral development is very good. From their entry into the nursery children are taught the difference between right and wrong. This is done by gentle reminders if behaviour is not quite good enough and praise when it is improved. A strong feature of pupils' moral development is that teachers do not rely on rewards or sanctions to gain good behaviour. They simply expect pupils to behave well and live up to the aims of the school. Teachers and other staff also provide good role models for pupils to copy in their politeness and respect for others. The school ensures that pupils are aware of wider and global moral issues, such as considering the effects of pollution on society. Parents are very happy with the values that the school promotes and say they

share them wholeheartedly and that they have a positive effect on their children.

- 37 Very good provision is made for pupils' social development. It is an important part of the curriculum for children under five, who are encouraged to learn and play together. They are expected to take their turn in conversations and listen to others have their say. In lessons, pupils in both key stages are given many opportunities to work in pairs or groups. Sometimes they get the chance to be the leader of a team or to explain the work of a group of pupils to the whole class. Staff and *dinner aunties* ensure that lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions when children sit next to friends and have a chance to chat. Younger ones are helped to use a knife and fork and pupils learn how to order food from a menu and make sensible choices of diet. Pupils' social development is also promoted in the many after-school clubs led by teachers and in the opportunities that pupils have to engage in sports and adventure activities. From these pupils learn to be competitive and to try hard to achieve the best they can. Older pupils learn to be independent during a residential visit, which is often the first time they have been away from their parents for any length of time. As part of pupils' social development, teachers plan opportunities for pupils to take part in both church and community events. For example, parents and pupils worked together to create an attractive garden area at the front of the school. Pupils are encouraged to give to charity and to take part in community events, such as singing carols at Christmas time.
- 38 The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils have many opportunities in subjects such as art, history, geography, music and religious education to learn of different cultures and civilisations past and present. Pupils are introduced to faiths other than Christianity, for example, Hinduism. The school promotes interest in good quality literature. Pupils in Year 4 recently visited an exhibition of author Colin McNaughton's work and listened to him reading extracts from his writing. Pupils have opportunities in class assemblies and after-school clubs to listen to a wide range of music and to make their own. Recently the school achieved considerable success when taking part in the *Millennium Song Promise* and *Poetry 2000*. Pupils visit theatres, museums, art galleries and archaeological sites. The school arranges for visitors to heighten pupils' experiences of what they are taught. For instance, a district nurse helps pupils in Year 2 to compare past and present conditions in hospitals.
- 39 Teachers continue to review policies and close links with the Church and community are maintained. This puts the school in a good position to be able to maintain the high quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## 2 **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

- 40 The school's procedures for supporting and guiding pupils in their academic and personal development are good. Procedures for ensuring the health and safety of pupils have improved since the previous inspection, when there was no clear policy to guide teachers.
- 41 Useful records of what pupils can do and detailed analyses of tests, provide a good basis for meeting pupils' needs. They are a factor in pupils' high standards of attainment and good progress. Teachers know their pupils well and offer support and guidance in an informal way. Children under five and their parents are introduced into the school with understanding and clear guidance about its routines and expectations. Pupils in Year 6 are prepared effectively for the next stage of their education. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teachers and visiting support staff. This contributes to the satisfactory progress made by these pupils. Most parents are happy with the help and

guidance the school provides for their children. They think that relationships within the school are good and that their children receive effective support from their teachers. These views are confirmed by inspection findings.

- 42 The school is very effective in encouraging good behaviour. There is a clear policy, which gives useful guidelines about how to encourage good behaviour and says what sanctions are in dealing with poor behaviour. In order to continue to improve its provision the school needs to have an equally clear policy on how to deal with bullying or harassment. However, teachers rarely have to consider sanctions. Good behaviour is achieved because teachers expect pupils to behave well and pupils generally do so. The good relationship they have with pupils is generally enough to make them want to be good and do well at their work. Any misbehaviour is dealt with quietly, firmly and immediately. Parents are satisfied that the school establishes good standards of behaviour.
- 43 Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Registers are checked regularly, to see if there are any gaps in attendance. Any concerns are referred to the headteacher, who in turn contacts parents if he feels it is appropriate.
- 44 All staff are aware of the school's satisfactory procedures for promoting pupils' health and safety. The school is a community with a very strong caring ethos. Staff listen attentively to pupils' comments, value them as individuals and treat them with respect. Child protection arrangements comply with the guidelines of the local education authority and the recommendations of the area child protection committee. The headteacher has designated responsibility for contacting support agencies and all teachers are aware of policy and procedures. However, lunchtime staff are not so familiar with procedures.
- 45 Fire-safety, first aid and medical arrangements are also satisfactory. There are regular checks of the premises and all safety checks on electrical equipment are carried out. The school and its grounds are very clean and well-maintained. Pupils are effectively supervised throughout the school day and *dinner aunties* manage pupils well and maintain order during the lunchtime break. Parents are confident that their children are safe, secure and well cared for when in school, inspection findings support this view.

## 2 **Partnership with parents and the community**

- 46 The partnership between the school and parents is very good. The information provided for parents by the school continues to be as good as at the time of the previous inspection. Parents are kept well informed about school events through regular newsletters, which are clear and interesting. The governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus are of good quality, although some information about information technology is missing from the prospectus. Governors need to ensure that this is included as soon as possible so that the school meets statutory requirements. Parents of children in the nursery value the notice board as a means of sharing information and have open access to their children's files of achievement. Annual reports to parents provide good quality information regarding pupils' progress in all subjects. In addition to written information, parents have opportunities to talk to teachers about their children's work and progress. They value both these formal meetings and the information provided by teachers on a daily informal basis. Links with parents of pupils with special educational needs are well-established and they are fully involved in regular reviews of their children's progress.
- 47 Parents are welcome to visit the school and a sizeable number provide valued support in classrooms. They work with small groups of children or with individuals, as when making



clay handprints to mark the millennium. These parents receive clear instructions about the work from teachers and as a result, their support has a positive impact on the progress made by pupils. Parents are also encouraged to share their experiences and expertise with pupils, for example, the father of a child in the reception class talked about his work on banana boats as part of their geography topic. Other parents support the work of the school as members of the Parent Teacher Association, which raises much valued funds for the purchase of extra resources.

- 48 Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning through the work they do at home and many of them listen to their children read. This has a positive effect on the standards pupils reach in literacy. Homework diaries are used as an effective means of communication between home and school and inform parents of what it is their child needs to do next in order to make progress. In the reception class children take home rhyme bags where they are asked to learn a rhyme at home; guidance is provided for parents as to how they can best support this activity.
- 49 The school continues to have close links with the Church and the community. This can be seen in the work of pupils and parishioners working alongside one another in the planting of a new school garden in recognition of the work of the retiring parish priest. Links with business, such as a local supermarket, have resulted in a visit by Year 6 pupils to observe the use of information technology in the work place. Regular visits to the Education Technology Centre have been used well to improve standards in information technology especially for older pupils. All of these links enhance the quality of education provided and contribute to the standards attained.
- 50 The commitment of the school and parents to work in partnership for the benefit of pupils ensures that the school has the capacity to maintain the close partnership it has with parents.

## 2 THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

2

### Leadership and management

- 51 The headteacher continues to provide very strong leadership for the work of the school. He has very definite ideas of how the school needs to develop in order to continue to improve and raise standards. The high expectations that he has of teachers and pupils are evident in the ambitious targets set for raising standards in English and mathematics in the Year 2000 National Curriculum tests. Parents' views that he has done much to improve the quality of education provided, are justified. Since the previous inspection, a new deputy headteacher has been appointed. As a response to criticisms in the previous report, she has a much higher profile in the day-to-day management of the school and in the school's partnership with parents. Her hard work and enthusiasm have been instrumental in bringing about many of the changes necessary to tackle the key issues identified in the previous report.
- 52 Staff with leadership and managerial roles have a good understanding of their responsibilities and contribute to the effective management of the school. Subject coordinators provide informal advice for colleagues and more formal training in their subjects during staff meetings and training days. As a result, there is a strong sense of shared purpose and teamwork in the school, which is evident in the support teachers give to one another and their willingness to work hard to continue to raise standards. In addition,

subject co-ordinators now monitor the curriculum more closely through looking at teachers' planning. Governors are not as involved with curriculum matters as they should be but are keen to keep up-to-date with new initiatives and to take a more active role in monitoring teaching and the curriculum. This puts the school in a good position to be able to continue to improve both aspects of its work. Although they do not analyse the results of National Curriculum tests, co-ordinators in English, mathematics and science are given this information by the senior management team and are involved in consultations about setting targets and identifying gaps in teaching or learning. Similarly, although co-ordinators have not yet begun to monitor the quality of teaching in a systematic way, this is seen as a priority for development. There is a succinct and useful policy to guide teachers in their monitoring, which puts the school in a good position to be able to continue to improve the quality of teaching.

- 53 Governors are not fulfilling all of their statutory obligations towards the school. This is because there have been considerable changes to the governing body and a number of newly appointed governors have not yet had the training or experience necessary to carry out their duties effectively. One of the areas that governors have too little involvement in is setting the budget and monitoring spending. Governors are unaware of how much money the school has to carry over into the next year. However, they have made a good start at remedying the situation and the finance committee has already met to discuss future plans for spending. Similarly, while governors are kept fully informed about curriculum developments and have an opportunity to contribute to planning for school development their involvement at present is limited. Once again, their willingness to get to grips with the task is evident in the way that an educational standards committee has met to analyse the results of standardised tests and compare pupils' performance with those in similar schools. Governors are very supportive of the headteacher and keen to get to play their part in the task of leading the school and to take a more active role in monitoring the curriculum and teaching. Their awareness and determination to do a good job puts them in a strong position to be able to fulfil their duties and statutory requirements from now on.
- 54 The school's development plan is a useful document. It sets out clearly the areas for development, which are linked closely to national initiatives and areas that the school needs to improve. The action plan for each target is clear about who is responsible and what training and resources are necessary in order to achieve the success criteria set by the school. Each half-term the senior management team monitors how well the school is moving towards these agreed targets. Governors do not play a full enough part in this stage of planning. Some of the plan could still be improved, for example, there is not a written review of what the school has achieved in the previous year, which makes it difficult to follow through targets that have been carried over for more than one year. In addition, there are a lot of targets to achieve, requiring great effort and additional work from all staff. A strength of the plan is that it is linked closely to staff development and training.
- 55 The school has a very good set of aims. They focus on providing equal opportunities for all pupils and helping each child reach the highest possible standards in all of their work. These aims are shared and agreed by teachers and governors. Parents also say that they support the school's values wholeheartedly. The ethos of the school is also particularly strong. It reflects the Catholic nature of the school and the warm and friendly relationships between pupils and staff.

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

- 56 There are sufficient suitably qualified and experienced teachers to meet the needs of the

National Curriculum and the areas of learning for children under five. Support staff are well qualified and experienced for their work in school including the support provided for pupils with special educational needs.

- 57 Arrangements for staff development are good. Training needs are clearly identified in the school development plan and are met through designated funding. All teachers have undertaken training for literacy and numeracy and this has contributed to the effective implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. There are good arrangements for the induction of newly appointed staff. New teachers have a mentor with whom they can share professional concerns and identify targets for development.
- 58 Accommodation is satisfactory. Classrooms are adequate to allow a range of activities to take place, although space is of a premium in some year groups. In particular, classrooms are not big enough to allow more than one computer to support the teaching of information technology. However, this is not having a negative impact on pupils' attainment. The outdoor areas of the school are adequate for the number of pupils on the school role and to support the delivery of the physical education curriculum. The school building and outdoor areas are clean and well maintained. Displays of pupils work make classrooms and corridors more attractive and celebrate their achievements.
- 59 At present the school spends less money than most other schools on resources. While this does not adversely affect standards of attainment, if the school is to continue to raise standards the quality and quantity of resources need to be improved. In particular, there needs to be more computers and software if pupils are to have the regular practice necessary to gain skills at the higher levels. The school has already recognised this need and there are plans to remedy the situation. In geography and history, resources need to be increased if the school is going to teach the new schemes of work. In addition, many of the books in classrooms are beginning to look dog-eared from constant use.

## 2 **The efficiency of the school**

- 60 Generally, the school manages its financial resources satisfactorily. The quality of short term financial planning to support educational initiatives is good but governors are not sufficiently involved at this stage. Current expenditure on different subject areas is linked to priorities in the school development plan. This plan clearly identifies curriculum initiatives, which are fully costed. Appropriate provision is made for evaluating the success of new ventures. Financial planning beyond the current financial year is brief but linked to expected national initiatives. The school has a very large surplus of money in the budget, which has been carried over from previous years. This is to fund major building projects, including creating a computer room. The headteacher feels that this is necessary because there is only space for one computer in each classroom and the ratio of computers to pupils is far lower than the national average. The headteacher and governors need to decide how this surplus will be spent, should this not be possible in the near future, as the money needs to be reduced significantly as a matter of some urgency. Co-ordinators are allocated funds for spending on their subjects but they are not aware of how much money is in the budget.
- 61 At present, governors are not sufficiently involved in setting the budget. In the past this has been done by the headteacher who ensured that targets in the school plan for development were ratified by the finance committee and funded appropriately. In order to meet their statutory obligations towards the school present governors need to decide how to spend the budget. The school keeps appropriate records of spending, which puts the

finance committee in a good position to be able to monitor spending and consider whether the school is getting value for money and what impact spending has on pupils' attainment. The current situation, whereby members of committees are elected annually means that they do not always have a long-term perspective of the school's financial affairs.

- 62 Funds allocated to support pupils with special educational needs are used effectively. A specialist teacher of science is employed part-time. Each class teacher has time to work with pupils in their class with special educational needs while the science teacher takes the rest of the class. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from having extra time with their teacher and all pupils benefit from the good quality teaching of science. Grants for training teachers are spent appropriately, to improve teaching and learning. Not all of the money has been spent in the current year, but next year's forecast is that it will all be used. Donations from the Friends of St Mary's Association are used wisely to add to the facilities available for pupils.
- 63 Financial controls and monitoring of the school's accounts are satisfactory. Regular monthly monitoring of the budget is carried out by the headteacher, but no other governors monitor the budget on a regular basis. There has not been a full financial audit since 1995, which was before the last inspection. Day-to-day administration is satisfactory, but because of difficulties with the present computerised system, a number of invoices have not been paid, even though they date back up to four months. In addition, governors need to ensure that charges made to parents are permissible and that where charges are voluntary this is made clear.
- 64 Staff are deployed thoughtfully so that their experience and expertise are used to good effect in their roles as curriculum co-ordinators and members of the senior management team. Good use is made of the part-time teacher of science to raise standards and enable teachers to give effective individual help to pupils with special needs. Teachers use resources effectively to support teaching and learning. Good use is made of the time allocated to different subjects and lessons start and finish on time.
- 65 Taking into account that standards are high, the school provides a good quality of education, particularly in relation to teaching and that expenditure per pupil is low in comparison with similar schools, the school continues to provide good value for money.

## 2 PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

### 2 AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

- 66 Provision for children under five is good, as reported in the previous report. Since the last inspection, the school has built a 26-place nursery, with 52 children attending part-time either for the morning session or the afternoon session. Most of these children transfer to the reception class in the September of the academic year in which they become five. At the time of the inspection, only seven children in the reception class were under five. The inspection for this age group focused on these children and those in the nursery.
- 67 The majority of children enter the nursery with attainment that is typical for their age. They make good progress, and before they are five, most children have achieved the desirable learning outcomes for young children. Assessments of pupils' knowledge and skills when they enter the reception class show that their speaking skills, their reading and writing skills, and their personal and social skills are above what is expected. Assessments of their listening skills and their use of number suggest that they are in line with most children of this age.
- 68 In personal and social education, children make good progress and achieve standards that are above those expected. Children quickly understand and follow the school routines. They line up sensibly and walk around school in a calm manner. They do not push and understand the need to walk and not run. They hang up their coats on their pegs and go and sit quietly in the classrooms. Most can put on their own coats, hats and shoes when going outside, though some younger children in the nursery require assistance with buttons and laces. They work well individually, in pairs and in small groups, and generally co-operate with each other. Children in the nursery share construction equipment, pass items to one another, and act out their own stories together. They treat games, books and equipment with care and respect. They talk to each other and form friendships with other children. They respond well to the class teachers and support staff, listening carefully to what they have to say. Children in the nursery help to choose their own activities, and hang their name beside the activity they wish to join. This develops independence and the ability to make their own decisions.
- 69 The teaching of personal and social education is good. Class teachers and support staff are very patient with children. Teachers explain class procedures clearly so that children know exactly what is expected of them. They are consistent in approach so that children gain a clear picture of what behaviour is acceptable. As a result, there is a calm working atmosphere in which children feel happy and secure. Class teachers and support staff provide very good role models. They have high expectations of children, and encourage them to organise themselves, with staff helping only when necessary.
- 70 In language and literacy, children make good progress. Inspection evidence shows that, by the time they are five, standards in both speaking and listening are higher than those expected. Most children talk quite fluently about what they are doing, using well-constructed sentences and a growing vocabulary. They offer opinions about what a baby might need, and talk clearly about what they are doing in the sand or water. Children listen attentively for to instructions, stories and rhymes. In whole-school assemblies, they listen carefully and show interest in other pupils' achievements.
- 71 Children in the nursery handle books with care, holding them correctly and turning the pages one at a time, starting from the front. They enjoy listening to stories, and can re-tell a story by referring to the pictures. Most children recognise their own names in print. Older

children are beginning to connect sounds with letters. A minority can read a few simple words. They are beginning to refine their pencil control and to write their letters correctly. By the time they are five, the majority of pupils write their own name and a few simple words correctly.

- 72 The teaching of language and literacy is good. Class teachers and support staff encourage children to hold their pencils correctly and talk about the letters and the marks children make. They encourage them to be aware of sounds and letters, and relate them to familiar words. They take every opportunity to develop children's language through asking a range of open-ended questions. They respond to children's ideas with suitable praise and encouragement. In circle time, individual children share what they have been doing with others, and this has a positive impact on their speaking and presentation skills.
- 73 In mathematical understanding, children make good progress. Inspection evidence shows that, by the time they are five, most children attain standards that are above those expected. Children in the nursery match pictures and shapes, and learn to spot small variations between similar pictures. They count to five, and join in number rhymes teaching numbers to ten. They sort a range of objects, such as baby clothes, by colour and by size, copy simple patterns, and play a variety of number games. By the time they are five, the majority of pupils count to twenty and tell the time on the hour. They work out the capacity of a large bucket by counting the number of small buckets needed to fill it.
- 74 The teaching of mathematical understanding is good. Class teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop children's understanding of number through rhymes, activities and play. Children are taught how to record numbers and are encouraged to talk about numerical information shown on pictures and in stories. There is a good variety of high quality resources to support mathematical understanding, and these are used effectively.
- 75 In knowledge and understanding, children make good progress. By the time they are five, most children attain standards that are above those expected for their age. A range of activities is provided to extend early concepts in science, design and technology, geography, history and information technology. Children talk about their holidays and name the places they have visited. They understand that babies grow up to become children, and point to photographs of themselves as babies. They looked on in awe and amazement as they observed a young baby being bathed. They know that babies and children need food to grow, and they compare the taste of baby foods and their own food. They feel the texture of a range of fabrics, and can identify those that are soft, rough, and smooth. They order the days of the week and know that Tuesday follows Monday. They listen to stories and talk about what they have heard. They use the computer to interact with talking books, and control what appears on the screen by using the mouse to click onto the correct icon.
- 76 The teaching of knowledge and understanding is good. Learning in the nursery and the reception class is closely linked to a range of topics. Class teachers work effectively to link stories and activities to the current area of learning. They introduce appropriate resources that will support learning for young children. Activities linked to the current theme of *babies* in the nursery, for example, include learning about the materials used for baby clothes and their texture, human growth and development, and the texture and taste of different baby foods. Teachers encourage children to find out more for themselves at home. For example, children in the nursery were encouraged to find out about nocturnal animals.
- 77 In creative development, children make good progress. By the time they are five, most children attain standards that are above those expected. Children in the nursery use glue to stick stars and moons onto a cardboard box to create a hanging mobile for a baby. They use rollers and sponges to apply paint to paper. Children use construction toys to build

houses and stars, and use a range of fabrics to make a toy. They act out their own stories using model figures in the sand tray. Children show pleasure in their work and are pleased with the results. Children's work is valued and is displayed effectively. Children enjoy singing simple songs, and enjoy playing different percussion instruments to accompany the singing of *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*. There is an imaginative play area in the nursery, and this provides the children with a valuable opportunity to dress up for role-play, and to develop their skills of communication and co-operation.

78 The teaching of creative development is good. Class teachers and support staff provide many opportunities for children to develop their creative ideas through drawing, painting and model making. They encourage children to express their feelings, and provide a range of suitable materials to challenge and extend children's learning.

79 In physical development, children make good progress. By the time they are five, most children reach standards that are above those expected. Children use a range of equipment and materials to develop their physical skills. They learn to control their fingers by using scissors to cut out pieces of fabric, and sticking these onto cardboard with glue. They work with coloured play-dough and roll, squeeze, push and kneed the dough before they cut out shapes. They use pencils and crayons efficiently and safely in their creative activities. In physical education activities, children learn to control their bodies and to move their arms and legs independently. They learn to skip around the circle, and use appropriate equipment to develop balancing, climbing and jumping skills. They use wheeled vehicles and tricycles to develop their physical skills when playing outdoors in the nursery.

80 The teaching of physical development is good. Class teachers and support staff explain how to use suitable equipment. They show children how to hold scissors and how to cut successfully. In physical education activities they give plenty of opportunities for children to improve their co-ordination and balance.

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## 2 ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

### 2 English

81 The results of National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 show that more pupils than in most other schools reached the expected level 4 and far more reached the higher level 5. The school exceeded the target it had set for raising standards. Over the past three years, test results have fluctuated but have remained above the national average and girls have performed better than boys. This year's results show a marked increase in the number of pupils who reach the higher level 5. When compared with similar schools, pupils' results are average in English tests.

82 The results of National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 show that far more pupils than in most other schools reached the expected level 2 in reading and writing. The proportion of pupils who reached level 3 was very high in reading and far more pupils than in most schools reached this level in writing. Over the past three years, standards have remained above the national average. This year's results show an increase in the number of pupils reaching the higher level in reading and writing. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls in reading or writing. In some years girls do better and in others boys perform better than girls. When compared with similar schools, pupils' results are above average in reading and writing.

83 Inspection findings are that by the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils achieve levels that are

well above expectations for their age. Higher attaining pupils do very well. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils talk confidently about their work and the techniques they have used to make their writing more interesting to readers. In discussions about issues, such as conserving the world's resources, average and higher attaining pupils put forward reasoned arguments for their opinions and use a wide and technical vocabulary. Lower attaining pupils describe what they have read and talk enthusiastically about the type of books and literature they prefer. Pupils of all abilities enjoy reading books and magazines and have favourite authors and genres. They compare novels with film versions of the same story and give personal responses to both that are thoughtful and show how well they understand different types of writing. Average and higher attaining pupils read expressively and fluently; this was particularly noticeable when pupils read from their own writing and poetry. They talk about plot and characters and make reference to the text when explaining their views. Lower attaining pupils read at levels expected for their age. They locate information in reference books and comment critically on how the language and style of writing differ from those used in fiction. Pupils' writing is a particular strength of attainment. Average and higher attaining pupils write eloquently, using a wide range of styles to write stories, reports and accounts from the point of view of characters. The best example of this is evident in the beautifully written work that has gone to make up a class book about Shakespeare's play *Macbeth*. In this, pupils of all abilities have written poems, plays and writing in the voice and style of Shakespeare and the characters from the play. Words are chosen for dramatic effect and language reflects the style of the time. When writing, all pupils follow the rules of grammar and spell accurately. Higher attaining pupils often have very good styles of handwriting. In all of their English work, pupils with special educational needs achieve standards that are close to expectations for their age. The difference in their work is that in reading they are less expressive and confident and their writing is not always as long or as detailed as that of average or higher attaining pupils.

- 84 Inspection findings show that by the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils reach levels that are well above expectations for their age. Standards are higher than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils talk confidently and use standard English to explain their work and offer opinions. In social situations they talk enthusiastically about their school. In lessons, pupils listen attentively to what their teacher says and try hard to use the same language that she does. This happened when one pupil used the term *alliteration* to describe the title of a story, after she had heard the teacher use it. When reading, higher attaining pupils read a range of texts easily and accurately. Average attaining pupils are also accurate but read less expressively. Lower attaining pupils use several strategies to help them read unfamiliar words and are generally reading at levels expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs are less sure about blending sounds and do not always use picture clues but read simple passages slowly and fairly accurately. The writing of higher attaining pupils is clear and well organised; they are creative in their use of words. This was evident in the poems they wrote about a *class cat*. Average attaining pupils punctuate their writing and most words are spelled correctly. Pupils' handwriting is generally consistent in size and joined, although lower attaining pupils do not do this as often as average or higher attaining pupils.
- 85 Pupils in both key stages make good use of their literacy skills in other subjects, which is one of the reasons why standards are above average. Pupils read in many situations. They seek information from reference books and articles in geography and history and use CD-ROMs if they are available. Pupils write in almost every subject; whether it is directions about how to use a computer program in information technology or their thoughts about art and artists, pupils put them down on paper. Pupils in Key Stage 2 use computers to draft and publish work of a high standard, for example, their school newsletter and poetry for a



class book.

- 86 Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and go on to make steady progress in Key Stage 2. This is better than at the time of the previous report when pupils in lower Key Stage 2 were not making satisfactory progress. The early, rapid progress is a result of good teaching and the impact of the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils get a good start to reading and writing in the reception class and quickly learn the sounds and shapes of letters, which helps them to read and write. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn a widening range of strategies to help them read. Their writing improves as a result of many opportunities they have to write in other subjects and handwriting gets better with practice. The early literacy skills, developed in Key Stage 1, are built upon as pupils get older. They widen their knowledge of books and authors and learn how to use library systems to find the books they need. Pupils gain confidence in speaking to the whole class and use an ever-widening vocabulary in discussions about their work.
- 87 In both key stages, pupils with special educational needs, whose attainments in reading and writing are slightly below those expected for their age, make steady progress because work is planned to match their abilities in subjects across the curriculum. When pupils work in small groups with their teacher they make good progress towards the targets identified in their educational plans.
- 88 Pupils in both key stages have positive attitudes to their work in English. They enjoy the structure and challenge that literacy lessons provide and settle quickly into a routine of work focused on reading and writing. Most pupils work hard, maintain high levels of interest and produce good amounts of finished work. Throughout the school, pupils behave well in literacy lessons. They listen attentively to stories and instructions and get on with their work sensibly and quietly. The youngest pupils work at activities designed to develop the skills of reading and spelling with very little adult supervision. Pupils show initiative in getting what they need to help them with their work, for examples, dictionaries or thesauruses. They work co-operatively in small groups or pairs from an early age and older pupils are capable of debating points and reaching agreement about their work without consultation with the teacher. This was evident when pupils in the Year 6 class had to agree what bullet points to present to the class in their work about using up the world's resources and eating beef burgers.
- 89 Three-quarters of the teaching is good. Of the remaining quarter, half is very good and half is satisfactory. There is more good teaching in Key Stage 2 than at the time of the previous inspection. A strength of teaching, which underlies the good progress pupils make in Key Stage 1, comes from teachers' clear understanding and ability to teach the basic skills of reading and writing. They implement the National Literacy Strategy to good effect on the learning of pupils of different age and ability. In Key Stage 2, a strength of the teaching is in the encouragement teachers give through praise and very thorough marking. This produces eleven-year-olds who are aware of their own strengths and of areas of their work that need improving. Teachers in both key stages are very good at assessing what pupils can do. They do this by constantly asking questions to find out what pupils know and making very good use of the results of tests to plan work at appropriate levels. All teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do, which are evident in the challenging work they provide for higher attaining pupils and the encouragement they give to pupils with special educational needs. They plan work that is interesting to pupils and are good at ensuring that literacy lessons support learning in other subjects. In addition, teachers plan many opportunities for social development, for example, pupils in the reception class worked together to hang a simple sentence in the correct order on a washing line and pupils in the Year 6 class worked in pairs to analyse styles of writing. Teachers make appropriate use of homework to support pupils' learning. Pupils are

expected to read at home and have spellings and written homework each week. Pupils with special educational needs are often given work to do at home with their parents.

## 2 Mathematics

- 90 The results of National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 show that more pupils than in most other schools reached the expected level 4 and far more reached the higher level 5. The school exceeded the target it had set for raising standards. Over the past three years test results have fluctuated but have remained above the national average. This year's results show a marked increase in the number of pupils who reach the higher level 5. In the three years 1996 to 1998 girls performed better than boys. When compared with similar schools, pupils' results in mathematics tests are average.
- 91 The results of National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 show that all pupils reached the expected level in mathematics. The proportion of pupils who reached level 3 was very high. Over the past three years, test results have fluctuated in mathematics but have remained above the national average. This year's results show an increase in the number of pupils reaching the higher level. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, pupils' results in mathematics tests are well above average.
- 92 Inspection findings are similar. By the end of Key Stage 2, almost all pupils reach the expected level of attainment and a large proportion reach higher levels. Almost all pupils have a very firm understanding of number. Average attaining pupils work accurately and quickly and use sensible strategies to solve problems involving all four number operations. Pupils convert fractions to mixed numbers and use two decimal places in addition and subtraction. They recognise the equivalence between percentage, fractions and decimals and fractions of numbers and quantities. In shape and measures, higher and average attaining pupils know the formula for finding the area of a rectangle and use this to find the area of more complex shapes. They know the relationship between metric measures such as kilometres and metres. Higher attainers measure angles in polygons and convert scale measurements from maps into kilometres and metres and also record this in decimal form. Lower attaining pupils estimate length with reasonable accuracy. In data handling, pupils use and interpret pie charts. Inspection findings confirm very high attainment in Key Stage 1. Average attaining pupils have very good mental recall of number bonds to 10 and higher attaining pupils work up to and beyond twenty. Most understand the value of each digit in hundreds, tens and units. Lower attaining pupils work with smaller numbers and have a firm understanding of addition by combining sets. All read and write the *plus*, *minus* and *equals* sign. Average attaining pupils estimate the lengths of objects sensibly in centimetres. Many then measure accurately, others reasonably. Higher attainers work more quickly and accurately and learn concepts before others are ready. For instance, they begin to understand how to construct bar charts. Lower attainers take more time to consolidate their learning, but often attempt the same work as others. For instance, most can add tens to tens and units.
- 93 Throughout the school pupils use their numeracy skills and mathematical vocabulary in other subjects. In science, history and geography they record the results of investigations as charts and bar or line graphs. They sometimes use information technology to support investigations.
- 94 Most pupils make good progress in developing mathematical skills. From early skills in counting to 10 or 20 as under fives, pupils expand their understanding of number and

place value to work with decimals by the time they are eleven. In Year 1, pupils add mentally two numbers within 20. By the time they are seven they have a good knowledge of the ten times table and have developed a wide range of mental strategies. Thus at the beginning of Key Stage 2 they can halve and double numbers quickly to 20. They make rapid gains in their ability to find fractions of quantities. They build on this knowledge well in Year 4 to gain a good understanding of the equivalence of fractions. By the time pupils are in Year 5 their ability to use metres and centimetres is extended to recognise and use the relationship between metres, centimetres and millimetres. Higher attainers use scale to find distances in kilometres. Pupils' use of mathematical vocabulary is extended to include terms such as *radius*, *diameter*, *parallel* and *perpendicular*. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in lessons and often make good progress when they work in a small group with their teacher.

- 95 Pupils' attitudes to their work are good throughout the school and even better towards the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils enjoy mathematics and are keen to learn. In both key stages they rise enthusiastically to the challenge of mental arithmetic. They show real pleasure when they answer correctly and are not afraid to get an answer wrong. Older pupils are confident and logical when explaining how they have worked things out. Pupils in all classes concentrate on their work and try hard to be neat. They relate well to one another and with their teacher. Their good behaviour has a positive effect on the pace of work and the quality of learning.
- 96 Two-thirds of the teaching is good and the remainder very good or sound in equal proportions. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject underpin the success of their teaching. They give priority to numeracy and understand their responsibilities towards ensuring that pupils become fully numerate. With recent training they have successfully adapted their planning and approach to meet the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers give clear explanations of the work to be done and make good use of examples and demonstrations. They have high expectations of their pupils' performance and behaviour. Good, active, direct teaching during the challenging tasks keeps pupils' levels of motivation high and lessons move at a good pace. With skilful questioning teachers check whether pupils understand before moving on to the next stage of learning. In the very best teaching a high degree of challenge with thorough support for lower attaining pupils enabled them to make good progress in understanding fractions.
- 97 The school gives due priority to the establishment of the National Numeracy Strategy. Staff training has been undertaken and more is in hand. A new mathematics scheme has been effectively incorporated into curricular planning to lay the basis for lessons. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment are very good. Standardised tests are set and the results analysed for gaps in teaching and learning. Teachers' planning of future work is then carried out in the light of this knowledge. Pupils' progression of learning is ensured through the checking of teachers' planning against pupils' attainment. There are, however, no opportunities provided for the monitoring of teaching in the classroom. The monitoring of the mathematics curriculum is carried out by the headteacher and deputy head. The roles of the subject co-ordinator and the governing body to support and monitor the mathematics curriculum are not sufficiently developed. The success of the implementation of the Numeracy Strategy is due to be evaluated at the end of the academic year and the findings presented to the governors. The school has good capacity to maintain standards in its provision for the mathematics curriculum.

2  
**Science**

- 98 The results of National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 show that far more pupils than in most other schools reached the expected level 4 and the proportion of pupils who reached level 5 was very high. Over the past three years test results have fluctuated but have remained above the national average. This year's results show a marked increase in the number of pupils who reach the higher level 5. In the three years 1996 to 1998 boys performed better than boys. When compared with similar schools, pupils' results in science tests are average.
- 99 Teachers' assessments of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 show that the number of pupils who reached the expected level 2 in science was above average. The proportion of pupils who reached level 3 was very high although it was lower than last year. When compared with similar schools, pupils' results are average.
- 100 Inspection findings are similar; by the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils achieve standards that are well above expectations for their age and higher attaining pupils do very well. Pupils design and carry out their own investigations. They handle equipment safely, make informed predictions, record and analyse their results, and draw conclusions. Pupils in Year 6, for example, performed their own experiments to determine the organic content of a range of soil types. They conduct fair tests to observe the solubility of different types of sugar, and plot their results as bar graphs. They understand the differences between plants and animals, and use keys to classify and name a range of creatures. Pupils in Year 5 carry out investigations to determine whether sound travels through solids, liquids and gases, and use a CD-ROM encyclopaedia to research information on how the telephone works. Pupils in Year 4 made their own switch and added it to a simple circuit to turn a light bulb on and off, while those in Year 3 carried out investigations to determine which materials are transparent, translucent or opaque. Pupils with special educational needs achieve levels that are close to expectations for their age but often write in less detail.
- 101 Inspection findings show that by the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils reach levels that are well above expectations for their age. Pupils learn how seeds are dispersed, and observe that plants need water and light to grow. They sort common materials into those that are natural and man-made, and observe their texture and rigidity. They carry out simple experiments to discover which materials a magnet attracts, and investigate how fast ice melts when placed in different parts of the classroom. They investigate the habitats of different creatures, and mix the ingredients of a cake to observe changes that occur before and after heating them in an oven.
- 102 Pupils make good progress at both key stages. They progress from simple sorting of rough and smooth objects in Year 1, to classifying objects that are rigid, flexible and elastic in Year 2. They progress from classifying metals according to their magnetic properties in Year 3 to a detailed investigation of the effect of different water temperatures on the speed that sugar dissolves in Year 6. The good emphasis placed on investigative science at both key stages ensures that both higher and lower attaining pupils make good progress. Pupils' investigative abilities develop from making observations in Years 1 and 2, to designing and carrying out detailed investigations in Years 5 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support and make good progress at both key stages.
- 103 Pupils' attitudes to work in science are good at both key stages. Pupils are keen to take responsibility for their own investigations. They listen carefully to instructions, and work conscientiously in pairs and in small groups. Pupils are very well behaved and have good relationships with one another and with their teachers. They share equipment and tasks sensibly, and co-operate well to produce reliable results in tests and experiments.

104 The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. A strength of the teaching is the good use made of the subject co-ordinator to teach all classes for one lesson a week. This works especially well and is a significant factor in pupils' high attainment. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject, although very occasionally they use incorrect scientific language, which is in common everyday use, when explaining ideas. Lessons are planned well, with clear learning objectives related to the National Curriculum programmes of study. The previous report suggested that more able pupils were not fully achieving their potential. Expectations are now suitably high for pupils of all abilities, and teachers provide suitable tasks and more difficult extension work for the most able pupils. Teachers expect, and achieve, high standards of good behaviour. Teachers use a wide range of teaching methods and good use is made of practical resources. There is a very good emphasis at both key stages on learning through investigative work, and good use is made of detailed questioning to extend pupils' observation and analysis. The measurement and recording of observations assist pupils to develop their numeracy skills. Homework is occasionally used to consolidate pupils' learning. Pupils' work is assessed regularly on a day-to-day basis, and pupil's knowledge and understanding are assessed very well at the end of each topic and when examples of investigative work are assessed each term. Very good use is made of lesson evaluations in teachers' *science diaries* to ensure that class teachers' science lessons build on the work covered by the science specialist. National Curriculum test results have been analysed thoroughly to determine areas of the curriculum in need of further development. This information is used well to plan appropriate work for individual pupils. Good use is made of a wide range of teaching resources for investigations, but there are, for example, few suitable information books, models of human organs, posters, or videos for pupils to use for independent research at Key Stage 2. Visits to the seashore, a planetarium and a local quarry extend pupils' experience of practical science, and older pupils gain further practical experience when they attend the science workshops organised by North Tyneside College. Visits by the school nurse and a police officer assist pupils' understanding of growing up and the misuse of drugs.

## 2 OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

### 2 Information technology

105 Pupils' attainment in information technology is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, and above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.

106 By the age of eleven, pupils use information technology to communicate information in a variety of ways. They use word processing software easily to draft and publish work of a high standard and combine graphic images to illustrate the text. The best example of this is the school newspaper, which is written, edited and published by pupils using their skills in desktop publishing. Pupils recognise that using desktop publishing allows them to produce a newspaper that is more glossy and attractive to readers than if they used other printing methods. Pupils also communicate via the Internet and through using electronic mail. They have begun to send electronic mail to pupils in a school in the United States of America. Pupils are also developing a school website, which includes graphics, photographs of staff and pupils, and links to the school newspaper. Pupils make good use of information technology to handle information. They add the details of pupils' personal characteristics into a database, and interrogate the database to investigate patterns in the data. Pupils use spreadsheets to store numerical information, and use the automatic calculator to add up the figures. They use computers to draw a line graph of daily

temperature observations. Following a visit to a local supermarket, pupils understand how barcodes work and how they help with the control and audit of stock. Pupils with special educational needs arising from difficulties with reading and writing achieve similar levels in their understanding of how to use information technology but sometimes need more time to produce written reports.

- 107 By the age of seven, pupils use the mouse effectively to click on items and to interact with talking books. They use the keyboard to type simple sentences, to amend mistakes, and to print out corrected documents. When handling data, they put in data on their favourite colours, and print out pictograms of their favourite cars and pets. They use a simple program to draw colourful pictures of people and houses.
- 108 Pupils are beginning to use information technology to assist their learning in other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 2 use word processing to describe places they have visited on holiday. Pupils in Year 4 print out recipes for vegetable soup and tiramisu, and design posters to encourage the conservation of energy resources. Pupils in Year 5 use a CD-ROM encyclopaedia in science to research information on how the telephone works and for independent research about Victorian times in history. Pupils in Year 6 use the Internet in geography to find weather satellite photographs.
- 109 Most pupils, including those with special needs, make sound progress in developing information technology skills at Key Stage 1, and good progress at Key Stage 2. They gain confidence in using the keyboard for word-processing and desktop publishing. They progress from putting in simple text in Year 2 to producing an attractively designed newspaper in Year 6. They progress from using the mouse to interact with talking books in the reception class, to using the mouse to cut and paste and to change fonts and font sizes in Years 5 and 6.
- 110 Pupils are keen to use computers. They listen carefully to their teacher's instructions, and watch intently what is happening on the monitor. They are keen to contribute during lessons, and are eager to answer questions. They behave well, and co-operate sensibly when using computers. They concentrate fully on their work, and treat the equipment with due respect.
- 111 The quality of teaching is sound at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. As a response to recommendations in the previous report, teachers have been trained and now have suitable expertise to teach the subject. Lessons are planned well so that pupils develop skills in information technology alongside learning about other subjects. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 learn to use word processing software during literacy lessons. A strength of the teaching is the good use made of the limited number of computers in the school. They are used almost constantly, as pupils practise the skills they have learned. However, teachers realise that in order to continue to raise standards pupils need to have more regular access to computers than they have at present. Visits to the local Education Technology Centre enable pupils to get additional practical experience of using computers and there are long-term plans to build a computer suite. Owing to the shortage of computers, pupils are often taught how computer software works, rather than using computers themselves. Teachers have made considerable improvements to the system for assessing what pupils can do, which was also an issue at the time of the previous inspection. Good use is made of day-to-day assessments of pupils' skills to plan lessons and there are plans for introducing a more formal system of assessment in the near future. This puts the school in a sound position to be able to identify gaps in pupils' learning and determine further training needed for teachers.

112 There have been considerable improvements to the quality of provision since the previous inspection, when it was identified as a key issue for development. There is now an up-to-date computer in each classroom and resources for teaching control technology have recently been bought. Teachers plan to teach this later in the year, which means that all aspects of the curriculum are now being taught. A helpful policy document and detailed scheme of work, based on national guidance, ensure that pupils learn more complicated skills in a logical order. Current priorities for development are to make use of a Telematics project to raise standards in geography and information technology. All of this puts the school in a sound position to maintain standards. One area that needs further attention is that governors do not give any details of the information technology curriculum in the school prospectus.

## 2 **Art and design and technology**

113 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainments are in line with expectations for their age in the techniques and skills they use to produce pictures and models in art and design and technology. The knowledge they have of art styles and artists is beyond expectations for their age.

114 Most pupils express ideas and feelings in their pictures and create images that are interesting and of good quality. Colour is chosen for its effect in images and designs, for example, in their work on contrasts a number of pupils chose red and black to depict war and calmer pastel colours to give the impression of peace. Their recorded observations are generally accurate and show pattern and texture in the images they portray. The strength of pupils' attainment is in the knowledge they have of various styles of art. They talk knowledgeably about realism, impressionism and modern art and about their own preferences. Most go beyond this to talk about the artists themselves, for example, pupils in the Year 4 class talked about how Matisse worked less on sculpture after he began to suffer from arthritis in his hands.

115 In their work on design and technology, pupils produce realistic designs that include lists of materials needed and tools required to carry out the work. Most pupils give clear, step-by-step instructions about how to make their models. They clarify ideas as they work and after evaluating their products make sensible suggestions as to how they would improve their design or model if they were to make it again. Pupils incorporate their numeracy skills into design and technology. They measure materials and test to see if they are sturdy enough. Pupils make models that have moving parts and incorporate levers and pulley mechanisms into them. Although pupils in Key Stage 1 decorate and finish their glove puppets attractively, pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 do not always pay the same attention to their models; some are painted but do not show the same level of detail.

116 Pupils make good use of their literacy and numeracy skills in art. Pupils in Year 6 write at length about the history of printing as a means of mass-producing copies of writing and pictures. Pupils in the Year 5 class use their knowledge of symmetry in designs in the style of William Morris. In addition, pupils in both key stages incorporate measurement into both art and design and technology.

117 Pupils make steady progress in designing and making pictures and models in both key stages. They make good progress in gaining knowledge and understanding of art and artists as a result of good teaching in this aspect of their work. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn to use a range of techniques and materials in their artwork. These are extended in Key Stage 2 where pupils gain understanding about how to use pastels and charcoal to

produce a range of effects in their drawings. Their knowledge of art improves considerably as they get older. Pupils in Key Stage 1 know the names and work of a small number of artists, but by the time they are in Year 4 pupils are able to talk confidently about the images of Andy Warhol. Pupils' designs improve as they get older. From simple pictures in reception class, they go on to produce far more detailed drawings by the time they are in Key Stage 2.

- 118 Pupils show very good attitudes to the work in art and design and technology. They are clearly interested and absorbed in their activities, work hard to complete them and take a pride in their achievement. They work well both independently and co-operatively, sharing and choosing resources sensibly. Their behaviour is very good.
- 119 In half of the lessons seen, teaching was good. The remainder was satisfactory. A strength of the teaching of art is the knowledge that teachers have of artists and their work. They ensure that pupils have opportunities to study a wide variety of artistic styles and art from other cultures. This is a significant factor in pupils' high attainment in this area of their work. Teachers also have a firm understanding of how to teach the skills of design and technology. In both subjects, they plan work that is progressively more complex and builds on previous skills as pupils get older. Throughout the school, teachers expect pupils to try hard and encourage them to be expressive and confident in their artwork and ensure that models resemble their designs. This results in some of the good quality work that teachers take care to display in classrooms. Clear planning ensures that art is used effectively to support pupils' work in other subjects and opportunities are provided for research and the use of computerised software packages. Efficient organisational strategies result in a pleasant and enjoyable atmosphere for learning in lessons in both key stages, which further contributes to pupils' social development. Teachers are good at assessing and recording what pupils can do in both subjects. Pupils have opportunities to talk about their work with teachers and records, samples and photographs provide useful evidence for sharing pupils' attainment with parents and writing annual reports.



## 2 **Geography**

- 120 By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment in geography is above expectations for their age. They have good knowledge and understanding of mountain environments around the world. They know that the effects of altitude and climate can result in a tropical mountain base, temperate slopes and a cold, snowy summit. Pupils' research skills are well developed. They use secondary sources of information such as books and photographs. They use information technology to gain access to additional sources of information on the Internet to find out about varying weather patterns of mountain environments.
- 121 Pupils make good progress through the school. Those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Pupils in the reception class talk about features they pass on the way to school and use a picture map play mat as an introduction to mapwork. Later they begin to develop their research and recording skills when they tally their means of transport to school and use information technology to construct a pictogram chart of their findings. Throughout Key Stage 1 pupils' geographical knowledge is steadily built up as they follow the real life travels of Barnaby Bear, their class soft toy. He is regularly taken on holiday, complete with packed suitcase, by road, rail, sea and air by pupils, teachers and friends of the school. By the time they are seven pupils carry out a whole-school survey of holiday destinations to the seaside, countryside or town and draw bar charts of the results. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2. In Year 3 they make good use of their own knowledge of holidays and compare temperature and food with home. Pupils in Year 4 build up their mapping skills well in their confident use of four figure grid references. The work of pupils in Year 5 shows clear progress in the development of mapping skills when they draw accurate, annotated plans of the school, showing drainage. In their study of the water cycle they show understanding of the problems caused by polluted water.
- 122 Pupils' attitudes to their work are good and even very good. They show great interest and in their curiosity ask further questions as they work. They work hard and take care to present their work well. They listen to their teacher and one another with respect.
- 123 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Their enthusiasm is reflected in pupils' interest. They give lively and interesting introductions to lessons and continue to motivate pupils with good, direct teaching during activities. They have high expectations and set challenging and purposeful tasks, encouraging pupils to think out problems. They maintain firm but friendly control and provide a busy working atmosphere. In one lesson, where in their enthusiasm pupils became a little noisy, the teacher restored a calmer atmosphere easily. Teachers ensure that pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are used to good effect. They provide pupils with opportunities for research and to write factual reports and stories. They develop pupils' skills in using graphs, charts and figures to illustrate their work.
- 124 A strength of the school's provision for geography is the planned use of fieldwork. For instance, after preparatory work on improving the environment pupils in Year 4 made a field visit to a local beauty spot. In Year 6 pupils undertake a residential field study. The school's procedures for assessment and its use for the planning of future work are very good. This makes a positive impact on the quality of planning and on pupils' attainment.
- 125 The school has improved standards in geography since the previous inspection and has good capacity to continue to do so.

## 2 History

- 126 By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment in history is above expectations for their age. They have a firm sense of the past and of differences and similarities with the present. They demonstrate good factual knowledge of aspects of Britain since the 1930s. Pupils know of the lives of people at different levels of society, including changes in the roles of men and women and in fashion and music. Their well-developed research skills enable them to select and combine information from various sources, including information technology. They record and present their findings impressively. Pupils have begun to understand the impact of past generations on their own lives and times.
- 127 Most pupils make good progress in the development of their historical knowledge, understanding and skills throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The youngest pupils develop a sense of time on a daily basis when they consider what they did the previous day, week or year. They develop an understanding of sources of evidence when they handle objects, such as flat irons, and compare them with modern steam irons. By the time they are seven they have acquired a good knowledge of the past beyond living memory. They research from a range of sources of information in their study of the life and times of Florence Nightingale. They use books, photographs, video and the human resource of a district nurse. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2. They begin to understand the importance of archaeological evidence. Site visits to Segedunum Roman Fort and Bede's World introduce them to the reality of the distant past, as they consider the evidence of artefacts and buildings. Pupils in Year 5 develop an empathy with children of Victorian times. They gain a valuable insight into the morals and values of the times.
- 128 Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are used effectively in history. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities for research and to write and record in various ways. The use of time lines helps pupils to develop an understanding of the concept of *long ago* and the duration of eras.
- 129 Pupils' attitudes to their learning in history are good, overall. In one lesson in Key Stage 2 their response was exemplary. In their keenness to answer questions they also very willingly listened to others and showed sustained concentration during their activity. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are confident in sharing their ideas, but a few call out in class discussion and some others work noisily in their groups.
- 130 The quality of teaching is good in both key stages, with a third that is satisfactory in Key Stage 1. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject, which enables them to make lessons interesting for pupils. They plan work thoroughly and provide a good range of resources to help pupils with their work. Generally, their provision of challenging work and positive support for learning maintains pupils' interest and motivation. For instance, good direct teaching throughout one lesson enabled pupils to gain an empathy with children of a past period, both in discussion and in their work. In another lesson, however, the teacher's insufficient support of an unstructured activity led to a loss of drive and pace of work. A strength of the teaching is the good planned use of visits to museums and archaeological sites to support and enrich pupils' learning. The school's procedures for assessment and its use for planning work are very good.
- 131 The school has improved standards in history since the previous inspection and is in a good position to maintain this trend.

## 2 Music

- 132 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is above average in composing, performing, and appraising music. Pupils in Year 6 have recently been successful in a regional competition to compose a song for the millennium. Standards are as high as at the time of the previous inspection. This is a result of good teaching and tuition and the many opportunities pupils have to play instruments and sing in after-school clubs.
- 133 By the time they are eleven, pupils have experienced a wide range of music from different times and places and compare the styles and instruments used. They talk knowledgeably about how Jupiter, from Holst's *Planets Suite*, which they hear in Year 3, differs from modern African music by Ladysmith Black Mambazo. Pupils recognise many musical styles, including blues and ballad rhythms, and compare country and western and Afro-Caribbean music. Most pupils read musical notation and those who have tuition in playing musical instruments do this easily because of the extra practise they get in school and when they play their instruments at home. When composing or reading musical scores, pupils use appropriate technical terms, such as *piano* and *fortissimo* correctly. Most pupils sing well and know many songs and hymns by heart. When singing, they vary the dynamics of their voices when shown the musical signs for crescendo and diminuendo. They sing four-part rounds and maintain clear diction of each part and keep two different melodies together in counterpoint.
- 134 Pupils in both key stages make good progress in all aspects of music. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn to sing simple songs from memory and play percussion instruments to accompany their singing and to represent different sounds. By the time they are in the Year 2 class, pupils use chimes, bars and Indian bells to express different moods in the story of *Hairy McClairy*. They widen the repertoire of songs that they know by heart, so that they sing local folk songs in Year 3 and go on to use a variety of percussion instruments to compost their own music in the class in Year 4. From early compositions in Key Stage 1, when pupils draw simple rhythmic patterns using picture notation, pupils in the Year 5 class compose their own tunes and those in the Year 6 class use musical techniques such as echoes, layering and rhythmic vocal backing in their composing. Pupils who have extra tuition to play musical instruments, such as violin, make good progress in learning to play their instruments.
- 135 Pupils enjoy listening to and making music. The youngest pupils sway and bob their heads in time to music and join in happily with action rhymes and songs. Older pupils listen attentively to music that is played in lessons or in assemblies and the popularity of lunchtime clubs and the choir is testament to the pleasure they get from performing with others. Pupils of all ages enjoy singing and concentrate on their own part when singing songs with two or three parts. Older pupils take responsibility for getting out and moving musical instruments and make sure that they are put away sensibly. Pupils who learn to play instruments show their dedication by practising at home. Those who sing in the choir are proud of their achievements.
- 136 The school benefits from the musical talents of several teachers and consequently most of the teaching in lessons and groups is good. Teachers have a firm understanding of how to teach music. They plan work carefully and make good use of the scheme of work to provide activities that are interesting to pupils and also build on skills that pupils have already mastered. For example, pupils in the reception class learn to clap and beat a rhythm and later in the key stage pupils are taught to listen to contrasting rhythms and repeat the different rhythmic patterns. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to hear and make music, which is a significant factor in the above average standards

achieved by many pupils. There are two lunchtime clubs, a choir and additional tuition for pupils wanting to learn to play a musical instrument. Music is played as pupils come into and leave assembly, although the composer is not always made known to pupils. Music lessons and hymn practice are brisk and pacy. Teachers do not need to discipline pupils; their shared enthusiasm is sufficient to keep pupils motivated and ensure that they behave very well. Since the previous inspection, teachers have made considerable improvements to the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment. The system used is now very good. Pupils are assessed regularly and records provide accurate information for writing annual reports to parents and make a good starting point for planning work. All of this puts the school in a good position to continue to maintain high standards.

- 137 Music makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. It is used well to help pupils express their spiritual response during collective worship. Pupils gain confidence and self-esteem from singing in the annual pantomime or nativity play. Similarly, singing and playing at church services or for members of the community strengthens the school's partnership with the community and gives pupils the chance to think about their own role outside of school.

## 2 **Physical education**

- 138 By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment in physical education is above expectations for eleven-year-olds. This standard has been maintained since the previous inspection. Older pupils experience a full range of activities in all aspects of the subject; games, gymnastics, dance, athletics, outdoor and adventurous activities and swimming. They understand the principles of a range of games such as netball and football, which are offered to both sexes. They have good tactical skills of attack, defence and avoidance, which they use to good effect in team games. They also have a good understanding of the value of fair play in games.

- 139 Pupils' progress varies through the school. In reception class they make good progress. In Key Stage 1, progress is satisfactory and in Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs have equal opportunities to progress at the same rate as others. In reception class pupils quickly develop their ability to demonstrate different body shapes. They are already well aware of the need for safety and the importance of warming up and cooling down activities. By the end of Key Stage 1 they perform the basic actions of travelling on the floor using small and large body parts, turning and balancing. As they move through the school into Year 3 their progress quickens again. They build well on their ability to travel in different directions and speeds. In year 5 pupils make very good progress when they practise, refine and repeat a sequence containing a turn, roll, balance and jump.

- 140 Pupils' attitudes to physical education are very good. All pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons. This is particularly noticeable in reception class and Key Stage 2, where they strive very diligently to improve their performance. Pupils listen very closely to their teacher and follow instructions carefully, with due regard for safety. They support each other well in pairs, groups and teams. In games they perform enthusiastically and fairly. They evaluate other pupils' performance in a considerate and positive manner.

- 141 The quality of teaching is good overall. It ranges from almost half that is sound, some that is good, to almost half that is very good and even excellent. Teachers are confident and have good knowledge of the subject. They have high expectations and make positive demands of their pupils. Their good management skills and firm control enable activities to

be carried out safely and effectively from start to finish. The best teaching challenges pupils to think deeply to solve problems and improve their performance. It shows very good use of demonstrations to lead pupils forward and for the teacher to assess performance.

142

The school offers a very good range of extra-curricular activities, which are very popular with pupils. A residential visit for pupils in Year 6 enriches their knowledge and experience of outdoor and adventurous activities. This provision extends pupils' experience and makes an important contribution to their personal development.

**The inspection of the school included a focused view of swimming, which is reported below.**

143 By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment is above expectations for their age. Almost all pupils swim at least 25 metres unaided, competently and safely. Most swim much farther. They have confidence in water and know how to rest, float and adopt support positions. They use a variety of means of propulsion with arms or legs or both, on their front or back. They understand the principles of water safety and survival. Swimming instruction is very good. Instructors are knowledgeable and well qualified. Lessons are planned well and instructors provide the school with copies of their planning. They ensure that pupils listen carefully to instructions and that they follow them safely. Pupils make very good progress in lessons. Less able swimmers receive support matched to their ability and level of confidence in a learner pool. Pupils receive swimming tuition from Year 3 onwards in half-term blocks in rota. The summer term is allocated entirely to those pupils in Key Stage 2 considered to be in need of extra support. The duration of each lesson is thirty minutes. These arrangements are suitable and enable pupils to reach high standards. Swimming is planned and assessed as part of the physical education curriculum. Teachers keep up-to-date records of pupils' attainment and progress.

144 The school has maintained high standards in physical education since the previous inspection and has the capacity to continue to do so.

2

## 2 PART C: INSPECTION DATA

### 2 SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 145 Prior to the inspection, a team of four inspectors looked closely at the school's documentation. This included policies and planning documents and assessment information for each subject and for pupils with special educational needs. In addition, inspectors were given the school's aims and targets, financial details, the minutes of meetings of governors and information for parents and arrangements for child protection and health and safety.
- 146 All parents were invited to give their opinions about the school at a meeting with the registered inspector and by completing a questionnaire. Fifty parents attended the meeting and 103 returned questionnaires. Parents' views were analysed and are included in the report. Members of the governing body also met members of the inspection team to explain their work.
- 147 During the inspection, lessons, assemblies, after school clubs and registration times were observed. Over four days, inspectors studied the recorded work of a number of children from each year group. The sample, chosen by teachers, included the work of low, average and higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Teachers also chose a number of pupils from each class to talk about books and to read aloud to inspectors. Additionally, work produced by pupils was examined as part of lesson observations. Inspectors looked closely at pupils' behaviour in lessons, at playtime and lunchtime and as they went about their daily routines.
- 148 Discussions were held with the headteacher, all teachers, some of the non-teaching staff and parents. All teachers were observed teaching English and mathematics. Inspectors saw as many lessons as possible in other subjects. Each day, inspectors talked to teachers about the quality of their teaching and at the end of the inspection all teachers chose to have a summary of their strengths and weaknesses.

2

## DATA AND INDICATORS

### 2 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	217	4	30	17
Nursery Unit/School	26	0	0	0

2

### Teachers and classes

#### 2 Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	8.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	25.8

#### 2 Education support staff (YR – Y6)

Total number of education support staff:	1
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	32.5

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

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

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

Total number of education support staff:	1
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	32.5

Average class size:	31
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2 **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998-1999
	£
Total Income	338573
Total Expenditure	328653
Expenditure per pupil	1389
Balance brought forward from previous year	22725
Balance carried forward to next year	32645

**PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:

217
103
(47.5%)

Number of questionnaires returned:

**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	54	43	2	1	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	66	32	2	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	32	40	25	3	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	48	43	7	3	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	63	36	1	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	71	27	1	1	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	50	40	10	1	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	52	40	5	3	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	68	32	0	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	66	31	3	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	70	28	1	1	0

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

Figures exclude nil responses.

**21 (22.6%) parents made additional comments**

**Strongest points in order:**

- The school helps pupils to develop well in relation to what they learn and their general confidence and maturity.
- Staff are committed and work hard.
- The school is happy and welcoming.
- There is a caring attitude towards individual children.