

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S RC VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Gateshead

LEA area: Gateshead

Unique reference number: 108383

Headteacher: Mrs E. Donelly

Reporting inspector: Mrs P.J. Allison
21420

Dates of inspection: 22nd to 25th May 2000

Inspection number: 191606

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Prince Consort Road Gateshead Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	NE8 1LR
Telephone number:	0191 4901517
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M. Hanson
Date of previous inspection:	9 th December 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
PJ Allison	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information technology Under fives English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well is the school led and managed?
J Moore	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
J Holmes	Team inspector	English Art Design and technology Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
D Horlock	Team inspector	Science Geography History Physical education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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The Registrar
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is a Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided school with 166 pupils on roll. Almost all pupils are of white ethnic origin, although the school caters also for a minority of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds and for a few Traveller children. The school is situated close to the centre of Gateshead, but takes pupils from a wide area. Attainment on entry overall is below what might be expected of children of this age, with many children having poorly developed language skills. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. A quarter of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. There is a high level of pupil mobility; many pupils join or leave the school during the school year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Joseph's is a good school, providing a high quality of education. Pupils achieve well and standards overall are improving satisfactorily. The ethos of the school is particularly good and has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes. The quality of teaching is good; teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. The school is well led and managed and gives good value for money. The overall effectiveness of the school is good.

What the school does well

- Pupils' achievements are good, which contributes to rising standards.
- The school has high expectations of its pupils.
- The quality of teaching is good, and has a strong impact on the rate at which pupils learn.
- The positive ethos of the school ensures that individuals are well cared for.
- The school provides well for pupils' personal development; relationships are very good.
- Pupils' attitudes are good and they behave well.
- The headteacher provides effective leadership and is well supported by staff and governors.

What could be improved

- Attainment in information technology is below expectations by the time pupils leave the school.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is not always used effectively to ensure that these pupils make sufficient progress.
- The school has not established a sufficiently effective working partnership with parents.
- There has been a period of instability of staffing, which has affected the continuity of learning of some pupils and school development generally.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When it was last inspected in December 1996, St Joseph's was described as a developing school. The school has continued to develop since then, despite being hindered by changes in staffing. All the issues from the last inspection have been addressed, bringing about major improvements, particularly in the curriculum and in staff development. Provision for the under fives has developed very well. Staff and governors are now more involved in managing the school. Provision for information technology and relationships with parents are areas which are still weak. Standards have recently improved, particularly in English, and the increased emphasis on literacy and numeracy and the use now being made of performance data and target setting are paving the way for more substantial improvements in the future.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	E	C	D	C
mathematics	D	D	D	C
science	C	D	E	E

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Although the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 were below the national average, they were broadly in line with those in similar schools. There was a weakness in performance in science, but this has been effectively tackled and pupils are currently attaining well in this subject. Standards achieved by 7 year olds in 1999 were well below the national average, but this was a year group with a particularly high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and of pupil mobility, both factors that affect the overall standards. Standards fluctuate from year to year, but the overall trend is a gradually improving one.

Work seen during the inspection indicates that currently standards are improving significantly in both key stages, and that targets set by the school are likely to be met. Attainment in English, mathematics and science is broadly in line with the national average throughout the school. Pupils achieve well and have made good progress by the time they leave the school.

Standards in mathematics are good. Standards in English have improved, and the standard of work in independent writing is particularly high. Attainment in information technology is currently below expectations. There is some evidence that girls achieve less well than boys, and this is the reverse of the national picture, particularly in English.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to school. They are interested and keen to learn. They try hard and show a particularly high level of involvement in activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well in and around the school. They respect others and are polite and friendly. A few pupils find it difficult to concentrate in lessons, but this is usually very well managed by teachers.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils is very good. Pupils are responsible and work well with others. Relationships in school are very good.
Attendance	The attendance of a few pupils is unsatisfactory, making the overall rate of attendance below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	good	good	satisfactory

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

During the inspection, 98% of teaching was satisfactory or better; 61% was good or better; 20% was very good. The quality of teaching overall is good, but the quality is more consistent in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching for the under fives is good and often very good. There are particular strengths in the teaching in Years 2 and 5. Teachers work very hard and have high expectations of pupils. They usually manage pupils very well, and the positive, supportive relationships in all classes have a good effect on pupils' attitudes. Teachers plan effectively and provide particularly well for the different attainment levels of pupils in their classes. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and offers pupils a wide range of relevant opportunities and experiences. Provision for English, mathematics and science is particularly good. There are some weaknesses in continuity of learning in other subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Procedures for identification are good. Available support for pupils is not always used as effectively as it could be.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils for whom English is an additional language are well supported by their teachers and peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is good. Clear values permeate the school and are promoted well by all adults. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Pupils are encouraged to work together and relationships are very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for its pupils. Pupils' personal and academic development is particularly well monitored and supported.

The school's partnership with parents is not as effective as it might be. Parents are provided with sufficient information, particularly about the progress of their children, but communication generally is not satisfactory and there are not enough parents involved with the work of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides effective leadership and is well supported by the deputy head. The school has been managed well through a period of staff changes and new development. There is a commitment to improvement and success.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are committed to the school and actively promote its ethos. They are now more knowledgeable about the work of the school than they were at the time of the last inspection, and effectively support new developments.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has recently begun to more closely monitor performance, and has effectively used procedures such as target setting to bring about improvements in standards.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is good. Priorities for spending are carefully chosen and planned for. School administration is efficient.

Staffing levels in the school are adequate. There is a satisfactory range of learning resources. The accommodation is satisfactory and is very well cared for on a daily basis. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value such as comparison and competition.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children make good progress. • The school expects children to work hard and achieve well. • The school promotes positive attitudes and values. • Children like school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is only a limited range of activities outside lessons. • Children receive too much or too little homework. • There is not enough information for parents about the progress pupils are making. • Parents are not encouraged to be involved with the school.

The inspection team agrees with the positive comments of parents. The caring ethos ensures that positive attitudes are promoted and children feel secure and happy. Expectations are high and pupils make good progress.

- The level of extra-curricular provision is better than in many schools. There is a high level of commitment from staff as they use their particular expertise and interests in providing a range of activities for all pupils.
- The level of homework is in line with what is expected.
- The school provides sufficient information for parents about the progress their children are making, but there are weaknesses in communication generally which the school needs to address.
- There is insufficient involvement of parents in the work of the school, and this an area for the school to develop.

OTHER INFORMATION

The governing body is responsible for drawing up an action plan within 40 days of receiving the inspection report, showing how the school will tackle the improvements needed. This action plan will be circulated to all parents at the school

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 Despite fluctuating results over the last few years and some particularly low results in Key Stage 1 last year, pupils generally make good progress through the school and achieve well. Attainment on entry is below what might be expected and pupils leave the school with attainment levels broadly in line with the national average. Standards have been low, particularly in English, but attainment is currently much higher, particularly in Key Stage 1, and this indicates substantial improvements being made.
- 2 Results from tests and assessments over the last few years indicate that by the age of seven standards in English, mathematics and science are below the national average and often below those in similar schools. In 1999 standards were particularly low, but the year group had a large percentage of pupils with special educational needs and was affected by a high level of pupil mobility. These factors had a bearing on the overall standards achieved. Inspection evidence indicates a substantial improvement in attainment levels. Seven year olds currently are working in English, mathematics and science at levels that are least in line with expectations, and many are working above this. This is a marked improvement on last year's results.
- 3 By the age of eleven, results indicate that standards in English, mathematics and science are below the national average, but broadly the same as those in similar schools. Standards overall have been improving, but only in line with the national trend. Standards are affected mostly by the few pupils who achieve above the expected levels. In 1999 standards in science were lower than those in English and mathematics.
- 4 Inspection evidence indicates that standards are currently rising more significantly. Despite the current Year 6 being a weak year group with a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs, attainment is almost in line with expectations in all core subjects. Most eleven years olds are currently working at expected levels, but there are very few at levels above this. However, this is still an improvement on last year's results, especially in science. Moreover, the attainment of the current Year 5 group indicates further, more substantial improvement next year. The school has set challenging targets and seems likely to meet them.
- 5 Many children enter the school with limited speaking and listening skills. They make good progress and by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils communicate confidently and listen carefully. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils have acquired appropriate skills in speaking and listening. For example, they take part in discussions, listening and responding to others and conveying their own opinions clearly. Reading skills are well taught in Key Stage 1 and by the age of seven most pupils read confidently with a good level of understanding. By the age of eleven pupils read widely for information and for pleasure. They read aloud with good expression and talk interestingly about characters and main story themes. Attainment in writing has been weak over the last few years but is now improving. In Year 2 pupils construct simple sentences and punctuate them correctly. In Year

6 pupils incorporate more structure into their writing and use different forms and styles appropriately. Throughout the school there are particular strengths in independent writing and in handwriting and presentation skills.

- 6 Pupils gain confident literacy skills and use them across the curriculum. For example, they find information from books in history and write down their ideas in science. Their skills in handwriting and presentation help pupils to communicate in writing in all subjects. Teachers make a particular effort to ensure that pupils are gaining subject-specific vocabulary, for example in science, and this helps to develop their language skills generally.
- 7 Skills in mathematics are taught effectively in the reception class, and children enter Year 1 with a good level of understanding of basic concepts. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a grasp of addition and subtraction facts and understand place value. They are beginning to develop mental strategies to help them solve problems. By the end of Key Stage 2, skills in problem solving and the application of mathematics have developed well and pupils are beginning to use fractions and decimals confidently.
- 8 Pupils' numeracy skills are good and are used across the curriculum. For example, in a science lessons pupils measure such things as distance and are able to do this accurately. In art and design technology pupils use grids for copying and enlarging designs.
- 9 Standards in science are improving with more emphasis on investigative science and careful teaching of associated vocabulary. There have been substantial improvements this year in Key Stage 2. Year 2 pupils identify external parts of the body, know that plants grow from seeds and that seeds need certain conditions to grow well. They distinguish between natural and man-made materials and understand the effect of forces such as pushing and pulling. Year 6 pupils have a detailed knowledge of the process of seed dispersal and pollination. They can explain food chains and have an understanding of the functioning of the internal organs of the body.
- 10 By the end of Key Stage 1 attainment in information technology is in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum, but by the time pupils leave school attainment overall is below what is expected. There is some good work going on in the school and in most classes some software is used regularly to support other subjects. But teaching is not consistent, and pupils do not acquire the skills they need to work independently at an appropriate level across all aspects of the subject. Skills in handling text are satisfactory. Year 2 pupils use word processing to create text and with support can save and retrieve their work. Year 6 pupils handle text and sometimes combine text and pictures with some awareness of audience. Skills in other aspects of the subject, such as storing and accessing information are less developed, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- 11 Standards in all other subjects are broadly in line with what is expected. There is however some lack of continuity in developing skills in such subjects as physical education, geography and history. The current emphasis on literacy and numeracy and in raising standards in science in Key Stage 2, together with changes in staffing and curriculum responsibilities have resulted in some subjects being relatively unsupported. Teachers' planning in these subjects is not as

- effective as it is in core subjects and sometimes pupils are not sufficiently challenged to achieve high standards.
- 12 Pupils' achievements, when taking into account prior attainment, are good. By the time pupils leave the school they have made good progress and are achieving appropriate levels in most subjects. Attainment on entry to the school is generally below what is expected of children of this age. There is a wide range of attainment, but many children have weak language skills. Evidence from assessments made as children enter the reception class shows children to be below average in literacy and numeracy, although quite confident in physical and creative skills. Children make good progress in the reception class, particularly in gaining skills such as those required for reading and numeracy. By the age of five, some children reach the levels expected of children of this age, but many do not. Many are still weak in speaking and listening and reading and writing skills.
- 13 In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress and achieve well. They effectively gain skills and develop their knowledge and understanding. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and challenge them with work at an appropriate level, whilst at the same time supporting those who need help. Pupils respond well to this; they gain confidence and they make a lot of effort. Progress in Key Stage 2, is less secure. In most classes pupils are well challenged and they achieve well. However, sometimes expectations are not as high and progress is not as good. Changes in staffing in the last few years has meant that some pupils have not had the continuity they need in order to make confident progress, and the legacy of this is still in evidence in some classes in the key stage.
- 14 There is evidence that girls in the school, and especially by Key Stage 2, are not achieving as well as boys. This is particularly noticeable in English where the picture is the reverse of the national trend. The school is aware of this through monitoring standards, but has not tackled the issue.
- 15 Higher attaining pupils generally make good progress, as the level of expectation is high and teachers usually differentiate work very well. The results of this are now being seen in the increased number of pupils achieving above average levels in most subjects.
- 16 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. In small groups they make good progress in developing skills. But these skills are not always carried over into the classroom and the imprecise nature of the targets set for pupils, means that teachers have difficulty addressing them in their planning. Although there is some well-qualified and experienced support in classes, such support is not always used to the best advantage in helping all pupils to make progress in lessons. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve well alongside their peers. They are well supported by their teachers and by other pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 17 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good; their personal development is very good. They respond well to the positive ethos of the school and the high expectations their teachers have of them. Parents recognise the positive effect the school has on their children' attitudes and are generally very happy about the standards of behaviour maintained in school. In the last inspection attitudes and behaviour

were found to be good, but there was some concern about the behaviour of some pupils in some classes. This situation has improved, although there is still an element of the problem remaining.

- 18 Pupils' attitudes are good. Throughout the school they are interested and keen to learn. Often this is a response to enthusiasm shown by the teacher. For example, in an English lesson in Year 2 the teacher captured the interest of pupils with a gift-wrapped box. The level of participation in the lesson as a result was very high and lasted for the whole lesson. Pupils are attentive and have the confidence to take part in discussions, answering questions and contributing their ideas. They involve themselves well in class activities. For example in a debate in Year 5, pupils took part eagerly and maintained their interest throughout. Pupils get on with tasks given to them in a purposeful way; they try very hard and are pleased with their achievements.
- 19 Behaviour in the playground and around the school is good. There have been no exclusions in recent years. Pupils are polite and considerate and respectful of people and property. They move around the school in a sensible and responsible way. Behaviour in class is usually good and often very good. Most teachers have set high standards for the behaviour they expect from their pupils and pupils respond well to this. In a few classes some pupils find it difficult to concentrate on their work and can take up more of the teacher's time than is necessary. This was an issue in the last inspection and is much improved now, but it can be a problem if it is not dealt with consistently by teachers.
- 20 Pupils' personal development is very good. The ethos of the school encourages pupils to be responsible and to care for others. Relationships are very good. Pupils work well together in class and play sensibly in the playground. They relate to adults well. They are pleased with others' achievements, for example in assemblies. They are willing to take on responsibilities, such as assembly duties and looking after younger pupils. There were no incidences of bullying during the time of the inspection and pupils do not regard this as a problem. Pupils are thoughtful and caring; pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported and integrate well in the school.
- 21 Attendance rates are below the national average. The poor attendance of a small number of pupils has a negative effect on overall attendance rates and hinders the progress made by those pupils. The school works well with the Education Welfare Office and other agencies in strategies to try to promote good attendance, and there has been some improvement in the figures recently. Registers are marked, closed and monitored effectively and efficiently. Punctuality was a problem but this has improved since the school doors were locked five minutes after the start of each session. All latecomers now have to sign in at the office, and this is effective in encouraging parents to get pupils to school on time and avoid disruption to lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 22 Overall the teaching is good in the school. Virtually all teaching is at least satisfactory; nearly two thirds of teaching is good or better. In one in five lessons teaching is very good. Teaching for the under fives and in Key Stage 1 is good. In Key Stage 2 the quality is more variable, but is generally satisfactory. There are

currently particular strengths in the teaching of the under fives and in Year 2 and Year 5. There are some weaknesses in Year 4 where the only unsatisfactory teaching is found. The quality of teaching has a direct impact on how well pupils learn and the progress they make. Learning is consistently good in the under fives and in Key Stage 1. It is more variable in Key Stage 2, but almost always satisfactory and often good.

- 23 There has been substantial improvement in the quality of teaching from the last inspection. There is now more good teaching overall and less unsatisfactory teaching. There has been an improvement in the teaching of the under fives and improvements in planning, assessing and the differentiation of work, throughout the school. Parents are confident in the quality of teaching, especially in the high expectations teachers have of their pupils.
- 24 Teaching of English, mathematics and science is good. The school has put a lot of emphasis on raising standards in these subjects, which has involved teachers in developing their skills in such areas as planning and assessment. This quality of teaching is having a strong impact on standards achieved. Teaching in other subjects is more variable and often depends for its quality on the confidence and subject knowledge of individual teachers.
- 25 Teaching for the under fives is of a consistently good quality. The reception teacher is well aware of the needs of the under fives and plans effectively for them. There is a wide range of stimulating experiences and activities covering all areas of learning. The teacher has high expectations of children and provides a good level of challenge for all attainment levels. For example, in literacy sessions some children are given activities to develop their phonic skills, whilst higher attaining children are encouraged in independent writing. Relationships in the reception class are very good and this has a positive impact on children's behaviour and personal development.
- 26 In Key Stage 1 and 2 the strengths in teaching are similar. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding, especially in core subjects. This is shown in the well-targeted levels of questioning during class and group sessions. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning as they are encouraged to think for themselves and develop their understanding. For example, in a science lesson in Year 6 the teacher's secure subject knowledge enabled her to lead a purposeful discussion about dissolving and solutions. Pupils built on their previous learning and made good progress.
- 27 Teachers are competent in teaching basic skills in literacy and numeracy. In introducing the literacy and numeracy strategies teachers have effectively developed their skills further, and are now teaching in these areas very competently and often imaginatively. For example, in Key Stage 1 pupils are taught phonic skills which they apply in their reading, and in Key Stage 2 pupils are encouraged to develop mental strategies in solving number problems. Teachers are particularly skilled at introducing and developing subject-specific vocabulary, for example in science.
- 28 Teachers have worked hard since the last inspection on improving their planning, and this is now very effective. There are clear learning objectives, often conveyed to pupils. When this is done, pupils understand what they are doing and can evaluate the progress they are making. Work is planned well, with a very good

level of differentiation in tasks. In this way the needs of all the pupils are met and they can make progress because they are building effectively on their prior learning. Day to day assessment is good, especially in the core subjects. Teachers know their pupils well and they are able to assess their work in the light of what they expect individuals to achieve. They encourage pupils to expect a lot of themselves and overcome difficulties.

- 29 Teachers challenge and inspire pupils, expecting the most of them. Pupils respond well to this and apply themselves to the work. For example, in a Year 2 information technology lesson the teacher set her pupils a challenge of making a sequence of instruction for a Roamer. Then, when the sequences were tried out she further challenged them to explain why a particular sequence had not worked. Pupils responded well in the lesson, they put in a lot of effort and made good progress in their understanding. Teachers use different methods to keep pupils interested. They use classsessions well to teach basic skills. They use group and partner work successfully, sothat pupils can learn from each other and support each other's learning.
- 30 Teachers manage pupils well. They set high standards of behaviour and are usually consistent in ensuring that all pupils reach these standards. In this ethos pupils sustain concentration and work at a good pace without wasting time. The positive supportive relationships in classes motivate pupils and give them confidence. In a Year 5 lesson a debate was being held. As a result of very good management of pupils and the skilful way in which teacher encouraged all pupils to be involved, everyone sustained concentration, gained confidence and developed their speaking and listening skills very well.
- 31 One of the features of very good lessons is the enthusiasm and interest teachers have in what they are teaching. In these lessons pupils show a high level of motivation and make very good progress. This is noticeable for example in lessons where the teacher is confident in information technology and manages to convey an excitement and interest in what is happening. Teachers usually keep a good pace to lessons. They introduce different activities and keep pupils busy and motivated. This happens regularly in the reception class, for example in numeracy sessions, where children are actively involved in games to develop their counting skills.
- 32 On the whole, homework is well used to reinforce work done in class. It is well organised and targeted accurately. Reading diaries are used, and when parents complete these regularly, it has a positive impact on pupils' motivation and progress. Occasionally homework is used imaginatively and parents are encouraged to involve themselves with the learning; for example when pupils are asked to make preliminary investigations of a topic, such as cleaning materials, in their own home. This is not however a consistent approach and parents are not usually involved in such a positive way.
- 33 Where there are weaknesses in lessons it is often as a result of a teacher having insufficient confidence in subjects, for example in information technology, physical education and music. Planning is not as effective in these lessons and there is sometimes a lack of focus on pupils developing basic skills and pupils do not acquire skills in a progressive way. In some of these subjects there is insufficient guidance to help them with their planning.

- 34 Occasionally standards set for behaviour are not high enough and unsatisfactory levels of attention are tolerated. This does not happen very often and only in Key Stage 2, but it can have a negative effect on levels of concentration in the class as a whole and on the amount of progress pupils can make. In the weakest lessons the teacher is not secure in the assessment of pupils and work set does not match their attainment levels and does not allow them to make sufficient progress.
- 35 In their careful planning for the different attainment levels in their class, teachers effectively meet the needs of the lower attaining pupils in their classes. This is particularly so during class sessions when they are skilled at making sure all pupils can take part. The needs of higher attaining pupils are well met in the challenging work planned and the high expectations teachers have. When being taught in small groups, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in developing skills. However, class teaching support is less effective and often does not help these pupils to make progress in their lessons, as it is intended it should do. There is not a close enough link between the work of the support teacher and the work of the class teacher, and the imprecise nature of some of the individual education plans makes it difficult for teachers to plan specifically for these pupils. Care assistants work in classes and provide some valuable support. However, the weak co-ordination of this support results in it not always being deployed as effectively as it could be.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

- 36 The whole curriculum reflects the school's aims and makes a valuable contribution to the learning experiences of all its pupils. Since the last inspection the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been introduced successfully, and the school has improved the overall planning of the curriculum, resulting in a clearly defined teaching programme designed to meet all requirements over time. The school continually reviews curricular provision in the light of pupils' attainment and, as a consequence of this, additional teaching time has been allocated to science this year in order to raise the pupils' achievement in this subject. This, together with the proper emphasis placed on continuing to improve standards in English and mathematics, has led to less time for teaching several of the other subjects. The school meets statutory requirements.
- 37 The curriculum for the under-fives is well planned, and carefully follows the areas of learning for children of this age. A range of stimulating and imaginative activities is provided, which enable children to develop skills and gain knowledge and understanding. There is a good balance between adult-directed activities and opportunities for children to be independent and show initiative. There is good provision for the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Provision for physical development is limited by the lack of regular access to outdoor play.
- 38 The school offers its pupils broad and varied opportunities for study. Pupils of all ages benefit from a curriculum that meets their intellectual, physical, social and personal needs and effectively prepares them for the next stage of education. There is appropriate provision for health issues, including sex education and drugs awareness, which are approached sensitively through programmes within the science and physical education curriculum. Personal, social and environmental

issues are addressed across all curriculum areas, and pupils experience a safe and happy environment in which to learn.

- 39 Policies for each subject give guidance for teaching and learning. They are reviewed regularly and amended as necessary. Schemes of work and planning programmes outline learning for each year group. However, further development and clarification is needed in some subjects to ensure that basic skills and techniques are taught progressively. The school has very good overall planning procedures in place, which are rigorously monitored by the headteacher and her deputy. The curriculum is taught mainly as separate subjects, although purposeful cross-curricular links are made in the planning. For example, knowledge of pattern, shape and symmetry gained in mathematics is exploited in design, and masks of fictional characters directly relate to stories written by a local author. These are now read avidly by the pupils following a visit the author made to the school.
- 40 The school continues to widen the pupils' experiences and positively promotes the study of the arts across the curriculum by encouraging visits from music ensembles, drama groups and story readers, and by arranging visits to art galleries and museums. Emphasis has recently been placed on multicultural education and, along with five other schools in the area, pupils have worked on an anti-racism project. Together with artists, musicians and members of the Jewish community, pupils have participated in music, created designs and broadened their understanding of different beliefs and customs.
- 41 The school has good provision of extra curricular activities. The Wednesday after-school clubs includes football, infant activities, modelling, percussion, library skills and aerobics. They are well attended and enrich pupils' lives. There is a high level of staff commitment shown as they run clubs based on their own interests and expertise. The school takes part in inter-school sports and the local maths challenge. There are opportunities for pupils to receive tuition in recorder playing, and to be entered for grade examinations.
- 42 The school recognises the importance of full curricular access for all its pupils and strives to ensure equality of opportunity in all areas of learning and social activity. However, the planning for pupils withdrawn for additional learning support is not always sufficiently linked to the work taking place in the classroom, and sometimes pupils miss out regularly on class work through being withdrawn. There are presently no strategies in place to address the underachievement of girls.
- 43 Procedures are in place for the identification and on-going support for pupils with special educational needs. Provision is through a combination of additional support within the classroom and withdrawal for specialist help. Individual education programmes are in place, but the learning targets for each pupil are not always sufficiently focused to clearly identify short-term learning goals which can be assessed easily. Additional groups of pupils receive extra support within the classroom to raise their achievement in literacy and numeracy. Pupils for whom English is a second language receive good support from their teachers within the classrooms. Advice and monitoring is received from outside agencies and these pupils make good progress.

- 44 There is good communication with the local secondary school and valuable opportunities to ease the transition of pupils are arranged. The school has close links with the Parish Church and with the day centre based in the parish house.
- 45 Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The school's mission statement and aims are firmly rooted and active in all aspects of school life. Much of this provision is planned and reflects a strong caring ethos. This represents an improvement in provision for spiritual and moral development since the time of the last inspection.
- 46 There is good provision for pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are given opportunities to think about issues of fundamental importance to themselves, their families and the Christian community. They reflect on the significance of Christian symbols and celebrations in their lives. They are encouraged to do this not only collectively, as in assemblies, but also in moments of personal and private reflection. Pupils are invited to nominate subjects for prayer in assemblies, and a caring attitude to others is fostered, particularly for those who have suffered a family loss. In these ways, pupils are able to reflect on their own relationship with God. Through poetry and art pupils have considered what is important for people's happiness. Pupils in Year 2 have used music by Rimski Korsakov to express feelings suggested by different instruments.
- 47 Provision for moral development is good. Values of honesty and fairness are strongly emphasised, particularly in assembly, and pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. The staff of the school provides very good role models: they treat each other and the pupils with courtesy and respect. Similarly, teachers have high expectations of pupils in this regard. Teachers and pupils negotiate class rules and these are reinforced by a system of rewards that recognises achievement and effort.
- 48 Provision for social development is very good. Pupils are encouraged to work together purposefully in literacy and numeracy, and group activities in subjects such as science and design and technology. In these activities, and across the school, pupils relate well to each other and to their teachers. In discussion and in assemblies pupils listen to each other respectfully and show an appreciation of the achievement of others. Older pupils undertake responsibilities in school and in the community. In school they have assembly and library duties, take care of plants, and have pastoral responsibilities for younger pupils. The recently formed School Council is beginning to foster the ideals of responsible choice and the values of citizenship. The school takes part in different charity appeals such as Catholic Care, and pupils sing at a senior citizens' home. Pupils are also involved in a centre for Alzheimer's disease. Older pupils have also shown initiative in planning and organising a concert to raise funds for a Blue Peter appeal for the Royal Society for the Blind.
- 49 Provision for cultural development is good. Visits to galleries and museums enrich the curriculum and contribute to pupils' understanding of their own culture. For example, pupils in Year 3 have seen how fragments of Roman pottery are pieced together and how this provides evidence about Roman Britain. Walks in the local area for Year 6 have contributed to pupils knowledge and understanding of how Gateshead has changed and developed in the last half of the twentieth century. Visitors to the school include a local poet who has conducted poetry workshops and local music and theatre groups.

50 The school is also making appropriate provision for an understanding of other cultures. There are strong links with the local Jewish community and Jewish teacher comes into school to explain the details of Jewish holy days. Also pupils have visited a synagogue as well as a mosque. Aspects of different cultures have been examined through the study of different foods and clothes. Currently for example, pupils in Year 5 are preparing foods from Bangladesh and relating this to the climate and vegetation of the area. As there are a small number of traveller pupils in the school a visitor to the school has provided information about that culture.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

51 The pupils are cared for very well and this is a strength of the school. The strong Christian ethos underpins every area of school life. Parents feel that the children are well cared for and the inspection evidence supports this. The school has maintained high standards in this area since the last inspection.

52 Children under five are thoughtfully integrated into the school with pre-school visits and by allowing parents into the classroom to settle pupils. There are improving links with the secondary school and pupils have taster days there before they transfer at eleven. The links between local schools within the area and also with the secondary school have positive benefits, for example in staff training and the sharing of good practice. Pupils were recently involved in a Good Neighbours project and an Anti-Racism initiative. An authority wide initiative includes an inter-schools newsletter to increase understanding and co-operation. All this participation has a positive effect on learning.

53 Child Protection procedures are in place and training is updated whenever necessary. The school's health and safety procedures and practices are good risk assessments are in place and reviewed annually, and training is kept up to date. The local authority services the electrical equipment and fire extinguishers annually. Fire drills are carried out each term, the last one having been in the spring term 2000. There is no sign of vandalism, and the school is taken care of very well by an efficient, committed caretaker.

54 The school effectively promotes good behaviour and behaviour in the school is good. Almost all pupils respond well to the ethos of the school and the high expectations the headteacher and other staff have of them. There is an effective rewards and sanction policy with acknowledgement for good behaviour and achievement within the celebration assemblies. This has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes. However, a few pupils sometimes find it difficult to conform and can cause a problem in classes. Most teachers deal with this very well, only occasionally is it allowed to impact on the rest of the class. Although the behaviour policy is sound in its values, it does not contain a sufficiently structured framework of strategies to support teachers in classes.

55 The school has good procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance and these are beginning to have a good effect on the improvement in attendance levels. Staff know their pupils well and monitor their personal development effectively. There are many examples of pupils being supported through difficult times by sensitive and caring members of staff.

- 56 All statutory requirements for pupils with special educational needs are met. Provision for identifying needs are good. Pupils with special needs are identified early and their progress is supervised through specifically designed programmes. Support for pupils is available for all pupils on the school's register, although the support is not always used as effectively as it might be. Good support is provided for pupils for whom English is an additional language and progress is checked regularly.
- 57 Assessment procedures generally are very good, and information is well used to help pupils make progress. Statutory requirements for assessment are fully met and, together with the school's own additional assessment procedures, confirm pupils' attainment and progress as their learning develops. This is an area that has been improved effectively by staff since the last inspection.
- 58 The youngest pupils are assessed against a checklist to establish their individual levels of development when they enter the reception class. Information of what they know, understand and can do is used to plan learning that meets the needs of each individual pupil. Learning targets are included in teachers weekly planning and future learning is planned according to achievement.
- 59 As pupils progress through the school samples of their independent writing, alongside examples of their work in mathematics and science are gathered ~~to~~ ^{to} firmly. These are retained in individual portfolios and give a clear picture of individual progress in relation to nationally expected levels of attainment. The school routinely uses a range of standardised tests to establish pupils' strengths and weaknesses. These are carefully analysed to help the school track individual progress, set appropriately challenging targets and raise overall progress. Information is analysed to identify the progress made by all pupils and to target those who would benefit from additional support. The marking policy is applied effectively by all teachers. In addition, a weekly written dialogue between teachers and pupils in the form of a journal is used consistently as a vehicle to carry teachers' constructive comments. Pupils respond appropriately and improvements in written work are noticeable.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 60 Parents have positive views of the school. They believe that children make good progress and that the school expects them to work hard and achieve well. They are confident that the school promotes the right attitudes and values ~~at~~ ^{that} children are cared for and they like school. Evidence from the inspection supports these positive views.
- 61 Some parents felt that there was room to improve in the following areas: the range of outside activities; amount of homework; parents not being sufficiently involved in the school; not enough information available about pupils' progress. Inspection evidence found that there is a good range of out of school activities and that the homework policy is in line with what is expected.
- 62 There is sufficient information for parents about the progress their children are making. Reports are good, with clear information and useful ways for parents to help at home. Parents feel they can talk to teachers whenever they have concerns. However, communications in general are not as positive as they could be. Written communications in their tone and style do not reflect the warmth of

relationships in the school. The school is beginning to consult parents, for example about the planned new library and computer suite. But in general, parents are not informed adequately about the curriculum and what is taught. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are not fully involved in reviewing their children's progress and considering the provision being made for their children.

- 63 The school has not created a sufficiently effective working partnership with parents and this is an issue for the school to address. It was a weakness in the last inspection and remains so now, because there are not sufficient numbers of parents involved with the life of the school and so supporting their children's learning. There is a small group of loyal parents who provide valuable help within the school, and support for fund raising and with organising social events. This has a positive social and financial impact on the school. Parents are encouraged to help in school but there is only limited take up of this.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 64 The headteacher is a very good leader. She effectively promotes the ethos of the school and provides clear educational direction for its work. She has actively led staff and governors in carrying through developments, which have brought about improvements in the quality of education and in standards achieved.
- 65 She is well supported by the deputy head. They form the senior management team and have managed the school well through a period of staff changes and new development; for example managing staff absences and introducing the literacy and numeracy strategies. Currently there is no permanent member of the senior management team from Key Stage 1, although a representative is invited to meetings when appropriate.
- 66 The school has had a period of staffing instability, including staff changes and absences. Although this situation has been well managed, for example in choice of quality supply teachers, it has inevitably had a detrimental effect on the continuity of learning of some pupils and on school development generally. The school has no strategic plan to ensure staffing stability in the future.
- 67 Teachers have worked hard to bring about changes, for example in planning and assessment, and have worked well together to improve standards. There is a shared commitment to improvement and success. In their roles as subject co-ordinators they have worked well to develop their subjects. They monitor planning and most of them are well aware of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and what they need to do to improve. They are beginning to play a part in monitoring teaching and learning, particularly in core subjects. Changes in staffing and absences have led to teachers taking on new roles, but they have been well supported in the changeover period. Some subjects are currently without a permanent co-ordinator and this has had an effect on support for teachers and consistency of progress in those subjects.
- 68 The school has clear aims and values set securely within the context of a Christian ethos and reflected in all aspects of its work. There is an emphasis on care for the individual and responsibility for each other and it has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes.

- 69 Governors are loyal and committed to the school. They actively and effectively promote the ethos of the school and provide positive support for staff. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities. Since the last inspection there have been substantial improvements in the way in which the governing body works with the school. Governors are now more involved with the work of the school and are more aware of its strengths and weaknesses. Individual governors have been closely and effectively involved in new developments, such as the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies. The governing body as a whole is becoming more involved in strategic planning and in monitoring standards and performance.
- 70 School development planning is good. Priorities are identified and action taken to achieve its targets. Response to the last inspection was good. Recently the school has begun to monitor performance more closely and has set targets for improvement. This has helped bring about the improvements in standards, for example in science in Key Stage 2.
- 71 Financial planning is sound. Costs are clearly linked to priorities and spending decisions are sound. Currently the school is carrying forward an accumulated fund, which will be used in the development of a new library and computer suite. School administration is efficient and the school runs smoothly on a day to day basis. The main recommendations in the last audit report have been acted upon. Effective use is made of new technologies, for example in monitoring performance data.
- 72 Overall, the school has sufficient suitably qualified teachers to provide a satisfactory balance of expertise and experience. Teachers are hard working and committed to the aims and values of the school. Curriculum responsibilities are appropriately matched to their qualifications, interests and experience. Currently the headteacher has the role of special educational needs co-ordinator. However, although well managed in terms of policies and procedures, the provision is not always well co-ordinated and the role of the support teacher in the school is not always clear or effective.
- 73 Support teaching staff are suitably experienced and qualified. When appropriately deployed, they provide good support to pupils including those with special educational needs. On occasions, however, the manner of deployment leads to an ineffective use of their time, and also in-class support for pupils with special educational needs does not always complement work prepared by class teachers.
- 74 The school is fully committed to its staff's professional development. This has been improved since the last inspection. Teachers and support staff attend courses that personally interest them, as well as helping them meet the curricular and pastoral needs of the school. Each year teachers are invited to evaluate the teaching and learning in their classes and identify needs for further professional development. This process of appraisal is further supplemented by classroom observations being made by senior staff. This constructive and positive process pinpoints teachers' strengths as well as agreeing on areas for further development.
- 75 There are effective procedures in place for the induction of new staff and newly qualified teachers. The deputy head takes on a major role in mentoring and supporting new staff. The school is an effective provider of initial teacher training.

- 76 The accommodation is satisfactory. The building is very well cared for and vandal free. The accommodation is adequate but the open plan area in Key Stage 1 is noisy and distracting and not conducive to the delivery of the modern curriculum. There is still no ramp at the front door. The site is safe and secure. The hard football surface limits its use to the older children. There is an extensive playground area, which, like the building, is well maintained, but there is no secure outside play area for the under-fives. There is a rolling programme for the replacement of windows and the very capable caretaker carries out on-going repairs and maintenance.
- 77 Learning resources in English are good. There is a plentiful supply of books to support learning in all classrooms, and many of them are available for pupils to borrow and read at home. In all other subjects the range, quantity and quality of resources are satisfactory and meet most needs. In most classrooms the resources for mathematics are particularly well organised and carefully labelled ensuring that they are easily accessible for pupils to use. In information technology there is reasonable access to control equipment and software is available to support most subjects. However, the computers are often old and unsatisfactory when they fail to respond appropriately. The school has clearly identified a need in this area and is awaiting the implementation of plans to improve provision. Basic materials and tools for design technology are stored centrally in trolleys and, as with art, any additional requirements are purchased as necessary. Although the central library has many good non-fiction books a number of them are dated and not particularly attractive to young readers. The school has done much to improve the library by providing a pleasant seating area, however its location in the dining room remains a problem and is not conducive to independent learning and personal study. Good use is made of the Gateshead Library Support Service to supplement resources and to extend topic-related reference books in the classrooms. The school makes very good use of small equipment such as balls, bats and hoops during playtimes and lunchbreaks. This has a major impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes during these times.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

78 In order to continue to develop and improve the educational provision of the school and maintain the recent improvements in standards, staff and governors should:

- (a) Raise attainment levels in information technology by:
 - ensuring that all teachers are confident with all aspects of the subject (paragraphs 10, 143, 149)
 - enabling all pupils to have regular access to suitable computers. (paragraphs 10, 77, 147, 150)

- (b) Improve the co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs, so that support is used more effectively. (paragraphs 35, 43, 56, 73, 108)

- (c) Improve the quality of partnership with parents by:
 - encouraging parents to be more involved with the life of the school and with supporting the learning of their children (paragraphs 32, and 63)
 - improving communication with parents (paragraph 62)

- (d) Develop a strategic plan for establishing a more stable staffing situation in school (paragraphs 13 and 66)

79 Other issues which should be considered by the school

- Providing more support for teachers' planning in foundation subjects to ensure more continuity in pupils' learning (paragraphs 11, 33, 39, 67, 140, 156)
- Supporting all teachers by providing a more structured approach to promoting good behaviour in classrooms (paragraphs 17, 19, 34, 54, 137)
- Tackling the weaknesses in accommodation – reducing the level of disturbance in Key Stage 1 classrooms; providing the under fives with access to a secure outdoor play area (paragraphs 37, 76, 83, 88)
- Ensuring that all teachers have the same high expectations of the majority (paragraphs 22, 34, 107)
- Developing a library area more conducive to independent study (paragraphs 77 and 100)
- Ensuring that expectations of what girls can achieve are high enough (paragraphs 14 and 91)
- Developing further strategies to improve levels of attendance (paragraphs 21 and 55)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	49
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	20%	41%	37%	2%	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	-	166
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	-	46

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	41

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	10	13	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	5	9
	Girls	8	7	12
	Total	14	12	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	61 (67)	52 (67)	91(92)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	9	9
	Girls	9	13	11
	Total	15	22	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	65 (67)	96 (92)	87 (92)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	12	16	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	9	10
	Girls	10	9	8
	Total	71	64	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (69)	64 (58)	64 (65)
	National	70 (65)	69 (58)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	9	10
	Girls	8	8	8
	Total	16	17	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59 (54)	63 (54)	64 (69)
	National	68 (N/A)	69 (N/A)	75 (N/A)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	145
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	-
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	-

Total number of education support staff	-
Total aggregate hours worked per week	-

Number of pupils per FTE adult	-
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	292987
Total expenditure	297225
Expenditure per pupil	1699
Balance brought forward from previous year	24029
Balance carried forward to next year	19791

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	173
Number of questionnaires returned	79

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	44	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	48	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	46	5	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	38	11	1	3
The teaching is good.	56	35	4	3	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	39	22	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	37	11	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	34	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	42	34	19	4	1
The school is well led and managed.	54	33	8	3	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	38	9	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	34	14	10	6

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

- 80 Children enter the reception class in the September of the year in which they will be five. They come from a wide area and some have limited pre-school educational experience. Attainment on entry is below what might be expected for children of this age. Whilst some children enter with well-developed skills and a wide range of experiences, many have weak language skills and more limited experience of the world about them. At the time of the inspection approximately half of the class were not yet five.
- 81 Children make good progress in the reception class, particularly in acquiring basic skills in literacy and numeracy. They also make good gains in social development and in general confidence. By the age of five some children have reached the levels expected in all areas of learning, but many have not. The main weaknesses are still in language and mathematics.
- 82 The quality of teaching for the under fives is of a consistently good quality. The reception teacher is well aware of the needs of the under fives and plans effectively for them. There is a wide range of stimulating experiences and activities covering all areas of learning. The teacher has high expectations of children and provides a good level of challenge for all attainment levels. There has been a marked improvement since the last inspection, particularly in provision and planning.
- 83 The reception classroom is an effective learning environment for the under fives. A pleasant, light room with a comfortable seating area helps to make the children's days enjoyable. The teacher uses the space well; it is well-organised and stimulating context for learning. Resources are generally satisfactory, but the lack of access to outdoor play limits the range of activities for developing children's physical skills. There is a lot of direct contact with parents and sufficient volunteers to accompany the class on visits, but very few parents help on a regular basis in the class.
- 84 Children make good progress in their personal and social development. Most reach expected levels in this area. They respond well to the positive relationships in the class and the high expectations of their teacher. They behave well and are attentive. They co-operate with each other and learn to share equipment and resources. Some good instances of co-operation can be seen in the role-play area and in building activities. There are however a few children who have not gained sufficient confidence and prefer to play alone.
- 85 The teacher is skilled in teaching language and literacy. She plans very carefully and provides activities that encourage whole class involvement. An excellent use of resources motivates children, for example when practising linking sounds and letters. Children make obvious progress during these activities. Tasks are well differentiated to meet the needs of all the attainment levels in the class. Attainment overall is below what is expected. Children begin to associate sounds with letters, they recognise letters of the alphabet and understand how books work. Many recognise some words and are beginning to read but there is often limited understanding of what they are reading. Only a few of the higher attainers

are beginning any kind of independent writing. Children are encouraged to take part in class discussions but the language children use is often limited. There is sometimes not sufficient focus on the particular language being developed, especially in small group activities.

- 86 The teacher plans very well for the mathematical development of children. Whole class activities involving all children help them gain counting skills. An emphasis on practical experiences helps children make the link between numbers and events, for example when counting the number of rings inside and outside a hoop. The teacher uses every opportunity to develop mathematical understanding; the classroom is a good mathematical environment. Well-differentiated tasks help children make progress in further developing their skills. Attainment however is below expectations. Children recognise numbers to ten, they order numerals and they recognise and recreate patterns. Only the higher attaining children are able to record numbers and are ready to use their mathematical understanding to solve problems.
- 87 The teacher provides a good range of experiences for children's creative development. These are at their best when children are given opportunities to experiment and explore materials, rather than being directed by adults to make something. Children reach the levels expected. They paint confidently and explore other materials and resources. Some children become quite skilled in handling tools and resources, for example in mixing paint colours. They explore sound when experimenting with musical instruments and making 'tunes' for others to play.
- 88 Children achieve expected levels in physical development. They move confidently with increasing control and co-ordination, for example when balancing on a bench. Most are aware of others, for example when running round the hall. Sometimes movement lacks imagination for example children had problems making a 'curled shape.' The teacher makes the best use of time in the hall for physical education lessons. She plans well and is well aware of safety. The good control she has of the class helps her to use time well. However, the range of experiences she can provide for children's physical development is limited by the lack of access to outdoor play. Children do not have the opportunity to explore and experiment with space and large apparatus.
- 89 The teacher provides a range of experiences to develop pupils' knowledge understanding and understanding of the world, for example the visit to the opticians during the inspection week. These experiences stimulate children's interest and provide them with the opportunity to talk about what they have seen. Some children talk confidently and relate the experience to things that have happened in their own lives. Others are more reticent and have limited language skills with which to describe what they have seen. Attainment is below what is expected. The teacher provides a good range of resources for children to explore and she uses the role play area imaginatively so that children can further develop their understanding. Information technology is well used in the reception class and children are confident with computers and use them alongside their other activities.

ENGLISH

- 90 In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds, the performance of pupils in reading was well below average and in writing it was very low, when compared with national results and with those of similar schools. Teacher assessments for speaking and listening indicated that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 was well below average, whilst those attaining the higher Level 3 was in line with the national average. Teacher assessments were generally in line with actual test results. The low standards in Key Stage 1 over the past two years have been affected by the higher than average number of pupils with special needs in the year groups concerned. However, during the inspection, the attainment of pupils in the present Key Stage 1 was significantly higher, and more in line with national levels. The school is setting realistic targets for continuing this improvement.
- 91 The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds in English at the end of Key Stage 2, indicated that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 was close to the national average and in line with results in similar schools. However, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level was well below the national average and this affected the overall point score. The school nevertheless exceeded the targets they set for this year group. Several factors in the school impact adversely on attainment, such as the higher than average number of pupils with special needs in some of the year groups, and the significant proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at critical times in their education. Careful analysis of school data reveals the close relationship between these factors and the results achieved. Over the last four years boys in Key Stage 2 have out-performed girls in English, which is the reverse of the national pattern and, although the school is aware of this, they are unable to account for it. Attainment since the previous inspection has fluctuated but has generally remained close to the national average.
- 92 During the inspection, attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 1 was judged to be in line with the national average. This represents a considerable improvement on the results of the 1999 National Tests. Attainments are similar to the national average in most aspects of English, such as reading, writing, speaking and listening, and a significant number of pupils are achieving higher levels, especially in reading and writing. Likewise, at the end of Key Stage 2 attainment during the inspection reached appropriate levels in all aspects of English. However, there is a wide range of attainment in the present Year 6 group and the achievement of a number of pupils is below average. In relation to the generally poor language capabilities of pupils when they enter in reception, most make good progress in Key Stage 1 and satisfactorily maintain this good progress in Key Stage 2.
- 93 Many pupils enter school in the reception class with a limited vocabulary and poor listening skills, but they make good progress, and by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 1, they communicate with confidence, listen carefully and respond appropriately. Although there are some reluctant speakers in Years 3 and 4 all make steady progress. All opportunities are seized to extend the pupils' word power by carefully introducing subject-related vocabulary across the curriculum. Some good teaching in the upper part of the school ensures that all pupils are involved in discussion. For example the excellent debate observed in Year 5, demonstrated the pupils' sound assurance when speaking to an audience and their considerable skills when using persuasive language to affect opinion.

- 94 Attainment in reading at the end of both key stages is not significantly different from the national average. However, at both key stages a considerable number of pupils read at a higher level. Pupils throughout the school are enthusiastic about books; an enthusiasm which is encouraged by the provision of interesting and appropriate reading material. Many pupils are members of a local library and understand how books are classified and coded. At the end of Key Stage 1 higher attaining pupils read confidently with good expression and an appropriate level of understanding. They talk about books they have read and give reasons for their preferences. Pupils are directed to select books from collections appropriate to their level of reading ability. Many of them take these books home to share with their families and their progress is recorded in diaries monitored by their teachers. At the end of Key Stage 2 many pupils read widely for information and for pleasure. Most read aloud with good expression and talk interestingly about the characters and the main story themes. Higher attaining pupils use inference and deduction when discussing possible story development and many make reference to text by making appropriate selections to illustrate their opinions.
- 95 Attainment in writing is satisfactory at the end of both key stages. In Year 2, pupils construct simple sentences and punctuate them correctly with capital letters and full stops. Some higher attaining pupils use lively vocabulary and more complex sentences to express ideas in interesting stories. They work in pairs writing questions to each other and replying with appropriate answers. Others use descriptive written language carefully when describing hidden objects. In Key Stage 2 pupils' writing shows a developing maturity. They incorporate more structure into their writing, organising their work in paragraphs and planning thoughtfully to develop more control in written narrative. They attempt to convert personal text into formal language and begin to develop an understanding of how writing takes different forms and styles that are appropriate to specific needs and audience. However, some pupils do not easily transfer their often good writing, which is present in the form of regularly written journals, into situations which are less familiar. Pupils use dictionaries to aid their spelling but few use a thesaurus to extend their ability with words. The youngest pupils are taught correct letter formation, and handwriting and presentation of work is of a very good standard in all classes.
- 96 Since the previous inspection in 1996 the school has continued to strive to improve standards in reading, writing and spelling and has successfully introduced the National Literacy Strategy. Careful planning following the new guidance, together with the emphasis on whole class teaching, are having a positive effect on pupil learning and have increased teachers subject knowledge and confidence. Pupils use their literacy skills across the whole curriculum. For example, they design suitable masks to fit the descriptions of fictional characters, and they suggest vocabulary that appropriately describes the mood of a song. They use their reading skills to help them to find and use information in history. Their very good handwriting and presentation of work complements work in all subjects.
- 97 The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was never less than satisfactory and was good overall, with some examples of very good teaching in both key stages. In the best lessons teachers provided interesting activities which inspired, excited and challenged pupils to achieve beyond expectation. For example, in Year 2 even the most reluctant speakers and writers were eager to participate in activities connected with the introduction of a gift- wrapped, mysterious package, and in Year 5 the debate involving pupils in role play extended their language skills to a very mature level. In both of these lessons the teachers had high

expectations, planned their work with considerable care and in sufficient detail to ensure well organised sessions which led to very effective learning experiences. The good attitudes and behaviour of pupils have a positive impact on learning in most lessons. There were a few occasions where low level disturbing chatter was too easily tolerated and some pupils did not achieve as highly as they might otherwise have done. A whole school strategy involving weekly dialogue between teachers and pupils in the form of written letters has a very positive effect on pupils writing. It provides valuable writing experiences that have real purpose and teachers use it for modelling examples of good writing and as a vehicle for constructive comments to which pupils respond positively.

- 98 In general, teachers know their pupils well and carefully match tasks, questioning and additional support to the differing needs of the pupils. Pupils at higher attainment levels are sufficiently challenged by the work they are given and by the expectations of their teachers. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in gaining the skills they need, particularly in small group situations. However, this learning is not always carried over into lessons because of a lack of co-ordination in planning between the teachers involved. Available support for these pupils in class is not always effectively targeted and as a result they do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- 99 The subject co-ordinator provides good support and guidance for teachers by regularly observing their teaching and giving written feedback. She has a clear overview of the subject, closely monitoring teachers' planning and organising training as appropriate. Assessment procedures are good, and careful analysis of test results provides sufficient detailed information to appropriately target pupils who would benefit from additional support. Examples of pupils' written work are retained regularly and are carefully matched against expected national levels to provide a record of individual progress. There is a plentiful supply of books that supports learning in all classrooms and these are supplemented by selections from Gateshead Library Support Service. However teachers do not always make sufficient use of large print class books during shared reading time and occasionally select less appropriate material instead.
- 100 The library has a pleasant seated area and some pupils in Year 6 are trained as library monitors to run a lending service, which attracts many pupils from all age groups. There is a useful reference section but there are some gaps in the provision and some of the books are dated. The location of the library is not conducive to independent learning and personal study and is underused for this purpose. Information technology is used satisfactorily in English. Pupils gain appropriate word-processing skills and learn to handle text in different contexts. However, they do not use computers confidently and independently as an integral part of their daily work. All educational visits make a positive contribution to the curriculum. Visits to the school made recently by a poet and a local author have widened experiences and provided inspiration for writing, reading and discussion. The school's capacity to improve further is good.

MATHEMATICS

- 101 Pupils achieve well in mathematics and standards are improving. There has been gradual improvement over the last few years, but more significant improvement currently. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well, the school already having placed an emphasis on developing mental skills. The headteacher

has led the subject well, but is to hand over the responsibility to a new and enthusiastic co-ordinator in September.

- 102 In 1999, standards in Key Stage 1 were below the national average and below those in similar schools. Most pupils achieved levels expected by the National Curriculum, but few achieved at higher levels and this made the average point score low. However, this was a particularly weak cohort with a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and of pupil mobility. Standards had been previously consistently close to or at the national average.
- 103 Standards in Key Stage 2 in 1999 were below the national average but broadly in line with similar schools. There have been some inconsistencies in standards over recent years, but overall standards are generally in line with or close to the national average and it is an improving picture.
- 104 Inspection evidence indicates a substantial improvement in standards currently in Key Stage 1. More pupils are achieving as expected and more are working confidently at higher levels. Year 2 pupils have a good grasp of place value and use this understanding to order numbers and carry out calculations, such as subtracting 10 and 12 from two digit numbers. Higher attainers are beginning to develop their own mental strategies to calculate addition and subtraction of two digit numbers. Pupils measure time and have a good understanding of the properties of shape.
- 105 In Key Stage 2 the improvement is not so marked as the current Year 6 is a weak group with few higher attainers. But most pupils are working at expected levels. Year 6 pupils recognise proportions of a whole and use fractions and percentages to describe these. They have a good understanding of place value in large numbers and use this to perform calculations involving multiplication and division. They measure angles and work with shape and measures. Pupils are developing their confidence in using mathematics to solve problems. They use their skills in numeracy well across the curriculum, for example in making accurate measurements in science.
- 106 Achievement overall is good, but is more consistent in Key Stage 1 where pupils make good progress from class to class. In reception the under fives and reception age children make good progress in developing basic number skills and mathematical understanding. They learn to count accurately and use mathematics in practical situations. In Year 2 they further develop their counting skills and are able to count in twos and threes. They begin to work with two digit numbers, gaining a good understanding of the importance of ten.
- 107 Achievement in Key Stage 2 is not as consistent but is satisfactory overall. In Year 3 pupils develop mental strategies; they gain confidence as the teacher encourages them to explain how they carried out particular calculations in their head. There are some weaknesses in this year in continuity of learning. Pupils do not always have the numeracy skills they need in order to carry out the tasks they are given to do. In Year 4 progress is not consistent. The work is not always targeted accurately and does not match attainment levels. The lower attainers are frustrated with work that is too hard for them, and higher attainers are not sufficiently challenged. Some pupils do not make the progress they are capable of. In Year 5 progress is good. The high expectations of the class teacher

encourage pupils to try hard. For example in one lesson they made good progress in understanding the equivalence of fractions and decimals.

- 108 In most classes higher attaining pupils achieve well, and this is indicated by the high percentage of pupils reaching higher than expected levels in the subject. They are sufficiently challenged by the level of work provided for them and by the high expectations of their teachers. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress alongside their peers. However, they are not always sufficiently supported and sometimes the work they are given does not match their level of understanding. Support, when available, is not always used to provide these pupils with more practical work to help develop their understanding. The achievement of girls is not as good as that of boys; they often lack confidence and need reassurance.
- 109 Pupils' attitudes throughout the school are good and often very good. They are interested in what they are doing and try hard. They are challenged by the level of work they are given, and make good efforts to complete tasks even when they find them difficult. They co-operate well and support each other positively. They attend very well and enjoy mental activity sessions, participating eagerly. They only become restless when the work they are given to do is not sufficiently challenging.
- 110 The quality of teaching in mathematics is good overall, but is more variable in Key Stage 2. The major strength in teaching is in the quality of planning. Lessons are carefully and effectively planned, with a range of different activities giving pupils plenty to do at an appropriate level. Occasionally the targeting of work is not quite accurate, but this is more likely to be an over-estimation of the understanding of lower attaining pupils, than an under-estimation of the higher attainers. Teachers' expectations are very high.
- 111 The over-reliance on published schemes, which was highlighted as a weakness in the last inspection, is no longer a problem. Teachers are much more confident in thinking for themselves and understand more confidently the mathematics involved in what they are teaching. They use their own resources very well. Class sessions are skilfully led; they are lively and involve all pupils. Pupils make good progress in developing their skills and confidence in these sessions. The good relationships in classes results in pupils feeling well supported; they are not afraid to make mistakes or to ask for help when they are 'stuck'. Teachers use computer software to support some of the basic number work in lessons, for example in working with amounts of money or practising converting decimals. But overall there is a lack of confidence in using information technology, for example in graph work.
- 112 The provision for mathematics in the school is good. The National Numeracy Strategy has been well implemented and it fits in well with the school's emphasis on developing mental strategies. The headteacher monitors the subject well and this has had an impact on quality of teaching and standards achieved. There has been more focus this year on target setting and this has been successful in raising standards. The headteacher has led the subject well but is soon to hand over the responsibility to a competent and enthusiastic new teacher. The transition period is being well managed.

SCIENCE

- 113 By the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in science matches the level expected for their age. For Key Stage 1, teacher assessments of science in 1999 confirmed that although pupils' overall attainment for science was below the national average, their attainment was in line with expectations for three out of the four National Curriculum areas of science. Only in the area of materials and their properties did attainment fall below the national average. These results reflect what the school expected for this cohort of pupils. Not only did the cohort include a high number of pupils with special educational needs but also assessments were made at a time when the school had identified raising standards in literacy and numeracy as a priority. Nevertheless, the number of pupils reaching the higher levels in all of the areas of science were in line with the national average, with attainment in physical processes being well above the average. Furthermore, when compared with similar schools, overall attainment was in line with the average and for those pupils reaching higher levels, attainment was above the average.
- 114 Overall inspection evidence confirms these results. By the end of the key stage, pupils are able to identify external parts of the body. They know that plants grow from seeds and that seeds need certain conditions to grow well. They use terms such as 'roots' correctly. They know external parts of the body, can classify living and non-living things and can distinguish between pushing and pulling forces. Pupils in Year 2 can distinguish between natural and man-made materials and can outline the uses of electricity. They are beginning to draw diagrams of simple electrical circuits.
- 115 The results of the 1999 national tests in science, showed standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were well below the national average. When compared with similar schools, attainment levels were well below the average. These results indicated a further fall in standards since 1997.
- 116 The school's senior management determined to address this situation. They conducted a very close analysis of every aspect of the test results. This has resulted in several policy changes for the provision of science in the curriculum. The scheme of work has been revised to allow more frequent attention to and revision of all aspects of the science curriculum. There has been a greater focus on experimental and investigative science throughout the school. Also a 'target' group has been identified for more focused support in the current Year 6 class, a class that has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. As a result of these actions, standards in science have improved and inspection evidence confirms that overall attainment is now broadly in line with the level expected for this age group.
- 117 By the end of the key stage, pupils have a detailed knowledge of the process of seed dispersal and pollination. Living creatures are classified as vertebrate or invertebrate and details of food chains can be explained. Similarly, there is a sound understanding of the functioning of the internal organs of the body, including blood circulation. There is detailed knowledge of nutrition, with most pupils able to distinguish between carbohydrates, fats and proteins and their importance. Pupils can explain the differences between solids, gases and liquids and recognise that some processes of heating and cooling are reversible.
- 118 Pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress in scientific understanding at Key Stage 1, with satisfactory progress made overall at

Key Stage 2. The increased focus on experimental and investigative sciences has resulted in good overall progress in this area with genuinely scientific approach encouraged. From Year 1, pupils' learning is based on hypothesis, prediction and observation using the senses and accurate recording. There is good progress in developing an understanding the requirements of a fair test and the raising of questions and finding of answers by investigation is being firmly established. For example, in Year 2, pupils were able to make simple decisions about equipment and strategies to investigate the sources and direction of sound.

- 119 A similar approach is encouraged in Year 3, with pupils investigating the effects of heat on different materials. Similarly, pupils in Year 4 have investigated the conductive properties of different materials. When investigating gravity, pupils in Year 5 have experimented with the rate of fall of materials of different weight and have learnt that a balance is created when upthrust equals the force of gravity. In Year 6, pupils have investigated the cleansing properties of detergents. In designing an experiment they appreciated the need for measured amounts and texture of dirt as well as water at a controlled temperature.
- 120 In the main pupils are attentive and show genuine interest in their scientific studies. They have developing observational skills and use appropriate vocabulary. They are supportive of each other and co-operate well when carrying out practical activities. When sufficiently challenged they show interest and sustained commitment. Most pupils answer questions with enthusiasm based on previous learning.
- 121 The teaching of science is good overall across the school. All lessons observed were at least satisfactory, with 60 per cent of teaching judged to be at least good. Fourteen per cent of teaching was very good. The best teaching is in evidence when there is good subject understanding and thorough planning together with high expectations of the pupils, including those with special educational needs. Most lessons are well paced and based on previous learning. In one lesson for Year 5, there was very good pace to the teaching and the teacher displayed very good questioning skills. The teacher ensured that there was a good balance between imparting knowledge and instructions and opportunities for pupils to observe different plants and use their knowledge to come to conclusions about the functioning of a stem. Also correct scientific vocabulary was used and this complements the school's strategy for improving standards of literacy. Similarly in Year 2, opportunities were planned for pupils to think about and make decisions about the direction and source of sounds.
- 122 One key factor that distinguishes the good teaching, is the degree to which teachers plan activities to challenge the full range of pupils' abilities. In some lessons all pupils are required to undertake the same tasks. However in other lessons teachers plan for different level of ability. In Year 6 for example, higher attaining pupils investigate detergents in terms of their molecular structure and are able to give reasons for 'rogue' results of their experiments expressed in scientific terms.
- 123 The co-ordination of science through the school is satisfactory. Recent focused work on the part of the senior management team has effectively brought about an improvement in standards. The science co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and is aware of what is being taught. He is however not himself clearly aware of what the standards are and how they can be improved.

ART

- 124 At the end of both key stages pupils' attainment in art matches that expected for their age. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. By the end of the reception year pupils have explored colour and shape. They use tools confidently and paint with a good level of control and imagination. In Year 1 pupils have used charcoal and pencil to create effective observational sketches of shoes, and again in Year 2 they have followed similar techniques to produce well-observed drawings of musical instruments. From the earliest days in school pupils learn to mix their own paint colours and by the end of the key stage they use colour sensitively in their designs. Much of their work across all areas of the curriculum is well illustrated and pupils make good use of a variety of materials and textiles when creating large collage pictures.
- 125 Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 have made silhouettes of themselves by drawing round their shadows and have produced some carefully painted shields. Three-dimensional work on Greek tragedy masks offered good opportunities for pupils to experiment with the application of paint creating different colours and effects. In Year 5 pupils produce good observational drawings of classroom plants, carefully considering light and dark areas and using a variety of techniques to create shading. The decoration of Egyptian pots successfully extended pupils' knowledge of design in other cultures and some effective flower paintings have been produced following a study previously made of the work and style of the artist Vincent VanGogh. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils paint colour-wash backgrounds on which to super-impose bridge designs at a later date, whilst others carefully copy pictures of the Tyne Bridge using a grid of squares to aid their drawing. Recent work with local artists, creating designs and posters as part of an anti-racism project, has involved valuable work with other schools and broadened pupils experiences and knowledge through visits to galleries and museums
- 126 Pupils enjoy art activities and work well on their own and in collaboration with others. Their concentration on the observational drawing tasks is good and enables them to produce some work of appropriate quality.
- 127 From the extent and quality of pupils' work and the few observed lessons, teaching is judged to be satisfactory. When at its best, pupils are encouraged to experiment and develop their own imaginative and creative skills, but little use is made of sketchbooks to note observations and experiment with design and composition. There is a useful scheme of work in place to support teaching which lists topics and skills to be taught, however, due to staff changes, teachers presently lack the guidance of a co-ordinator. There is a satisfactory range of resources, which are supplemented as necessary to meet all the needs of the curriculum, and they are readily available in all classrooms.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 128 It was only possible during the inspection to observe two design technology lessons. However, judging from the policy documents, teachers' planning and pupils' displayed work, a satisfactory curriculum is in place. This evidence is consistent with attainment that matches the national expectations at the end of each of the key stages. Pupils, including those with special educational needs,

are working at expected levels and, in the lessons seen, make satisfactory progress.

- 129 In the reception year pupils draw and list the things they will require before making a pair of spectacles out of card, and they make vehicle models using construction equipment. Throughout Key Stage 1 pupils continue to develop their construction skills and by the time they reach the end of the key stage they make model box vehicles incorporating wheels and axles. In Key Stage 2 pupils design and make papier-mâché masks. Their initial plans are carefully drawn, and include a list of materials required and an indication of the making process. Plans are adapted later to overcome any difficulties experienced during the making stage. In Year 4 pupils begin to investigate the practical problems involved in making shadow puppets and, through discussion, they select the most appropriate solutions to overcome them appraising outcomes as they proceed.
- 130 All pupils respond well in lessons and work with interest and concentration. They value the opinions of others and share ideas readily.
- 131 Teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory. Pupils acquired new skills and developed their ideas collectively through whole class projects. Teachers ensured that the cycle for designing, making and evaluating was well used. However, there was generally too much direct intervention which limited the opportunities for individual experimentation and pupils sometimes had little scope to select their own materials and tools.
- 132 The subject is satisfactorily co-ordinated and the documentation is in place to support teachers' work. The co-ordinator offers advice when required and ensures that all resources are available to maintain satisfactory provision. Resources are supplemented as necessary and most are stored in trolleys in appropriate teaching areas. The co-ordinator runs a good after-school club that is well attended. Pupils are enthusiastically involved in their own projects and complete their models over a period of time.

GEOGRAPHY

- 133 There were no opportunities to observe geography lessons in Key Stage 1 classes during the period of the inspection. As a result, judgements are based on scrutiny of pupils' work and classroom displays as well as the four lessons observed in Key Stage 2 classes. By the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment in geography matches what is expected for their age. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in the subject.
- 134 At Key Stage 1, pupils show an awareness of the geography of the local area and higher attaining pupils are able to explain the different features of their surroundings. In Year 1, pupils draw plans of their classroom showing a sense of location and scale, and by the end of the key stage pupils draw simple maps and show, for example, their routes to school. Some pupils are able to plan real journeys using maps and showing an understanding of the importance of keys. There is less awareness of places beyond their locality.
- 135 This work is continued and developed at Key Stage 2. In Year 4, pupils use maps to examine the local transport systems, as well as routes to European capital cities. In Year 6, maps and aerial photographs complement fieldwork in the local area. In focusing on traffic, features of landscape, land usage and economic activity, this work provided a sound basis for work on a contrasting location. Pupils

in Year 5 are able to distinguish between countries and continents. They are able to contrast features of the local area with Bangladesh, in terms of climatic conditions and their impact on flora, fauna, lifestyle and economic activity. In so doing pupils develop an understanding of specific terminology such as `monsoon`.

- 136 Across both key stages, there is satisfactory progress in the understanding and use of symbols, map use and understanding of direction and location. At Key Stage 2, there is satisfactory progress in the use of secondary sources as well as maps, including Ordnance Survey maps using grid references and co-ordinates. The accurate use of vocabulary, such as that describing for weather conditions, complements the school's strategy for developing literacy. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are developing an understanding of settlements, appreciating why settlements grew in particular locations and the importance of landscape and natural resources in determining economic activity.
- 137 In the few lessons observed, pupils' attitudes were at least satisfactory. They showed interest in their work and were keen to take part in discussion. When appropriately challenged, pupils worked conscientiously on individual and collaborative activities. On occasions however, an unacceptable noise level that is not always checked affects pupils' learning adversely.
- 138 The scrutiny of work as well as the lessons observed indicates that teaching is mainly satisfactory and sometimes good. The best teaching is characterised by good use of sources, effective questioning and lively and well-paced demonstrations. However, some activities tend to be over-directed by the teachers with too much instruction and explanation, particularly for higher attaining pupils. Similarly, the planning of some lessons does not take into account the range of abilities in the class. For example, in a lesson for older pupils, more use of co-ordinates should have been expected in identifying features of the local landscape.

HISTORY

- 139 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in history matches that expected for their age, and pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress in the development of historical skills. Pupils in Year 1 are beginning to develop an awareness of differences between past and present. Focusing on different toys, they know that there have been changes in the types of materials used and in the technology involved in the way that they work. In this way, for example, pupils are beginning to appreciate the impact of the introduction of electricity on peoples' lives. Pupils are developing an understanding of chronology by knowing that popular toys have changed and that different toys are enjoyed by children of different ages. This is developed further in Year 2 in which pupils plot time-lines with details of famous people and events. This complements, for example, their knowledge and understanding of the life and achievements of Florence Nightingale and the details of the Great Fire of London. The use of primary source material in the study of the latter contributes to the development of pupils' skills of historical enquiry. They used extracts from the diary of Samuel Pepys to learn details of the Great Fire.
- 140 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment matches that expected for their age and overall, all pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils in Year 4 have a detailed knowledge of the Tudor monarchs and of aspects of daily life in that period. They also know about famous seafarers of the time and higher attaining pupils have an appreciation of the significance of the Reformation. Similarly, pupils in Year 5

have detailed factual knowledge of Ancient Egypt, understanding the importance of the River Nile and the details of the political and social hierarchy of the time. In Year 6, pupils know about pre-war unemployment as well as details of the experiences of people in Britain during World War Two. In Year 3, pupils appreciate the painstaking process of accumulating evidence about Ancient Greece and Roman Britain. However, the development of historical skills is not maintained consistently. The emphasis on factual knowledge excludes, for example, the use of primary source material such as newspapers and reminiscences and an evaluation of the reliability of such sources. The main reason for this is that planning at Key Stage 2 focuses on knowledge only. Therefore, although planning is monitored by the subject co-ordinator, this lack of consistency is not identified.

- 141 In the few lessons observed, pupils' attitudes and responses were good. They showed interest and enjoyment in their work. They were keen to take part in discussion and worked conscientiously on individual and collaborative activities.
- 142 The scrutiny of pupils' work, as well as the few lessons observed, indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. The best teaching occurs when lessons are well prepared with challenging activities designed to extend previously learned knowledge and skills of the full range of pupils' abilities. This aspect of planning and teaching is not consistent across the school, partly because the scheme of work does not provide sufficient guidance to teachers about strategies for meeting specific National Curriculum requirements such as the skills of historical enquiry.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 143 In the last inspection information technology was found to be satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and more variable in Key Stage 2, with teacher confidence and lack of equipment being the major factors limiting progress. Although there have been improvements, for example in the range of experiences pupils have, the picture is a similar one now. However, the school has identified this as a priority for development and plans are well in hand for improvements in facilities and professional development of teachers.
- 144 In Key Stage 1, pupils achieve well and the standards attained by the oldest pupils are in line with what is expected. In the reception class, children have a good experience of computers and they become familiar with their use. They confidently use the 'mouse' and keyboard to control effects on screen and are happy to use computers as part of their normal activities. In Year 1 pupils begin to use word processing, for example to make labels. They learn how to use a CD-ROM to find out information.
- 145 By the end of the Key Stage, Year 2 pupils have good word processing skills and they draft and edit their work effectively. With support, they save and retrieve their work. They have had experience of making graphs and of making decisions in an adventure game situation. They are very confident with control technology. Most pupils have an understanding of how to control Roamer by giving instructions and many successfully make a sequence and describe the effects of their actions.

- 146 In Key Stage 2, achievement is more variable and attainment at the end of the key stage is below what is expected. In Year 3, pupils combine graphics and text and they learn to use a database. In Year 4, they collect data and use information technology to put it into graph form. They begin to interrogate this information. In Year 5, pupils use spreadsheets and use design software to create pictures and patterns. They develop their skills in control technology.
- 147 By Year 6, pupils have had some good experiences of information technology, but they do not have the confidence to use it independently, nor do they regard computers as part of their normal classroom equipment. They have not had sufficient opportunity to develop the skills they need. For example, they have used a CD-ROM for finding information, but have not reached the stage of framing questions and evaluating the information they get.
- 148 Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They want to learn and are willing to tackle tasks given to them. They work co-operatively and support each other well. For example, in Year 5 groups of pupils got on independently using 'logo software' and solving their own problems, whilst the teacher worked with the rest of the class. This level of independence of which pupils are capable is not always exploited to the same effect in other classes.
- 149 Teaching in the subject is satisfactory and often good. Teachers plan effectively for class lessons in which they teach and demonstrate skills. These sessions can be very well used, for example in Year 2 and Year 5 when control technology skills were being developed. In both of these lessons all pupils were actively involved and they made good progress. Teachers are good at using software to support other subjects, for example in practising number work or phonic skills. There are a few good examples of information technology being used more creatively to develop specific skills as well as supporting subjects. In Year 6 a digital camera was used and in Year 4 a mapping program was used, both to support geography. But this is not happening sufficiently for pupils to become confident with the skills.
- 150 On the whole pupils do not have sufficient access to computers on a regular basis to enable them to become confident and independent. This is often as a result of a lack of teacher confidence in certain aspects of the subject, and sometimes because of limitations in quality and quantity of suitable equipment. The school is addressing both of these issues. The new co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has a good level of expertise. She is capable of confidently moving the subject on in the school and bringing about improvements.

MUSIC

- 151 Attainment in music matches national expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. This is a similar picture to that seen at the time of the previous inspection.
- 152 In the reception year pupils learn a wide range of counting and action songs. They compose, record and perform rhythms using symbols to convey sound and silence. Through Key Stage 1 pupils become increasingly familiar with tuned and untuned percussion instruments, identifying them accurately from the sound display tables. By the end of the key stage pupils' listening skills are developing

appropriately. They mimic animal sounds incorporating them correctly into taped music and they enjoy singing familiar songs.

- 153 In Key Stage 2 pupils have a growing repertoire of known songs which they perform tunefully during hymn practices and assemblies. In Year 6 they recognise and describe the expressive quality in a piece of recorded music and they follow the written notation, being aware of phrasing during the singing of a Welsh lullaby. A visiting music teacher teaches all pupils in Year 3 the early stages of recorder playing and simple notation. From Year 4 to Year 6, pupils have the opportunity to continue with group recorder tuition in which many of them reach good standards in grade examinations. Recent work with musicians as part of an anti-racism project and regular visits from musical ensembles ensure that pupils' experience and musical knowledge is ever broadened.
- 154 Pupils enjoy music activities. They concentrate well on all occasions and handle instruments with care. An after-school percussion club is well attended and pupils demonstrate a pleasing commitment.
- 155 Teachers have varied subject knowledge and skills. They take their ideas from a commercial scheme that they use appropriately to compensate for any lack of expertise and confidence. They make good use of cassette recordings to extend pupils' experiences by developing their appreciation of music and their perceptive listening skills. Although the full range of the music curriculum is evident in the scheme of work, teachers emphasise the listening, performing and appraising elements of the subject and opportunities for composition are more limited. Co-ordination of the subject has been uneven due to teacher absence, although staff work hard to compensate for the lack of regular support and guidance. Resources are of good quality and adequately meet the needs of the curriculum

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 156 The last inspection referred to an imbalance of time devoted to each area of physical education. This has been addressed to a large extent. There is now a more even balance between the time allocated to athletics, gymnastics, games and swimming. Nevertheless the quality of provision for dance varies across the school, according to individual teachers' interest and confidence in this aspect of the subject. Other than country dancing, there is very little creative work involving the use of body movements in mime or moving to music to express feelings or develop a theme. Dance is represented in the scheme of work for the subject, but this does not offer guidance regarding ideas for purposeful or creative activities. Similarly, there are no current opportunities to develop skills associated with outdoor activities in different environments, even though there is the necessary expertise on the staff to develop this area. The physical education curriculum is however supplemented by extra-curricular sports including football and aerobics. These are well attended and available to boys and girls.
- 157 All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall in developing their physical skills, achieving a standard that is expected for their age. Due to specialised coaching, pupils achieve good standards in soccer skills. This was noted particularly in Year 4, with pupils' ability to trap and dribble at speed, using the sole and side of the foot. They showed good recall of previous learning about the best position of different parts of the body for 'throw-ins'. All pupils have the opportunity to go swimming throughout

Years 4 and 5. After this experience almost all pupils meet the expectation to swim 25 metres and a large number can swim greater distances. However the very small number of pupils who have not reached this target do not have the opportunity to achieve it in Year 6.

- 158 In lessons, pupils know the importance of warm-up and cool-down at the start and end of activities. They are aware of the importance of safety implications in particular activities and know about the effects of sustained exercise on the body. In the gymnastics observed, pupils show a good awareness of space and develop thoughtful sequences involving, hopping, skipping, running and jumping and apply these sequences to apparatus work. Pupils develop sound techniques in a variety of traditional games skills such as passing, aiming, throwing and catching. For example, pupils in Year 2 progressed in their ability to catch and throw at different heights and moving at different speeds. Most show the ability to work effectively with a partner in such work. Similarly, when given the opportunity, many pupils were able to evaluate their actions and make purposeful refinements.
- 159 Most pupils enjoy physical education lessons particularly when there is a brisk pace set and where instructions are clear. The procedures for changing and leading to and from the hall are conducted very efficiently. When the teaching is confident and enthusiastic, pupils respond with interest and attention and try their best. In some instances, such as when there are delays in preparing apparatus, some pupils become restless and distracted.
- 160 The quality of teaching seen was satisfactory overall, however not all teachers were observed. In the lessons seen there were clear objectives and appropriate, well-structured strategies to achieve these objectives. The best teaching was characterised by a very secure subject knowledge that ensured a confidence in demonstration and setting high expectations for the pupils to achieve and improve their performance. This was observed in the teaching of soccer skills by a visiting coach and by the co-ordinator in the reception class.