

INSPECTION REPORT

All Saints' Catholic Primary School

Lanchester, Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114255

Headteacher: Mr A Reather

Reporting inspector: Mrs S Walker
21045

Dates of inspection: 21 - 22 May 2002

Inspection number: 198562

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Kitswell Road
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr S McKenna

Date of previous inspection: November 1997

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REPORT CONTENTS

Page

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

6

Information about the school
How good the school is
What the school does well
What could be improved
How the school has improved since its last inspection
Standards
Pupils' attitudes and values
Teaching and learning
Other aspects of the school
How well the school is led and managed
Parents' and carers' views of the school

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

10

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

14

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

18

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

19

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a small Catholic primary school situated in the residential village of Lanchester, a few miles outside the city of Durham. There are 116 pupils on roll; 61 boys and 55 girls, almost of all of whom are of white British heritage. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. Most of the pupils are drawn from the village, though about a quarter of them come from outlying areas. About six per cent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils from homes where adults have benefited from higher education is much higher than the national average. There is a wide spread of attainment in the school, although the attainment of the majority of pupils when they start school is average. Most of the children have attended nursery prior to starting school. There are 28 pupils (24 per cent) on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs, which is well below average nationally. Two of the pupils have statements of special educational need because they have learning difficulties. The school has an increasing number of pupils from the Travellers community. Currently 12 pupils (10 per cent) are Travellers. The school roll has increased by 18 per cent since the last inspection, resulting in a shortage of space, soon to be remedied by an extension to the existing school building. As a result one of the classes is taught in the hall each morning. There are five classes each morning session and four each afternoon. The school recently received an Achievement Award from the Department for Education and Skills.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school where pupils are attaining high standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave. In most lessons the teaching is good or very good and pupils learn well. The sound leadership and management of the headteacher have created a good team spirit and sense of community that is valued by parents. The school gives satisfactory value for money; the high costs of educating pupils in this small school are offset by the good teaching and the standards achieved by most of the pupils.

What the school does well

- By the time they leave the school pupils attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Most of the teaching is good and pupils are learning well.
- The school has a caring 'family' atmosphere; pupils are polite and well behaved and have good attitudes to school.
- Pupils with special educational needs are catered for well and they make good progress.
- The curriculum is enhanced by additional enriching musical and cultural activities.

What could be improved

- Standards in reading and writing by the end of Year 2.
- Provision for children in the reception class.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning to strengthen the leadership within the school.
- The quality of the learning environment.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in 1997 the school has made sound improvement and the relatively few issues have been tackled conscientiously. The teaching has improved because there is now a better match of work to the needs of individuals and groups of pupils. There has been increased emphasis on the provision of pupils with special educational needs with the result that provision is

now a strength of the school. The school has been concerned with raising attainment in writing for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and several new initiatives have recently been introduced to help with this, including target setting for each class and for individuals. This is now working well because teachers are able to monitor more closely the progress made by each pupil. The provision in the reception class has been reorganised to take account of national guidance but there is much work still to be done to ensure high quality provision for the youngest children. The school has produced schemes of work for history, design and technology and speaking and listening though the impact of these has yet to be measured.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	A	A	A
mathematics	A	A	A	B
science	B	B	A*	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table above shows that in 2001 in national tests standards in English and mathematics were well above average. In comparison with results in schools with a similar intake standards were well above average in English and above average in mathematics. In science, results were very high and in the top five per cent in the country. They were well above average when compared to results in schools with a similar intake. There has been an improving trend year on year in all three subjects. The school met its targets for improvement comfortably in 2001. It is unlikely to do so in 2002 however, because there are more pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6 and consequently in this year group standards are lower than last year. Inspection judgements confirm that standards throughout Years 3 to 6 are generally above average. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs are achieving well and making good progress.

Over the past four years results of tests and assessments in reading and writing for pupils in Year 2 have not matched the high standards seen in Year 6. Results in reading have been below average every year, dipping to well below average in 1999. In writing they have been well below average, though in 2000 they picked up to above average. In comparison with schools with a similar intake, results in 2001 were well below average in reading and very low in writing (lowest five per cent in the country). Although the majority of pupils are reaching the expected level for their age in reading and writing, they are not achieving as well as the older pupils because too few pupils are reaching the higher levels. The picture is much better in mathematics, in which results rose from average in 1998 and 1999, to above average in 2000 and in 2001. This places the school above average when compared with similar schools. It should be noted that there are considerable variations in the size and make-up of the groups of pupils and this has some bearing on the performance of the school as the results of just one pupil can make a significant difference to overall results. Inspection findings indicate that standards of work are better than results of tests and teacher assessments would suggest. The unvalidated results of 2002 tests and assessments confirm this, showing an improvement on previous years, with all pupils reaching the expected level and a few reaching the higher level.

There is a wide spread of attainment when pupils start school, but most have average skills in literacy, numeracy, speaking and listening. These are not built upon well enough throughout the reception year, however, and so some children are not making the progress they should.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils concentrate well, listen attentively and take their schoolwork seriously. Their attitudes improve as they get older.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Most pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They know and apply the school rules sensibly and are very courteous and friendly.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Most pupils are mature and considerate of others. They relate very well to each other and can be relied upon to take responsibility when given the opportunities to do so.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils arrive on time and lessons start punctually.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Unsatisfactory	Good	Good

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.

The teaching is good overall and meets the needs of most pupils. The teaching in the reception class is not always effective because the tasks chosen tend to lack scope and challenge for children to make the progress of which they are capable.

There are several common strengths in the teaching in Years 1 to 6 that promote learning well. Teachers generally have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach. In particular the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is generally good because staff are confident with the strategies for literacy and numeracy, and as a result pupils learn well. Teachers' planning makes effective provision for the individual learning needs of the pupils in most, though not all, lessons and this has a positive impact on the progress made by the pupils. In all classes the teachers manage their pupils well so that there is a calm working atmosphere conducive to learning. This can be counter productive at times because it can limit the extent to which pupils, especially younger ones, develop their speaking and listening. In a few lessons there are not enough opportunities for pupils to take part in activities that require them to talk and to share their thoughts and ideas fully. The presentation of work is variable and sometimes untidy, especially when teachers' marking does not draw attention to the importance of neatness. Most lessons are well organised and teachers make good use of classroom assistants to support pupils who need extra help to learn.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall but unsatisfactory in the reception class because of the narrow range of experiences. An interesting range of additional activities enhances the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The provision is given a high priority in the school and it is well organised and co-ordinated. As a result pupils made good progress in their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school provides a strong moral and spiritual framework for the pupils to follow, which underpins all the school's work. This is based on the teachings of the Catholic church and a common belief in the values of respect and kindness. There is a strong sense of community.

How well the school	Very well. The school takes very good care of the pupils and has a
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cares for its pupils	high regard for health and safety considerations. There are effective systems for checking the pupils' progress and for child protection.
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The school has good links with parents, particularly through the thriving Parent Teacher Association, and most parents have positive views of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The leadership and management by the headteacher gives clear direction but monitoring is insufficiently rigorous to support developments. Co-ordinators manage their subjects efficiently and the assistant headteacher provides a very good level of support to all.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors serve the school well. They are knowledgeable and very supportive of the school. They take their responsibilities seriously and several are actively involved in the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school is using statistical data to evaluate its performance and to set new targets.
The strategic use of resources	Governors are committed to maintaining small classes and providing the maximum amount of support for pupils with special educational needs. They target funding carefully to achieve these aims, applying the principles of best value though evaluation of the effectiveness of their spending decisions is informal.

The building presents several difficulties that have an adverse impact on teaching and learning. One class has no permanent base, being taught in the hall each morning. This restricts the use of the hall for other activities such as physical education. Some of the classrooms are cramped with very limited space for practical activities to take place. The library area is small and classroom provision does not compensate for this by displaying and storing books attractively. Parts of the building are cluttered and untidy. Work is due to commence on an extension to the building, which will provide welcome additional teaching space.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teaching is good. • Pupils' behaviour is good. • The school helps pupils to become mature and responsible. • The teachers have high expectations. • They would feel comfortable approaching the school with problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents are unhappy about the amount of homework. • Some would like more information about the progress their child is making. • Some would like more activities outside of lessons.

Inspection findings support parents' positive views of the school and also their concerns regarding homework and information about progress. There is inconsistency between classes in the amount and regularity with which homework is given. Although the school provides plenty of information to parents through written communications there is little to tell them what children will be learning in their lessons so they can help at home. The school provides two formal occasions per year when parents may talk to staff about the progress pupils are making, which is similar to most schools. The range of activities that the school provides over and above the national curriculum is good and broader than in most small schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

By the time they leave the school pupils attain good standards in English, mathematics and science.

1 As at the time of the last inspection attainment in these three subjects is generally above average by the time pupils leave the school at eleven years of age. Pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their starting points because of the good teaching.

2 In national tests in 2001 results at the end of Year 6 were well above average in English and mathematics and very high in science; indeed, the science results placed the school in the top five per cent in the country. Not only are the school's results above average, but there has also been an improving trend in all three subjects year on year. This trend is illustrated particularly well by the improving picture in science, in which results have risen from average in 1998, to above average in 1999 and 2000, culminating in a very high standard in 2001. This compared very favourably with results in similar schools. The school successfully met its targets for both seven and eleven-year-olds in 2001. In comparison with similar schools the school performs well, although there are variations between year groups, especially when groups are small. The performance of just one pupil in such groups can affect overall results dramatically. The current Year 6 class is predicted to do less well in national tests in 2002 than last year's group because of the greater proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the class, whereas next year's group is expected to surpass all previous results. Inspection judgements confirm this view.

3 Inspection judgements match the school's views of pupils' attainment in each year group and also test results by the end of Years 6 in English, mathematics and science. Although standards in these subjects are generally above average they vary from year to year as the composition of the groups varies. The standards in the current Year 6 group are not as high as they have been in previous years, though the majority of pupils are achieving the appropriate level for their age.

4 By the time they are eleven most pupils are generally confident speakers who can articulate their thoughts maturely in conversations and discussions. The majority of pupils in Year 6 read fluently with understanding at the level expected for their age; average and lower attainers are more hesitant and tend to lack expressions or intonation when reading aloud. The daily literacy lessons have been implemented well and pupils develop secure skills in spelling, grammar and punctuation, which they use correctly when writing for a suitably broad range of purposes. For example, they write play scripts, poetry, letters and factual accounts. Pupils use their writing skills frequently in other subjects of the curriculum, for example when they record their findings in science or geography. Higher attaining pupils use an increasingly varied vocabulary to add colour to their writing. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress over time as their skills are consolidated through specially modified tasks that are well matched to their levels of attainment. Higher attaining pupils too are suitably challenged by their work.

5 Most pupils are good at expressing their thoughts in writing and do so with an increasingly mature style. Pupils in Year 6 have developed the habit of drafting and amending their work and they have become increasingly proficient in planning out their imaginative writing, giving consideration to the characters, the opening paragraph to capture the interest of the reader and the development of the plot. In handwriting lessons many pupils produce neat, carefully formed letters in a fluent joined style but these skills are not always transferred to other types of written work and the appearance is often untidy. Of particular note is the way in which pupils evaluate each other's work critically, providing an opportunity for them to suggest improvements. One pupil for example, observed ... 'It is good but you should have used some similes'.

6 Attainment in mathematics is above average throughout the school and most pupils are achieving well in the subject as a result of the very secure grounding they get in basic skills during the daily numeracy lessons. Pupils become increasingly proficient in mental calculation as a result of the well-paced mental sessions at the start of each lesson and consolidate their skills in written tasks that are well planned to meet their differing needs. Good encouragement and practical support is provided for pupils who find learning difficult and these pupils achieve well and make good progress. Although pupils are proficient with calculating numbers they are less adept at using their mathematical knowledge to solve problems. This has been highlighted by the school's analysis of test results and is an area for further development.

7 The school achieves consistently high standards in science in national tests in Years 2 and 6 because of the good teaching and the thorough preparation for the tests. Analysis of results has indicated that pupils perform well in all aspects of the subject except investigative science. This has been a focus for development and has improved as a consequence. When teaching is good pupils are given interesting practical activities, which strengthen their scientific knowledge and skills, and this enables them to achieve well. In a good lesson in Year 3 /4 for instance, pupils made sensible predictions about where they might find different types of insects and then drew upon their previous knowledge of habitats to justify their ideas.

Most of the teaching is good and pupils are learning well.

8 Teaching in the majority of lessons observed was good. It was very good in about one third of the lessons seen. There are several strengths in the teaching that are common to all classes and successful in promoting effective learning. In Years 1 to 6 teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and often their personal enthusiasm for a subject shines through, making lessons lively and fun. This was especially evident in music and French lessons. In a very successful music lesson for example, pupils in Year 6 were able to refine several different musical skills as they learned about timbre in a lively rendition of 'Dem Bones'. The lesson worked well because the teacher was able to play a catchy accompaniment on his guitar, which made the singing enjoyable. The performance improved as the lesson progressed because the teacher wove in plenty of information that encouraged pupils to appreciate the nuances of the music.

9 The way in which teachers mark pupils' work is generally good. Not only is it encouraging and supportive, but the best examples, notably in Year 6, give pupils a clear indication of how well they are doing and what they must do to improve. The presentation of work is variable and sometimes untidy, especially when teachers' marking does not draw attention to the importance of neatness.

10 All teachers have good relationships with their classes and maintain a calm working atmosphere that promotes learning well. This can limit the extent to which pupils develop their speaking and listening however, particularly for younger pupils, because sometimes there are too few opportunities for them to give extended answers to teachers' questions and to share their thoughts and ideas fully. This skill, which ultimately helps pupils with their writing because it encourages them to frame their thoughts before speaking, is not developed as well as it might be. Teachers all have high expectations of pupils' behaviour; pupils know this and invariably rise to those expectations.

11 A key issue at the time of the last inspection was that planning did not make sufficient provision for the individual learning needs of the pupils. This has been remedied well since then and in most lessons planning is well matched to pupils' needs. A notable exception to this is in occasional lessons where the spread of ability is too wide for one task to cater effectively for all pupils, for example in a lesson in which pupils from two year groups were taught together for geography. This limited the progress made by some pupils because the task was too easy for older, higher attaining pupils, and too difficult for others. By contrast, in literacy lessons when the tasks are very well matched to learning needs pupils make very good gains in learning. This was seen in a very good lesson when pupils in Year 2 solved riddles and puzzles as they developed their comprehension skills through challenging independent work.

12 Most lessons are well planned and organised with clear learning outcomes that are shared with the pupils so they know what they are expected to learn. Support assistants are generally deployed well to maximise their impact with small groups of pupils. In the best lessons there is a brisk pace that keeps pupils motivated and on the ball. When parts of lessons become overlong pupils tend to become restless and their concentration wanes, especially when expected to remain seated for lengthy periods. Questioning techniques are generally good, the best ensuring that all pupils are involved in discussions and that questions are pitched to challenge pupils of all levels of attainment.

13 When teaching is unsatisfactory it is because tasks have insufficient scope within them to provide enough interest or challenge to take learning forward and as a result children mark time. For example, in a session of outdoor play in the reception class children were whizzing round skilfully on their tricycles and practising weaving in and out of cones but beyond this there was little else to excite and challenge them or to refine their skills to enable them to make progress. Those who had no tricycle had nothing to do and so the time was not used to best advantage.

The school has a caring 'family' ethos; pupils are polite and well behaved with good attitudes to school.

14 Parents at the meeting prior to the inspection spoke warmly of the way in which the school promotes a caring atmosphere and a sense of community. In particular they praised the values upheld by the school and the way in which they are fostered. Inspection judgements support the parents' positive views. The school's aims are clearly set out in much of the documentation and underpin the work of the school. They are entirely suitable and are based on the traditions and beliefs of the Catholic faith, which is the cornerstone of the school.

15 Pupils throughout the school have good attitudes. They take their work seriously and concentrate well in lessons. Pupils of all ages take part in group and collaborative activities sensibly. They listen well to each other and respect the contributions made by others, even when views differ from their own. Teachers set good examples in the respectful way in which they talk to pupils and in their high expectations of good manners and politeness. As a result pupils are thoughtful and considerate in the way they interact with each other.

16 The 'family ethos' of the school is seen in the good knowledge teachers have of the families of the pupils and in the caring way in which pupils look out for each other. A good example of this was seen in the reception class as children prepared to play a class game. When the teacher asked who should start off the game one child spontaneously nominated a child who was celebrating his birthday. Pupils all know one another and are encouraged to be responsible; older pupils in particular willingly take on tasks that involve them in helping others. A group of Year 6 pupils, for example, regularly help younger pupils with their reading by practising word and letter recognition with them. Others undertake the duty of being a 'buddy' to younger pupils, helping them to make friends. The school welcomes pupils from the Travellers' community and they are fully integrated into the school family and are supported well. The effective additional support provided by specialist staff from the local education authority enhances the provision considerably.

17 The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is very good. The school has adopted a clear policy to promote good behaviour and this is working well in bringing about consistency among classes, particularly for those few pupils who find difficulty in conforming to the school's expectations. All pupils are aware of the school rules and they know what the consequences will be if they overstep the mark. Pupils play together amicably during break times, making good use of the items of equipment that are made available for them.

18 The school promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils well through the taught curriculum, assemblies and during lessons. Spirituality is an inherent part of all assemblies and spiritual awareness is also reinforced through music, discussion, personal reflection and appreciation of the natural world. At other times pupils extend their spiritual

awareness incidentally, as in a science lesson with insects when the teacher emphasised the importance of taking care of all creatures. Such special moments occur incidentally, however, and there is no guarantee that they will take place, as they are not included in curricular planning. Social and moral development is promoted well in class and group activities, in which pupils learn to negotiate, collaborate and share. These features are taught well from the very first days in school when in the reception class children learn to take turns and to listen to what others have to say. Through sensitive and thoughtful discussion of topical affairs, such as events in Afghanistan, older pupils gain an insight into some of the complex moral issues in the world today.

Pupils with special educational needs are catered for well and they make good progress.

19 Although the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the school is well below the national average, a number of pupils require special help to enable them to achieve their best. The needs of these pupils are met well through the careful systems that are in place and which are effectively co-ordinated by the assistant headteacher. There is a good level of support from the governor who has responsibility for special educational needs because she is involved and well informed. The school has fulfilled its commitment to special educational needs through careful financial management to fund a full-time classroom assistant for special educational needs.

20 Pupils who need extra support to help them to learn are identified at an early stage and their needs are carefully diagnosed and addressed in the individual education plans. Parents are fully involved at the beginning of the process and subsequently through regular review meetings. As a result of the effective provision pupils who are placed on the school's register of special educational needs make good progress and are removed from the register when it is felt they no longer need the additional support. When learning support is particularly effective it enables pupils with learning difficulties to gain confidence alongside their peers. A very good example of this was seen during a mathematics lesson in Year 6 when a group of pupils benefited from well-focused guidance and careful questioning by the support assistant. This enabled them to think hard and work independently in an interesting lesson investigating the content of newspapers.

21 The individual education plans for each pupil are carefully constructed by the co-ordinator in collaboration with the class teachers and meet the needs of the pupils well. Each plan has well defined learning targets and indicates the small steps to be taken to achieve the targets. Just occasionally these are too broad and insufficiently specific to translate into the most effective learning activities; for example, the objective 'to improve short-term memory'. The co-ordinator is very experienced and well qualified in this field and a good start has already been made in adapting the school's systems in readiness for the proposed changes to the Code of Practice. Pupils with specific needs are well supported by additional adults and through the effective programmes in their individual education plans. Where the school lacks expertise and experience in a particular field staff are acquainting themselves with the needs of the pupils and provision is improving.

The curriculum is enhanced by additional enriching musical and cultural activities.

22 The curriculum meets statutory requirements; it is relevant to the needs of the pupils. As in many other schools it has been weighted towards literacy and numeracy, as staff have worked hard to raise standards in English and mathematics. All pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from the regular teaching of French. This enriching feature is taught over and above the National Curriculum and is effective in helping to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education.

23 A key strength of the school is the provision for music. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting spoke enthusiastically of the high standards achieved and there are lots of opportunities for pupils to take part in performances and to join in with music making. A video recording of a delightful school production of 'Jason and the Golden Fleas', written and composed by the headteacher confirms this view. The show was performed at the comprehensive school, which enjoys good links with All Saints and the music was recorded onto a CD at a professional recording studio. This provided a valued memento of the experience for pupils and their families. Music

lessons are particularly successful when taken by a subject specialist who has the enthusiasm and skill to make them lively, challenging and above all enjoyable. The musical provision for a minority of pupils is enhanced by tuition in stringed and brass instruments provided by visiting teachers. There are thriving and popular clubs for pupils to learn to play keyboards and tin whistles.

24 For a small school the provision of extra curricular activities is good. The activities on offer meet the needs and interests of most pupils and the majority of pupils are involved in at least one activity, sometimes more. The range of activities caters for interests in sport, music and computers and these clubs extend the learning that takes place in class very well. Although a minority of parents indicated that they would like to see a broader range of activities made available, inspection judgement is that the school is doing a good job in extending the curriculum outside of school hours.

25 The school provides a range of additional enriching activities for the pupils, which support their learning and help to prepare them for the next stage of their education. As well as extending the geography curriculum the popular residential visits to Middleton enable pupils to develop their social skills well when they venture away from home, possibly for the first time. There are plenty of visits to local places of interest, such as Beamish Open Air Museum, the Roman wall and Botanical Gardens to enhance the curriculum and deepen pupils' understanding of the things they have been learning in class. One class recently visited Low Barns, a local nature reserve, to study wildlife and this has helped to strengthen their understanding of environmental issues. Other classes have been part of a re-enactment of a Viking lifestyle in an exciting event that brought history alive to the pupils.

26 The school has been actively involved in a number of worthwhile ventures that have strengthened the links with the community. For example, there have been reciprocal visits with a local special school, where pupils from All Saints worked and played alongside children with physical challenges and came to understand some of the difficulties they face. The school has been involved with an environmental project, planting trees in a newly formed 'Dora's Wood' woodland area, and is taking part in a 'Walk to School' initiative. Work is due to begin very soon on a project to improve to the school grounds. As a result of a project with a visiting artist all pupils in the school were able to design a small glass square to contribute to a large and colourful stained glass window, currently displayed in the school hall.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in reading and writing by the end of Year 2.

27 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are doing well in mathematics and science but they are not achieving so well in reading and writing. In national tests and assessments for seven-year-olds, results in reading have been lower than average consistently since 1998, dipping to well below average in 1999. Performance has been even lower in writing - well below average every year since 1998 except in 2000, when results rose to above average. In comparison with that of similar schools the school's performance in 2001 was well below average in reading and very low in writing. These results have been a matter of concern for the school for some time and a number of strategies have been put in place to tackle the issue. As a result there are clear signs of improvement. Inspection findings indicate that standards of work in pupils' books are better than results of tests and assessments would suggest. The unvalidated results of 2002 tests and assessments confirm this, showing an improvement on previous years, with all pupils reaching the expected level and a few reaching the higher level.

28 Most significantly, the groups of pupils taking the tests are often small and this can have a dramatic effect on results. For example, the disappointing performance of just one pupil in a small year group can lower the overall results significantly, (16 per cent in a group of only six pupils). However, the majority of children who start at the school have levels of attainment that are at least

average but this is not reflected in the results of tests and assessments in Year 2. Although most pupils achieve the level expected for their age in reading and writing very few reach a higher level and a proportion of pupils only just attain the expected level.

29 Despite the good teaching in Years 1 to 6 there has been a history of underachievement in reading and writing in Year 2 for several years, as can be seen from test results. Although variations in the make-up of the year groups go part of the way towards explaining this, aspects of the teaching are also contributory factors. First, provision in the reception class is not as effective as it should be in laying down the foundations of learning. Second, pupils in Year 1 do not benefit from the continuity of a single class teacher, as they are taught separately as a year group each morning but mixed in with other year groups each afternoon. During these sessions teachers do not always plan suitable work for the younger children and they lose time doing work that is too hard or too easy for them. Finally, teachers in Years 1 and 2 do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to fully use their speaking skills as a pre-requisite of effective writing and reading is not promoted to best effect.

30 The school has taken several positive steps to raise attainment in Years 1 and 2. Pupils are grouped by ability so that teaching can be more directly targeted to the capabilities of the pupils. In addition to this pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught in separate year groups during morning sessions to provide a better staffing ratio for English and mathematics. There is now regular support from parent helpers with reading. A recent major investment has been in a new reading scheme and additional resources for reading, though the impact of this has yet to be evaluated to see if it has been effective in raising standards. Teachers' assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2 have not been secure enough. To address this the school has produced a helpful file of pupils' assessed work as benchmarks to help bring about better accuracy.

31 The school has a 'reading record book' used as a link with parents. Although this system has the potential to have a positive impact on standards it is not working as well as it should because of the inconsistent way in which it is implemented by staff. Not all pupils take their books to read at home and many of the parents attending the meeting were critical of the inconsistencies in this system. The range of books to tempt pupils to read is narrow and each class lacks an inviting reading area to promote a love of reading or to encourage pupils to browse or find out information.

32 The school has taken a robust approach to analysing the written work of the pupils in order to identify key areas of weakness. As a result of better analysis of test results staff have identified specific aspects of writing that need further refinement and have addressed these in their planning. There is now a greater emphasis on the use of adventurous words and writing for a broader range of audiences. Work still needs to be done to raise the attainment of the pupils who are achieving a lower level. Homework is not used to best advantage to capitalise on the high level of parental support and to raise attainment.

33 The school is now making much better use of the information from data to help to understand where there are particular weaknesses in the curriculum and to help to plug any gaps in the teaching. The data is carefully analysed by the literacy co-ordinator to identify potentially higher attaining pupils and those who need extra help with their learning. The school is also using additional assessments to supplement national tests and assessments, as well as reading tests. The data is being used to track pupils as they move through the school to measure the progress they are making.

Provision for children in the reception class.

34 The school has invested much time and thought in implementing the new guidance for the Foundation Stage since September 2000 with support from the local education authority. However, there is still much work to be done to eliminate shortcomings in the teaching and to ensure that the provision for children in the reception class provides stimulation and challenge to get them off to a fine start in school.

35 There are several positive features in the reception class. Good relationships in the class create a secure environment for young children. The staff have a good rapport with children, who are familiar with daily routines such as registration or at milk time. Class management is sound overall and most children are clear about the boundaries of behaviour and the expectations of staff. The staff are developing through training and advice their expertise in managing children who present challenging behaviour.

36 During 'circle time', when children are encouraged to share their ideas, there are good opportunities for them to articulate their thoughts and listen to the contributions of their friends as they take turns to say, for example, which minibeast they would like to be. Children are attentive and on the whole listen well, but during discussions they are not all effectively drawn into the dialogue. Often the same children, usually the higher attainers, are called upon to answer most of the teacher's questions, while a significant number remain passive observers. Questions frequently require little more than a one-word answer. This means that some children do not develop their skills in speaking as well as they might or learn the art of framing their thoughts into a response.

37 When elements of the teaching are unsatisfactory it is because activities are not sufficiently well planned to provide high quality, stimulating experiences that match the learning needs of the children. Sometimes there is not enough scope within tasks to hold the attention of the children for the time planned. Activities, such as those in sand and water, often lack a clear learning objective and so children use the time to play and experiment by themselves. Whilst this freedom is very valuable in allowing children to find things out for themselves, without some adult interaction the teacher has no way of knowing what has been learned or understood and so the time is not used to best advantage. By contrast, when an adult supervised children working in clay for a time they sustained their concentration very well indeed and the time was used productively. The children made good progress in developing their manipulative skills as they used a range of tools to achieve different effects when carving a design into their clay pots.

38 Curricular planning does not take enough account of the stepping stones set out in national guidance for the Foundation Stage, which ensure that young children learn new skills and concepts in a clear and logical sequence. Children are grouped broadly according to ability but the teacher's planning does not make the best use of assessments to match activities closely to the children's stages of development and to ensure that learning builds on what has gone before. Consequently children often rehearse skills they have already mastered. Sometimes they work for lengthy periods with little or no adult intervention because the planning does not take enough account of the role of adults within the lesson. Other adults are not always sure of what is expected of them and the role they will take in the lesson and therefore best use is not made of their expertise.

The monitoring of teaching and learning to strengthen the leadership within the school.

39 The headteacher has been successful in creating a strong team among staff and in creating a culture in which staff are open to developing their skills. In general, however, the monitoring of the work of the school is unsatisfactory because it fails to identify key weaknesses so that appropriate action can be taken to bring about improvement.

40 Co-ordinators have begun a programme of monitoring in English, mathematics and science and this is working well. The system has been effective in providing staff with an insight into strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and a good means of sharing expertise and ideas. The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators in particular have developed a good overview of their subjects and it is intended to extend this monitoring to include further subjects. As a result of monitoring data, co-ordinators have successfully identified weaknesses in the curriculum that need to be remedied. They have also examined samples of pupils' work. But there are inconsistencies in the way in which staff tackle things and this has not been picked up in the monitoring. For example, the presentation of pupils' work is variable and untidy in some instances, yet this has not been addressed through the monitoring either by co-ordinators or senior management. There are also inconsistencies in the way homework is administered and reading diaries are used, which concern

some parents.

41 The school has a systematic programme for monitoring the quality of teaching. It is now well established and is an effective management tool and an effective part of performance management. Monitoring has a clear focus, which is shared with staff beforehand, and there is helpful professional dialogue and written feedback to leave teachers with pointers for further development. This form of monitoring has been effective in helping to maintain the good quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 though it does not yet extend to the close monitoring of pupils' work, for example to check that there are high standards of presentation and a consistency in marking. Most importantly it has failed to identify shortcomings in teaching in the reception class and to provide the necessary support, guidance and training to make improvements.

The quality of the learning environment.

42 The lack of space in the school building presents considerable difficulties which hinder teaching and learning, the most significant being the cramped classrooms for Years 3 to 6 and the organisation of five classes into four rooms, with the use of the hall as a classroom each day. However, best use is not made of the available space to make the learning environment an attractive and educative resource. The storage of materials and equipment is cluttered and untidy and items are not easily accessible. Many items take up space needlessly, especially in the hall, such as spare furniture and crates of books. The appearance of the building does not promote high standards of presentation or encourage pupils to take a pride in their school.

43 The learning environment is insufficiently stimulating and opportunities are lost to use it as a vehicle to promote learning. There are few high quality and interesting displays of work or collections of artefacts for pupils to look at and handle. Most classrooms have helpful aides-memoires to remind pupils of things they need to remember in literacy and numeracy. But there are few displays of pupils' work to remind them of what they have learned or to celebrate their efforts, nor is the environment language-rich to promote vocabulary and a love of reading. The quality of the mounting of some work undervalues it, for example by fixing pictures to walls with two drawing pins. The proposed new extension promises to bring fresh opportunities to improve the internal appearance of the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 44 Staff and governors should work together:
- [i] Improve standards in reading and writing for seven-year-olds so they match more closely those in mathematics and science;
[See paragraphs 27-33]
 - [ii] Improve the provision for children in the reception class;
[See paragraphs 13, 34-38, 41]
 - [iii] Strengthen monitoring of all aspects of the school's work so that timely action can be taken to tackle weaknesses;
[See paragraphs 5, 9, 11-13, 29, 31-32, 34-43]
 - [iv] Improve the quality of the learning environment.
[See paragraphs 42-43]

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	5	5	2	0	0
Percentage	0	37	26	26	11	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than five percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	116
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	28

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	9	3	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	11	9	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (83)	75 (85)	100(100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (95)	92 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

* Data has been omitted because there are fewer than ten pupils in the group.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	6	8	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	13	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (93)	100 (93)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	13	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (100)	100 (93)	100 (100)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

* Data has been omitted because there are fewer than ten pupils in the group.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	89
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	2	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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)	5.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	67

Financial information

Financial year	2000/- 2001
	£
Total income	282,893
Total expenditure	266,366
Expenditure per pupil	2,296
Balance brought forward from previous year	31, 831
Balance carried forward to next year	48,358

* The large carry forward figure includes funds set aside to finance the new extension.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	116
Number of questionnaires returned	56
Percentage response rate	48

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	41	48	7	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	46	7	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	55	4	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	16	54	21	7	2
The teaching is good.	45	50	2	4	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	25	45	25	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	34	9	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	36	4	5	0
The school works closely with parents.	29	55	15	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	41	41	13	5	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	36	57	5	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	48	18	7	9