

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ENGLISH MARTYRS' RC (VA) PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Sunderland, Tyne and Wear

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108842

Headteacher: Miss C Robson

Reporting inspector: Mr J J Peacock

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2002

Inspection number: 198625

Full inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Redcar Road  
Sunderland  
Tyne and Wear

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Telephone number: 0191 553 5540

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Father C O'Connor

Date of previous inspection: November 1997

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25344	J Peacock	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught?
12536	S Bullerwell	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20645	R Webber	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
10347	R Rodger	Team inspector	Geography History Music Foundation Stage Equal opportunities	
30597	R Howells	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Special educational needs	

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>5</b>
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	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM.</b>	<b>32</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school is one of a number of schools in the Sunderland Education Action Zone. It caters for pupils from three to eleven years of age and is about the same size as other primary schools nationally. There are 254 pupils on roll, 116 boys and 113 girls in ten classes and a nursery, which has places for 52 children to attend on a part-time basis. Numbers are about the same as they were in the previous inspection. Pupils come from an area which has a high level of unemployment following the decline of heavy industries. The attainment of most pupils when they enter the nursery is below that expected nationally.

About 21 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is broadly in line with the national average. The school has 69 pupils with special educational needs, which is broadly average. Three have a statement of special educational needs and this is about average. There is only one pupil from a minority ethnic background.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an effective school in more ways than one. Many strengths were identified in the previous inspection and these have largely been either maintained or improved upon. The very good leadership of the headteacher is the firm foundation, underpinning all that happens. Under her guidance, staff are not only concerned with academic performance, but with producing well-rounded pupils who are able to act responsibly, show respect for one another and their teachers and fully embrace the Roman Catholic faith. Her recipe for running a caring and happy school has helped to create a school community where staff and pupils alike feel valued. As a result, all pupils strive to do their best, showing a very good attitude towards their learning. Teachers work very well as a team, supporting one another and showing a strong determination to raise standards. When all these factors are considered, along with the above average level of funding for each pupil, the school is providing good value for money.

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

- The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good. It is instrumental in bringing about improvements to the quality of education and in raising standards.
- Pupils attain above average standards in five of the ten subjects inspected by the age of eleven. Standards in reading by age eleven are also above average and seven-year-olds do well in art and design.
- Pupils are proud of their school, show a very good attitude towards their work and enjoy very good relationships with everyone.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.
- The consistently good quality of teaching in the junior classes is largely responsible for the standards pupils achieve by the age of eleven.
- All staff are deeply committed to providing a worthwhile all-round education for pupils.

#### **What could be improved**

- Aspects of the Foundation Stage, which covers children's time in the nursery and reception classes.
- Standards in writing by the age of seven.
- The planning for pupils' personal, social and health education and drugs education.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION.

The school has efficiently and effectively managed to improve most of the issues raised in the previous inspection in November 1997. The quality of writing has been improved for eleven-year-olds but it still remains as a weakness for seven-year-olds. Standards in reading are above average by the time pupils are aged eleven due to the improvement in reading schemes, the development of better strategies to promote reading and the introduction of a consistent policy on reading at home. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly in all subjects and their marking gives clear guidance on how pupils can further improve their work. The biggest jump in improvement has taken place in teachers' expertise in information and communication technology (ICT). This has been aided by the school's involvement in the Sunderland Education Action Zone, which has provided training and additional resources. Teachers confidently use the well-equipped ICT suite and class computers to enhance pupils' learning in all subjects. One important area, raised in the previous report, was the lack of provision for pupils' drugs education. There is no policy for staff to follow and little evidence was found that pupils are made aware of the dangers they face. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented well, helping to raise standards. A result of all these changes for the better is the improvement in pupils' attitudes towards their learning.

## 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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	C	D	D	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	C	E	D	D	
science	B	E	D	D	

The table above shows that pupils' attainment in mathematics and science is recovering from a dip in standards compared to all schools in 2000. Compared to similar schools, pupils' performance in 2001 is below average in all three subjects. The pattern of results is similar for pupils aged seven, up one year, down another. A detailed analysis shows that pupils' overall performance is directly linked to the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in each year group taking the tests. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. If anything, boys tend to be closer to boys' performance nationally than the girls are at age eleven. The overall trend in results since 1997 shows that pupils' performance is in line with the national average. Pupils are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment but, because of the number with special educational needs, the school's overall performance is below average in the tests.

Inspection evidence shows that standards in mathematics and science, by the age of eleven, are above average and in line with those expected in English. Pupils do well in reading to achieve above average standards by age eleven. Their attainment is also above that normally seen in geography, ICT and physical education. Standards for pupils aged seven are in line with those expected in all subjects, except art and design, where they are above, and English, where a weakness in writing makes the overall standard below average. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve the early learning goals in all areas except their mathematical development. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. However, in the Foundation Stage, children with unclear speech are not provided with adequate support and their rate of progress is unsatisfactory.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and work hard. Most settle quickly, listen attentively and are eager to answer questions.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. They are polite, sensible, friendly children. No oppressive behaviour was observed during the inspection. One fixed-term exclusion, last year, reflects the school's high expectations.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Staff set a good example of consideration and respect for pupils to follow. The relationships between pupils and with teachers are very good, creating an effective climate for learning.
Attendance	Broadly in line with the national average. No unauthorised absence is recorded. Pupils are punctual, allowing lessons to start on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	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.*

In the 1997 inspection, the quality of teaching was reported as a strength of the school, in spite of identified weaknesses in each of the four key issues for improvement. Five new teachers have been appointed in the past two years and all have settled in well. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teaching is strongest in the junior section, particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6, where most of the lessons seen were either good, very good or excellent. This is mostly due to teachers' enthusiasm, experience, rapport with pupils and the way they engage pupils with well-planned and challenging tasks. The main weakness is in teaching writing in the infant classes. Overall, good, very good or excellent teaching featured in two-thirds of all lessons. Unsatisfactory teaching was seen in only two of the 77 lessons seen. This was due to problems with the organisation of the lesson and lack of clarity in what the pupils were expected to learn. In mathematics, science, ICT, art and design, music and physical education, teaching is good throughout the school. It is also good in design and technology and English in the junior department. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is satisfactory overall. Good teaching was seen in children's personal and social education and their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their mathematical and language development in the nursery. Although mathematics teaching is satisfactory overall in the reception classes, teachers' expectations of pupils and their knowledge of the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy need improving.

The quality of learning is satisfactory overall in the Foundation Stage and in the infant department. The good quality of learning in the junior classes reflects the consistently good quality of teaching and higher standards being achieved in half of the subjects inspected. All pupils are fully included in all activities and most work hard in lessons. Junior pupils work productively and produce neatly presented work in their exercise books. All pupils listen attentively and concentrate well in class. Pupils of all ages show maturity as they work independently of their teachers in pairs or small groups. Most sustain their concentration well.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met. However, planning for pupils' personal, social and health education and drugs education is unsatisfactory. The use of computers and links with the community effectively enhance the quality of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Individual learning targets are clearly defined but teachers often do not include these in their lesson planning to enable pupils to achieve them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The provision for pupils' spiritual development pervades the work of the school. Staff are good role models for pupils and many opportunities are provided to develop pupils' social skills. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. The school is not doing enough to promote pupils' awareness of cultural diversity.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good procedures exist for ensuring pupils' personal wellbeing. Pupils know that they are well looked after. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for tracking pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science.

Parents are very supportive. The good partnership between home, school and church has a positive effect on pupils' learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher demonstrates a high level of professional expertise, delegates responsibilities to key staff well and succeeds in inspiring all staff to work very effectively as a team. As a result, this is a happy school, getting the best out of its pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Led by an astute, knowledgeable and extremely hardworking chairman, all governors carry out their duties conscientiously with the best interests of pupils in mind. It is an effective governing body.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Standards are evaluated carefully. Monitoring the quality of teaching needs to be better planned and linked to subjects identified as priorities in the school development plan.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The finances are managed efficiently and best value is sought in all expenditure. The school management makes satisfactory use of new technology.



Support staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. However, there are too few helping in the junior classes. The accommodation is good but space for the library is limited and there is no free access to an outdoor play area for reception children. Resources are good overall and very good for ICT.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils like school and they make good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable about approaching school.</li> <li>• Pupils are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• The school helps pupils to become more mature.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• The amount of homework for pupils.</li> <li>• Information about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• The way the school works with them.</li> <li>• The way the school is led and managed.</li> </ul>

The return rate of the parents' questionnaire was low at just under 19 per cent. Inspectors agree with parents' positive responses. Inspection evidence shows that there is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, homework is about right for a primary school and the school has a good partnership with parents. Information provided for parents about pupils' progress is good, with the exception of the nursery, which needs to be on a par with the rest of the school. Inspectors disagree with those few parents who think the school is not well led and managed.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. The previous inspection in 1997 reported that standards for eleven-year-olds were in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. They were similarly in line for seven-year-olds in mathematics and science but below average in English. Since 1997, pupils' overall performance has fluctuated, one year up, another down. A detailed analysis by the school, and one that inspectors are in full agreement over, is that this variation is due to the proportion of pupils with lower ability or special educational needs in a year group. Even before the school had to replace five teachers, which it has in the past two years, the pattern existed. This is a happy, caring school where teachers know their pupils well and work extremely hard to help each one, whatever their ability, to achieve their full potential. Furthermore, pupils' attitudes are very good, as are their relationships with one another and their teachers. The climate for learning was reported as very good in 1997 and remains so today under the very good leadership of the headteacher.
2. Children enter the nursery with a wide range of attainment but for most it is below average. Many begin the nursery with below average skills in speaking and listening. Consistently good teaching enables all children to quickly settle into school routines and approach their learning positively. The teacher is supported very well by the conscientious nursery assistant, parent volunteers and, on occasions, students. Children transfer to the reception classes, having made good progress in most areas. However, because of the low starting point, many still experience difficulty with their communication skills. The quality of teaching in the two reception classes is satisfactory. Teachers are hampered to some extent because children in reception do not have the same freedom of access to an outdoor play area as those in the nursery. This limits the range of curriculum opportunities for them. Although the quality of teaching of the early learning goals in children's mathematical development is satisfactory, overall, weaknesses exist in teachers' expectations of what children can do. Their knowledge of the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy also needs improving. This is adversely affecting children's rate of progress. During the Foundation Stage, which covers children's time in the nursery and reception class, all children make good progress. Most are well placed to attain the early learning goals in their personal and social development and all other areas of learning, except mathematics, by the time they are ready to transfer to Year 1 when they begin the National Curriculum.
3. Inspection findings show that the attainment for seven-year-olds in mathematics and science is in line with the national average but in English it is below average. This is the same as in the previous inspection in November 1997 for all three subjects. In English, it is the standard of pupils' writing which causes the overall standard to be below average. The school's results are compared with those of other schools according to the number of pupils who are receiving free school meals. There is a slight improvement if the results are compared with those schools in the 20 to 35 per cent band and not the 8 to 20 per cent band. Twenty-one per cent of pupils are taking free school meals. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening and in reading are in line with those normally expected of seven-year-olds. The school has consistently tried to improve standards in all three subjects, with some success, in some years. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and an improvement in

aspects of teaching, such as class discipline and the assessment of progress, are beginning to have an impact.

4. In the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds, pupils' results compared to all schools nationally were below the national average in reading and well below in writing and mathematics. It was a low attaining cohort of pupils. There is no obvious trend in the school's results. In 2000, for example, pupils' performance in reading and writing was above average, below in 1999 and in line in 1998. When the school's performance is compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds in 2001, pupils' performance was well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teacher assessments in science show the number achieving the expected Level 2 or above was well below average. However, the proportion achieving at the higher Level 3 was in line with the national average. On inspection, the overall attainment in science for seven-year-olds was judged to be in line with the national average. A similar proportion of pupils to that found nationally, attained the expected Level 2 in the three areas tested in 2001.
5. In English, current work in Year 2 shows that pupils' speaking and listening skills are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to express themselves in class discussions and most listen attentively. The good strategies in place to promote reading show that the weaknesses highlighted in the previous report have been corrected. Reading is taught effectively, enabling pupils to develop good strategies for reading unfamiliar words. The close liaison between home and school, with parents regularly hearing their children read, is most certainly helping to improve standards and they are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils are provided with sufficient opportunities to write in most subjects. However, teachers are not giving pupils sufficient examples to follow when trying to improve their knowledge of letter sounds, spelling and sentence structures. In the literacy sessions, pupils are not provided with a very good range of different forms of writing, such as re-telling stories and composing letters or poems. Most form their letters correctly when doing their handwriting exercises. However, the neatness achieved when practising is not transferred to other work in their books.
6. In mathematics at Year 2, attainment is in line with the national average, with pupils achieving satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. This is mostly due to the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, which has had a marked effect on standards in mental mathematics in particular. Pupils work out sums involving addition and subtraction, multiplication and division of numbers up to ten quickly. They count forwards and backwards in twos, threes, fives and tens accurately and have a good grasp of the qualities of regular two-dimensional shapes, such as squares, triangles and circles. Much work of a practical nature is undertaken in science. In Year 2, for example, pupils know about sound waves and the correct procedures to follow when doing experiments.
7. Pupils attain standards which are in line with those normally expected for seven-year-olds in ICT. The effective use of the very good resources by teachers who display expertise in the subject account for the marked improvement in standards in ICT. In all other subjects, standards are in line with those expected, reflecting the satisfactory quality of teaching. In art and design, they are above average. This is largely due to the influence of the subject co-ordinator, who works in the infant department.
8. The satisfactory achievement of pupils after starting Year 1, and the standards they attain by the age of seven, are a reflection of the improvements in teaching and pupils' attitudes towards school. Almost all parents (96 per cent) who returned the

questionnaire, believe that the school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best. The inspection team recognised the strong impact that the headteacher, supported by key staff such as the deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators, is having on pupils' willingness to work and determination to do well.

9. The good quality of teaching, particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6, is mostly responsible for the standards being achieved by eleven-year-olds and quality of learning experiences for pupils. Out of ten subjects inspected, pupils are achieving standards which are above those expected for pupils of this age in five of them. Pupils' level of achievement, taking account of the way most pupils with special educational needs meet their targets, is good. Many of the standards reported in the previous inspection have been improved upon, not least those in ICT and design and technology, which were below average in 1997. Parents, at the meeting prior to the inspection, agreed that standards generally are improving. In the current Year 6 class, inspection evidence confirms that standards in English are in line with those expected nationally and in mathematics and science, they are above average. In English, pupils' listening skills are good and their standard of reading is above average.
10. The results of National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-old pupils in 2001 show that attainment was below average compared to the national average in English, mathematics and science. When these results are compared with those of pupils from similar schools, they remain below average in all three subjects. As with the test results for seven-year-olds, the make-up of the cohort of pupils taking the tests accounts for pupils' overall performance, rather than any weaknesses in the quality of teaching or learning. The successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is having a positive effect on standards for all pupils, particularly in English and mathematics.
11. When the school's results since 1997 are averaged out, the trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for all core subjects is in line with the national trend. Taking into account the often high proportion of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, the standards attained reflect the quality of provision in the junior classes. As pupils move up the school, they grow in maturity and act responsibly. Most concentrate well in lessons and produce neat work in their books.
12. In English, well-chosen texts and the teachers' skill in drawing pupils' attention to important differences in writing styles and content improve pupils' reading and writing skills as well as widening their vocabulary. The partnership between home and school in reading remains strong and this also contributes effectively to the above average achievement and good progress pupils make in reading. In mathematics, the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has undoubtedly helped to raise standards, particularly in mental mathematics. There is no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys. Although the school failed to meet national targets for these two subjects last year, all junior pupils reached the individual targets set for them and the school's own more realistic targets, based on its detailed assessment of pupils' potential.
13. In science, the ample resources and pupils' ability to get on well with one another means that both boys and girls can enjoy the practical approach in lessons. Science was a subject where the boys did better than the girls in the national tests in 2001, though the difference was small.
14. Standards of attainment, by the age of eleven are above those normally seen in geography, ICT and physical education, as well as in mathematics and science. In art

and design, design and technology, history and music, standards are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils transfer skills learnt in the computer room well into their class work and make effective use of computer features in most lessons. The range of programs is good. However, the school needs to provide more sensors linked to computers. Religious education was not inspected this time as it will be inspected separately later in the year. Overall, the effectiveness of the school is good as the vast majority of pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.

15. The provision for special educational needs is satisfactory and pupils on the register for special educational needs make satisfactory progress against the targets set for them. Their individual education plans mostly have clear achievable targets. However, these specific targets are not always taken into account when teachers plan their lessons. The special educational needs assistants provide effective support helping most pupils to meet their targets. In all classes, pupils with recognised behavioural difficulties are fully integrated in lessons. Teachers' high expectations of behaviour and good levels of class control and discipline ensure that they make satisfactory progress.
16. The school identifies more able or talented pupils, and teachers usually try to provide them with suitably challenging work. This was seen in the off-site ICT lesson when pupils were writing instructions for computers to operate traffic lights. Higher attainers had to do the job for two or more sets of lights. The school tries to ensure that all pupils, whatever their ability, are fully included in all aspects of school life, with teachers ensuring equality of opportunity for all. This includes any pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. As a result, pupils feel valued and this in turn encourages them to do their best in lessons. This is just one of the reasons why the junior department of the school is helping pupils to achieve well in so many subjects.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

17. This area of pupils' learning is a strength in the school's overall provision. The very good standards that pupils achieve reflect the caring ethos and Christian values the school promotes through its very good provision for pupils' personal development. Pupils respond very well to this provision and, as a result, spiritual, moral and social development is very good and cultural development is sound. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were reported as good overall.
18. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, enjoy coming to school, confirming parents' views. As they progress through school, pupils' attitudes to learning improve. In the nursery and reception they learn to listen to their teachers and to work co-operatively in groups. By the age of seven, they are approaching their work with more enthusiasm and respond well to the structure of the literacy and numeracy lessons. By the age of eleven, pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. In the best lessons, pupils settle quickly, listen attentively to their teachers and are eager to answer questions. They work with interest and concentration throughout the lesson. They take care when getting resources ready for use and work together sensibly when clearing up at the end of the lesson, as was seen during a Year 6 art and design lesson. The less positive attitudes and behaviour of a minority of pupils with special educational needs are reflected in the targets set for them in their individual education plans. Teachers work hard to support and manage these pupils in line with the behaviour policy.
19. Pupils' behaviour is good, overall, in lessons and around school. They are polite, sensible, friendly children who respond well to the school's consistent expectations of

good behaviour promoted through the 'reward slips' which they receive for positive attitude, behaviour and effort. The weekly 'reward slip' prize draw and 'caring cup' award encourages most pupils to think of others and always try their best. Pupils' behaviour in the playground is good. Boys and girls of all ages play happily together taking turns to share the equipment available. Supervision by midday assistants is good. Pupils are happy that if bullying occurs they have someone to turn to and staff will deal with it. The very good provision for pupils' moral education means they understand the difference between right and wrong and are developing self-discipline based on consideration for others and sensitivity to the feelings of others. Pupils with particular behaviour problems are effectively managed and supported by all staff. One fixed-term exclusion in the last year reflects the school's expectations of consistently good behaviour from all pupils.

20. Pupils' personal development and relationships are very good. The very good relationships are based on mutual respect. Staff set a good example of consideration and respect for all and pupils follow their example. The very good standard of pupils' personal development is reflected in their fundraising for charity when they think of, and support, others less fortunate than themselves, such as the 'Jeans for Genes' appeal when they raised over £400. Older pupils enjoy the responsibilities they are given for helping in school. For example, the newly appointed 'playground pals' from Year 5 who help pupils up to the age of seven to enjoy the playground and play together happily. Pupils are encouraged to show independence in their learning. For example, pupils in the Years 1 and 2 class used group discussion well while researching information about Florence Nightingale and her achievements. Pupils grow in self-esteem and confidence in response to teachers' good management of pupils and the effective use of praise. During their time in school, pupils plan and deliver a class assembly each term and this allows them to contribute to the work of the school. Parents were rightly proud of their Year 3 children and their assembly on 'Journeys'. All members of the class demonstrated how well they had learnt their part by speaking clearly and with confidence. They led prayers and singing and kept the interest of even the youngest pupils throughout their presentation, which included religious, moral and personal journeys. However, the school does not yet have a school council, denying pupils the opportunity to express their views about any aspects of the school community.
21. Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average. This is the same as at the time of the previous inspection. There is no unauthorised absence. Authorised absence is due to illness, medical appointments and when parents take their children on holiday during term time. Pupils are punctual, enabling lessons to start on time.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

22. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Previously it was judged to be a strength of the school with mainly good or satisfactory teaching but four per cent of it was unsatisfactory. Interestingly, all four key issues from the previous inspection highlighted weaknesses in aspects of teaching, such as the use of assessment, teachers' marking, and improvements needed in the teaching of reading and writing. In this inspection, teaching was good or better in two-thirds of the 77 lessons seen. This is more or less in line with the quality of teaching seen in most schools nationally during inspections and is a remarkable record considering that five new teachers have been appointed in the past two years. They have quickly settled into the school. Only two lessons were unsatisfactory, one in each section of the school.

23. The weaknesses reported in the 1997 inspection in the teaching section of the report were the lack of consistency in teachers' assessment of pupils' progress and the quality of their marking. The headteacher and her staff have worked hard to improve these areas. Subject co-ordinators are now much more involved in the assessment and evaluation of standards in their subject and good procedures for assessing pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science now exist. All teachers also carefully assess pupils' performance in other subjects on a termly or annual basis. Teachers' marking is thorough and in the junior classes, in particular, it informs pupils on how to further improve their work.
24. It was apparent from lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils' completed work that teaching was strongest in the junior classes and this included the performance of a newly qualified teacher in Year 3. It was particularly good in Years 4, 5 and 6 however, with the more experienced teachers. Three-quarters of the lessons seen were good and almost a quarter was either very good or excellent. The quality of pupils' work and the amount they produced in each subject reflected the good quality of teaching in the junior department. As a direct consequence, pupils achieved above average standards in five of the ten subjects inspected. The overall quality of teaching in the infant classes is satisfactory. However, examples of good or better teaching were seen, but not with the same consistency as in the junior classes. Furthermore, standards being achieved by pupils in the infant classes in all subjects are satisfactory, reflecting the quality of teaching. Only in art and design were they above average and this was attributed to the influence of the art co-ordinator, who is an infant class teacher.
25. Good features of teaching were: teachers' sharing the clear learning objectives for each lesson with pupils; very good relationships with pupils; and work which was well matched to pupils' capabilities. Where teaching was very good or excellent, teachers' energy, enthusiasm and rapport with pupils, along with their well-planned and challenging activities, successfully motivated pupils. Pupils gained much from these sessions and the quality of learning was high. Three excellent examples of teaching were seen in Years 4 and 6 and in the mixed-age Years 1 and 2 class. Due to their teachers' expertise, pupils made significant gains in their knowledge by the end of each session. In a Year 6 geography lesson, for example, pupils learned to apply theoretical principles relating to wave action to their own fieldwork evidence in photographs. All demonstrated an advanced knowledge about coastal landscapes and used technical terms confidently to explain the process of erosion. The excellent subject knowledge of the teacher was readily apparent and pupils responded well to her high expectations.
26. Most aspects of teaching, such as teachers' knowledge, their teaching of basic skills, their methods, use of homework and planning are satisfactory, overall. Class discipline is a strong feature in both sections of the school and is good in most lessons throughout the school.
27. The quality of teaching in the literacy hours is satisfactory in the infant classes and good in the juniors. Weaknesses in the teaching of writing, resulting in standards which are below those normally seen, account for the difference in the quality of teaching between the two sections of the school. The teaching of mathematics in numeracy sessions is good throughout. Most teachers teach mental mathematics well, showing that the National Numeracy Strategy has been satisfactorily implemented. In literacy sessions, good use is made of pupils' individual whiteboards, on which pupils can write answers and easily make corrections. In the better numeracy sessions, teachers make good use of computers and set challenging

tasks for pupils. This makes lessons more interesting for pupils. Teachers effectively use the skills that pupils have learned in these sessions when teaching other subjects. In a Year 6 computer session using logo, for example, pupils needed to use their knowledge of geometric shapes and mental mathematics skills to calculate internal or external angles of regular geometric shapes. Pupils use their writing skills in history and geography, writing accounts about ancient civilisations, such as the Egyptians, or explaining coastal erosion.

28. Pupils access to, and use of, computers to support their learning in literacy and numeracy lessons are satisfactory. In Year 2, for example, pupils practise their spelling and write stories about 'farmer duck'. Year 4 pupils reinforced their knowledge of angles when using a program requiring them to move a turtle on the screen. Teachers are able to plan activities for pupils to use and develop their computer skills to support their learning by using the wide range of programs available in most of their lessons.
29. The quality of teaching in all other subjects is at least satisfactory. In science, teaching is good. Pupils have good opportunities to carry out scientific investigations for themselves, often working with a partner or within a small group. In ICT, the quality of teaching has improved markedly since the previous inspection and is now good. Teachers confidently use the very good level of resources to good effect and standards, as a result, are better than those normally seen by age eleven.
30. Teachers' confidence varies in music but the scheme of work gives clear guidance on teaching music and most manage to cover the statutory curriculum fully. The overall quality of teaching is good. It is also good throughout the school in art and design and physical education and in design and technology in the junior section. Resources have been improved, following criticism in the previous report and pupils are able to enjoy the practical nature of design and technology. Activities are well planned, and teachers provide a wide variety of resources for pupils to use. Good discipline and control of pupils are strong features of physical education lessons, enabling all to take part in safety and to enjoy their lessons. All teachers make good use of the satisfactory range of equipment in the two school halls and pupils also benefit from teachers' willingness to organise extra-curricular activities and residential experiences where pupils can enjoy taking part in competitive sport, adventurous and challenging activities. The skilled subject leadership in art and design is largely responsible for raising the standard in teaching. There was insufficient evidence to form a judgement on teaching design and technology in the infant classes. This was also the case for geography as history topics were the main focus for this term. However, geography is taught satisfactorily in the junior classes. The teaching of history is satisfactory throughout.
31. Teachers make good use of modern technology in their lessons. All teachers use the new interactive computer-linked whiteboard in the ICT suite confidently and effectively. Pupils in Year 1, for example, know which icon to touch in order to retrieve information about Florence Nightingale. A digital camera is often used to record pupils' activities in physical education, visits to local rivers and pupils working with the new whiteboard. All teachers frequently use overhead projectors, videos and CD players to add interest and variety to their lessons.
32. The overall quality of learning was described as very good in the previous inspection, in spite of some weaknesses being identified in the teaching of basic skills, such as reading and writing. A fair reflection of the quality of learning in this inspection, taking into account the overall quality of teaching and the standards being achieved in all



departments of the school, is satisfactory. All teachers work hard to establish a good working atmosphere and promote effective learning. Classroom support staff are used well to support individuals or small groups of pupils in lessons. Their contribution is instrumental in raising standards. Teachers have developed good strategies to maintain good behaviour and ensure that pupils maintain their level of concentration. In most classes, for example, pupils are given strict time limits to finish tasks. Pupils obviously enjoy the calm, orderly atmosphere in lessons and most usually behave well showing a very good attitude towards their learning. The copious amount of neatly presented work produced by pupils in the junior classes is a fair reflection of the very good attitudes pupils show towards their work. All concentrate well and are keen to do well for their teachers and themselves.

33. The school identifies very able or talented pupils with a view to making special provision for them as part of its drive to raise standards. For example, each year, the top five per cent of pupils in Year 6 attend a special two-week summer school with pupils of similar ability from other local schools, at a nearby college. Teachers are well prepared for their lessons, with a good range of resources readily available for pupils. This helps to maintain most pupils' interest and encourages them to use their initiative and choose suitable materials when working independently. Most pupils sustain satisfactory levels of concentration. As a direct result, the overall quality of learning is satisfactory. It is good in the junior section because of the quality of teaching in most lessons.
34. The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage, which covers their time in the nursery and two reception classes, is satisfactory. Children are given a good start to their learning in the nursery as the quality of teaching is consistently of a good standard with seven of the ten lessons seen being good or better. All teachers in the Foundation Stage work hard to enable most children to attain the early learning goals before they leave the reception classes. However, teachers' knowledge is not as secure in the teaching of the early learning goals for mathematics as it is in all other five areas of learning in the reception classes. As a result, many children do not achieve the required standard in this aspect of their learning.
35. There are strengths and weaknesses in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Established classroom assistants make a significant contribution to the learning of the pupils they support, whether in small groups or in withdrawal groups. They use their initiative well to ensure pupils participate in the lessons. In one lesson, for example, the classroom assistant worked alongside one pupil while the teacher was introducing the work for a literacy session, making sure that the pupil understood the questions and could answer them. Teachers know the specific individual targets for pupils as they help to prepare their individual education plans. However, too often, planning, other than for lessons where pupils are withdrawn, is not sufficiently linked to pupils' individual education plans or statements of special educational needs as required in the school policy. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are usually well managed, to prevent other pupils' learning being disrupted and to help them gain self-control as quickly as possible. Booster sessions, which focus on English and mathematics, give pupils in Year 6 the extra push they need to achieve the best they can in National Curriculum tests.
36. A small number of parents, in their responses to the questionnaire sent out prior to the inspection, were unhappy with the amount of homework their children were expected to do. At the meeting for parents, some said pupils were given too much homework, and others felt that the tasks set were not well matched to pupils'

capabilities. Inspection evidence shows that the amount and quality of homework is satisfactory. The school's policy statement gives clear guidance to teachers and parents on homework. Teachers are generally making satisfactory use of homework as part of their commitment to raise standards. As a result, homework adequately supports pupils' learning.

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

37. The quality and range of opportunities for learning provided by the school is satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and well balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum in all subjects. However, a policy for pupils' personal, social and health education is not securely in place. Although this aspect of pupils' learning is effectively integrated and taught discreetly through other subjects, such as science and religious education and through circle time type activities, the school has yet to formulate a specific policy and guidelines for this aspect of pupils' learning. Sex education is addressed satisfactorily. However, at the time of the previous inspection the school had no drugs misuse policy in place and this is still the case. Well-planned visits to local places of interest and visitors to the school, such as authors and artists, greatly enhance subjects across the curriculum, such as English, geography, history and art and design.
38. The equality of opportunity and access to the curriculum is satisfactory. However, there are occasions when pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn from some music lessons in order to receive extra numeracy support and this restricts the rate of progress for this group of pupils in music. Attempts are made to vary this time so that pupils do not miss the same lessons.
39. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. The curriculum covers the six nationally agreed areas of learning as recommended for children in the nursery and reception classes. However, the curriculum lacks balance due to the limited opportunities to promote all areas of learning when children are using the outdoor environment. Aspects of children's personal and social development are covered well along with children's physical development. However, activities which would promote the early learning goals for other areas of the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage are not well planned.
40. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Those pupils requiring additional support have an individual education plan. Targets have been set, but the guidance provided for teachers and learning support assistants is often too general. While targets have been set, they are not always phrased positively and a few are not specific, measurable or timed. As such, some of the plans are not the useful tools for teachers that they should be. Little account appears to be taken of pupils' targets in teachers' lesson planning. However, pupils are well supported in class and normally given work which is appropriate to their ability.
41. The school has successfully implemented both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and curricular planning in English and mathematics is good. Both medium- and short-term planning is detailed and thorough and well allied to the strategies. This has impacted well on raising standards in English and mathematics, particularly in the juniors where the strategies for teaching both literacy and numeracy skills are good. The effectiveness of strategies for teaching literacy in the infants is satisfactory. Long- and medium-curriculum planning in all other subjects is satisfactory. The school

effectively uses national guidelines in these other subjects to inform their curriculum planning and this ensures that all aspects of subjects are suitably covered. Curriculum planning follows a two-year cycle in the infants, which means that Years 1 and 2 pupils follow the same study units. Planning does not always ensure that activities and tasks are appropriate for the different age groups, particularly in history. It means that, on occasions, work is too difficult for younger Year 1 pupils.

42. The provision of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. The activities offered are well attended by pupils and consist of a breakfast and fitness for fun club, a choir and guitar group, as well as football and netball clubs. Pupils' personal development is effectively enhanced as they learn to co-operate with one another and build friendships. In addition, they gain valuable games skills and develop their competitiveness.
43. The school has established good links with the community and its partner institutions in order to enhance pupils' learning in subjects across the curriculum. For example, the school makes good use of the facilities, such as computer suites, science laboratories and swimming pools of local secondary schools and colleges, in order to enhance pupils' learning in ICT and physical education. Links with Sunderland Football Club enables pupils to develop their football skills and visits from local organisations, such as the Women's Institute, in order to sew and knit with Year 5 pupils, supports well design and technology. A careers workshop with a literacy and numeracy emphasis attended by Year 6 pupils at the local Nissan factory effectively supported pupils' learning in English and mathematics. The school has strong links with the local church and parish and these support well pupils' spiritual development and religious education. Visits from representatives from the local police and fire services, in order to talk to pupils, effectively enhances pupils' personal and health education. Good links exist between the school and its main receiving secondary schools and this supports well pupils' smooth transition into the next phase of their education.
44. The very good provision for pupils' spiritual development pervades the work of the school. There is a strong positive ethos. Staff and pupils are pleasant and display consideration of each other and visitors. There is a weekly whole-school assembly and daily class assemblies all of which include prayers, hymns and opportunities for reflection on the wonder of life and the goodness of others and of God. In one class assembly with the theme 'journeys', the pupils are reminded of how God helps people and people help each other. The pupils say the prayers with sincerity, eagerly answer questions or offer examples of kind deeds and join in the singing of hymns. There are other times during the day when prayers are said and one class has a daily Rosary period. The pupils are given opportunities in all lessons and particularly in personal social health education to look for the good in others and to consider the importance of friendliness.
45. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school's mission statement emphasises consideration for others and is posted around the school. The rules for behaviour are positively written and displayed in classrooms. There are high expectations of good conduct in and out of the classroom and this is encouraged by regular adult feedback. Displays of negative behaviour are addressed with firmness and the invitation for pupils to consider their behaviour, the reason why it is not acceptable and how it affects other people's feelings. Pupils who have misbehaved show remorse and apologise. The staff are good role models and they deliberately help pupils to develop high self-esteem and to show respect for other people's qualities. They congratulate the pupils for their good positive qualities, such as displays of kindness and tolerance, and they show appreciation of their work and for

their efforts. The pupils show concern for those less fortunate than themselves and are keen fundraisers for good causes. They have a clear sense of right and wrong. Their awareness of truth, justice and of rights and responsibilities are addressed in their religious studies, personal, social and health education and in other studies.

46. Provision for the pupils' social development is very good. There are playground 'pals' who look after other pupils to whom they can go if they are upset or are being teased or bullied. There was no evidence of incidents of bullying, although there was some boisterousness, which was swiftly dealt with by staff. The school has a clear policy on how bullying is dealt with and all pupils know exactly what to do if they feel bullied or intimidated. Staff deal with any incidents, no matter how minor, effectively. Pupils have special responsibilities in their classrooms and around the school. There is a breakfast club where a group of children of various ages meet to enjoy breakfast and play games together. This is a most sociable occasion. Pupils are often encouraged to work together in groups to plan work or solve problems. At all ages, they display a remarkable level of seriousness and maturity. Pupils' families are valued and frequently invited to special events in school. There are strong links with the parish church and the local community and pupils enjoy arranging special events and attending them in church and other schools.
47. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to read and write stories, plays and poetry and enjoy visits to the theatre. In art and design lessons they learn to appreciate the work of famous artists such as Paul Klee and Van Gogh. Through work in history they learn about people who have influenced our lives. Year 1 pupils, for example, use the Internet to find out about the work of Florence Nightingale. Visits to local museums and geography lessons inform pupils of their own cultural heritage and that of other European countries. In their studies of other faiths they are beginning to appreciate cultural differences. Opportunities are also taken to develop pupils' awareness and understanding, of other faiths, as in the assembly on 'journeys' when they learned about various pilgrimages. Although teachers are conscientious about the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, few plan specifically to promote pupils' understanding of non-western cultures. Opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of other world faiths, for example, are missed when important festivals such as Eid, Diwali or the Chinese New Year pass without reference.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

48. The school takes good care of its pupils. Effective child protection procedures are in place. The headteacher is designated overall responsibility and the deputy headteacher has also been fully trained. Staff are aware of procedures to be followed. A member of staff holds a certificate for first aid and procedures are in place to deal with pupils' particular medical needs. The local education authority completes risk assessments for the building, and the premises committee of the governing body are kept informed. As yet, governors do not take a sufficiently active role in monitoring health and safety issues within school, for example ensuring electrical equipment used in school is checked annually. The school is now aware of the need to improve some aspects of health and safety and the need for more regular, formal monitoring such as ensuring that all visitors to school sign the visitor's book.
49. Procedures for monitoring and improving pupils' attendance are good. The attendance cup is awarded weekly to the class with the best attendance. Annual certificates are used to reward pupils who have full attendance. The school actively discourages parents from taking children on holiday during term time as it can

adversely affect their achievements. Regular monitoring of attendance is done during the fortnightly visits of the education welfare officer.

50. The staff establish good patterns of behaviour in lessons and around school. Pupils agree the class rules with the teacher at the beginning of the year, so they know what is expected of them. The use of 'reward slips', stickers and certificates to acknowledge pupils' efforts are effective in motivating them to achieve good standards. Concerns of parents are recorded and dealt with in accordance with the behaviour policy. The recent introduction of class 'incident books', used to record the concerns of teachers, lunchtime staff and pupils, are the first steps towards the more formal monitoring of behaviour on a daily basis.
51. Procedures for assessment are good in the junior and infant sections of the school. At the end of each lesson teachers convey to the pupils their assessments of the degree of learning they have achieved. Teachers' planning has been revised and is now uniform. On the short-term plans they add assessments of each class's or individual pupil's achievement and this information is used to inform further planning. The teachers work very hard to keep their records up-to-date. To improve the effectiveness of their assessment information, it would be useful if they were to add the National Curriculum level towards which they are working.
52. For each of the core subjects, numeracy, literacy and science, teachers also keep a record of what each child has achieved. To make it easier to assess progress over time, it would be an advantage to indicate on each sheet, the National Curriculum level towards which their classes are working and to highlight where individual pupils are working at higher or lower levels. Teachers set targets for each subject in terms of the percentage of pupils reaching a particular National Curriculum level by the end of each year. Some teachers also set targets for individual pupils in terms of learning and behaviour. Careful records are kept of pupils' attainments from their starting points in the nursery to age seven and age eleven.
53. There is a lack of continuity in the assessment procedures between the nursery and the reception classes. Historically, school procedures have not been applied to the nursery, with the result that parents do not receive a yearly report or are invited to open evenings. Record keeping has not followed the procedures in the reception classes. This is an area for improvement to assist the school to achieve the necessary continuity and progression in learning from the time the children start in the nursery to when they leave in Year 6.
54. The assessment process is proving to be a useful contributor to ensuring pupils' progress and level of attainment. Teachers use the information from assessment well in their lesson planning. However, the assessment of pupils with special educational needs is less well documented. Teachers do not always use the targets set in their individual education plans to plan specific work for these pupils, making it difficult to assess their progress towards these targets. Plans are in place to address all these issues and to utilise computers to store information on a whole-school, key-stage, year and individual pupil level.
55. The school gives good support and guidance for pupils' personal development. Pastoral care is based on teachers' very good knowledge of their pupils. It is closely linked to the very good provision for pupils' personal development and reflected in the very good standards of pupils' attitudes and relationships. Weekly mixed-age pastoral lessons are effective in allowing pupils of different ages to share their feelings and listen to others' views, thus promoting and supporting their personal development and

allowing teachers to informally monitor individuals. At present there is no formal monitoring of pupils' personal development. Regular class assemblies, performed for parents and the rest of the school, give pupils responsibility and boost self-esteem giving them confidence in their own abilities.

56. The weekly visits by the qualified pastoral care worker make a valuable contribution to supporting the individual needs of pupils and parents. The breakfast club, introduced since the previous inspection with funding through the new opportunities funding, a government initiative for all schools, provides early care for pupils before school. It encourages very good relationships between staff and pupils in a social setting as well as providing a service to help working parents.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

57. Parents' views of the school are good. The good partnership with home has a positive effect on pupils' achievements. Parents of the children who are due to start in the reception classes are visited in their home by their teacher, even though many of the children already attend the nursery. The nursery staff have now started to visit the parents of the nursery children prior to them starting in the nursery. The two lots of visits are, in the inspection team's view, an unnecessary duplication.
58. Parents who expressed an opinion, either through the questionnaires or during inspection, are particularly pleased with the caring ethos of the school that encourages good attitudes and values in their children and helps them to become mature. The majority of parents are happy that their children enjoy learning, work hard and make good progress. They believe that the quality of teaching is good and the behaviour of most of the pupils is also good. Inspection findings agree with parents' positive comments.
59. The analysis of the questionnaires, received from 19 per cent of parents and the meeting with parents, representing seven families, raised some concerns from a small number of parents. These were: the range of extra-curricular activities; the leadership and management of the school; how closely the school works with them; and the provision of information about their children's progress. Inspection findings show that the range of extra-curricular activities is typical for a school of this size, although there are no school clubs for children under the age of seven. The leadership and management of the school is good and the staff are committed to working in partnership with parents and to providing good information about pupils' progress through the annual reports. A very small number of parents queried the policy on school uniform, where girls are discouraged from wearing trousers in school. The governing body, after consultation with parents, made the decision about the school uniform and the school believes the vast majority of parents are happy and support their decision.
60. Information provided for parents is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when information was satisfactory. The school consulted with parents to improve the partnership and provide opportunities for them to work together. An agreement between home and school has been introduced and returned by most parents. Parents of nursery children attend termly open evenings to find out about the six areas of children's learning. However, unlike other pupils, children in the nursery do not have an annual written report on their progress.

61. Curriculum evenings have been held to inform parents about literacy, numeracy and sex education, although not many parents attended. Courses on 'parent helpers in school' and 'positive parenting' have been run. A computer course for parents and pupils, using laptops at home provided by school, to raise attainment in basic skills, was successfully completed. Weekly gospel sheets, written in children's language, allow parents and pupils to prepare for the church service on Sunday. Annual reports about pupils' progress are better and now include individual targets for improvement. Parents of pupils with special educational needs have the opportunity to meet teachers on an annual basis to discuss progress towards targets in individual education plans. Any parent with more pressing concerns has easy access to their child's class teacher or the headteacher. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs are closely monitored and parents are regularly invited to a review process, in line with the requirements of the new Code of Practice.
62. Regular letters from the headteacher and newsletters from the 'friends of the school' keep parents informed on events taking place within school. Regular information is provided about numeracy and how parents can help at home, although parents do not receive the same kind of information about literacy or other subjects in the curriculum. The school prospectus meets requirements but is seen as an item for development by the school, to provide more accessible information for parents.
63. Parents' contribution to the work of the school is good. The vast majority of parents have agreed to work in partnership with the school and are aware of their responsibilities to do with attendance and behaviour. The nursery and reception parents share the 'talk, talk' and 'play together' bags which provide opportunities for quality time at home with their children. Most parents give good support with homework, such as reading and mathematics. There is scope to involve parents more in improving their children's progress in other subjects, by providing more specific information about what they are learning in school and how parents can support this at home, such as writing. A small number of parents regularly help in class and have attended training to support the work of the teachers. A few parents organise social and fundraising events for parents and pupils through the friends of the school, such as the Summer Fayre. Parents give good support to these events to raise money to buy resources for teaching and learning, such as computers, reading materials and guitars. They have also provided new doors and curtains. Parents enjoy the opportunities to share in their children's achievements by watching class assemblies and Christmas concerts and helping on school trips. These events are always very well attended.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

64. In the previous report, the school's management and efficiency was described very positively. The headteacher's determination to create a successful school, her caring and supportive relationships with both staff and pupils and her depth of knowledge, continue to make her leadership very effective. The high quality of her pastoral care is a strength recognised and appreciated by parents, staff and pupils. Showing great perseverance and a strong dedication to her duties as headteacher, she has worked tirelessly to bring about many improvements to the school. For example, five new teachers have been appointed in the past two years, revitalising the school and most of the issues for improvement raised in the previous inspection have been put right. Her vision and strong belief in a team approach have been instrumental in building the school's reputation. In the disappointingly low response to the parents' questionnaire, an overwhelming majority of those who responded agreed that the school is well led

and managed. Staff know that their views are valued and all are equally committed to bringing about agreed improvements and raising standards. Their collective efforts are beginning to have an impact on the standards achieved by pupils. In five of the ten subjects inspected, for example, standards by the age of eleven were above average. Raising standards in the quality of pupils' writing by the age of seven will be a future priority for the school. When aspects of management, such as the monitoring and development of teaching and the school's own priorities for development, are taken into consideration, the overall quality of leadership and management is good.

65. The headteacher has conscientiously tackled the key issues identified in the previous inspection. The biggest jump in improvement has taken place in teachers' expertise in ICT. This has been aided by the school's involvement in the Sunderland Education Action Zone. Teachers confidently use the well-equipped ICT suite with its new interactive whiteboard and many laptop computers to enhance pupils' learning in all subjects. One important area, raised in the previous report, was the unsatisfactory provision for pupils' drugs education. This has not changed. There is still no policy for staff to follow and little evidence was found that pupils are made aware of the dangers they face. This needs to be a future priority for the school. The headteacher is aware of the requirement to have a policy for racial equality and has a draft policy to be presented to the governors at the earliest opportunity this term.
66. The school has rightly focused on the implementation of national strategies for literacy and numeracy and these strategies have been thoroughly introduced. The school's governing body has set challenging targets in English and mathematics. However, due to the different proportion of pupils with special educational needs in some year groups, they have not been met. Furthermore, the school's targets fall short of national targets. This was the case in the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000. Since then, standards have been rising steadily, despite the disruption caused by the appointment of five new teachers. Information gained from optional tests is used well to inform target setting in English and mathematics. The school is well on course to meet its targets for eleven-year-olds in English and mathematics this year.
67. The school development plan is thorough, involving the views of the senior management team, all staff and the governing body. It is monitored carefully. However, the monitoring and evaluation of priorities are mostly carried out by the headteacher and key staff, with very little governor involvement. The role of the recently appointed deputy headteacher is being developed well and this strengthens the effect the senior management team is having on the pace of change. Roles of the subject co-ordinators are clearly defined and these include rigorous monitoring of planning and the quality of teaching, particularly in English and mathematics. All other subjects are given a thorough review on a rota basis.
68. A key management issue for the school is the development of the Foundation Stage, which covers the time children spend in the nursery and two reception classes. Provision lags behind that found in most schools and weaknesses exist in a number of areas. These include the assessment of children who may have special educational needs, the quality of information provided for parents about their children's progress and the continuity between the classes. Access for children in the reception classes to a suitable outdoor play area is currently unsatisfactory. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. However, the inconsistencies in provision between the nursery and reception classes need to be addressed. These include the outdoor play areas and reports to parents.
69. Governors have a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and



work closely with staff towards the common purpose of improving standards and the quality of education. The astute chairman of the governors shows a keen interest in the school, visiting for lengthy periods each week. All recognise that he has the best interests of the school at heart and all know too that he can be relied upon to take decisive action should the need arise. The school's aims and values, which are firmly rooted in the Roman Catholic faith, pervade its work; staff and pupils interact very well with one another. All pupils are made to feel equally important. The school offers equality of opportunity for all pupils, taking care to quickly integrate pupils who join mid-term and make them feel welcome. Visitors to the school are welcomed and the school environment is a happy and caring one where pupils' work is valued and celebrated.

70. The governing body meets all its statutory responsibilities. However, inspectors noted that essential annual checks on electrical equipment were out-of-date. These should be carried out as soon as possible. Governors know the school well and are very supportive of the headteacher and staff. Performance targets have been set for all staff and the appraisal process is well established. Good procedures exist for the induction and support of new staff to the school. There are good links with a teacher-training institution and students receive a good standard of mentoring as they work alongside experienced teachers.
71. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. It meets all legal requirements and the implementation of the most recent national guidelines is progressing well. The special educational needs co-ordinator was appointed this year but he has had no training for this role. He expects to receive local education authority training on the implementation of the new Code of Practice before the end of the year. The co-ordinator has prepared a good development plan, which identifies the need to link special educational needs to assessment processes and to include 'able and gifted' pupils on the register. However, it omits planning for the training of teachers and support assistants in the preparation of individual education plans, including target setting and monitoring. Records and documentation are efficiently filed, making it easy for staff to access information.
72. The governor with responsibility for pupils with special educational needs is very well informed, maintains an active interest and reports regularly to the governing body. Resources for learning, and the use of ICT equipment to support learning are satisfactory. The budget for special educational needs is used effectively to support pupils' learning.
73. The time allocated for administrative support is almost one third less than in a school of equivalent size. In spite of this, the administration staff run the school office efficiently and give a positive first impression to visitors. It bears testament to the interest, involvement and dedication to duty shown by the office staff. Educational priorities are supported by clear budget costs and the school does its best to apply best value principles by obtaining tenders for services or goods and paying attention to quality. Good quality information is available from the headteacher and governing body to ensure that finances are kept in good order. The governing body is provided with monthly financial statements and the finance committee meets regularly. The school is making satisfactory use of new technology, including computers, as they are using a financial database, wordprocessing reports and using electronic mailing facilities. Expenditure per pupil is above average, and when all other factors, such as the standards attained, pupils' very good attitude to learning, the quality of teaching and the positive aspects of leadership and management, are considered, the school

is providing good value for money.

74. Specific grants are used satisfactorily. Government funding for computers, for example, has been effectively used to purchase modern computers and update educational programs. As part of the Sunderland Education Action Zone, the school has benefited greatly from the involvement of staff in training programmes, funding for additional computers and the help of other specialists who support the work of the school. Funding through the new opportunities fund provides for people who take the weekly fitness for fun sessions. The pastoral work is funded by a grant from the Northern Rock Foundation.
75. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. Support staff make a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning. However, the deployment of classroom support staff is heavily weighted towards the infant department of the school. It means that some of the larger junior classes, and those with an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in them, have to rely on parent volunteers for additional support. Fortunately, the quality of teaching in the junior section is of a high standard and so pupils' progress is not adversely affected.
76. The standard of the accommodation is good. The school building is extremely well maintained and immaculately clean. Along with the tidy grounds and attractive flower borders, it perfectly reflects the devotion to duty shown by all who work there. Access for disabled pupils in wheelchairs is satisfactory. The only drawbacks to the accommodation are: access to an outdoor play area for children in the reception classes, the lack of a covered walkway between the two parts of the building; and a shortage of space for the library. Outside there are good quality grassed and hard play areas with seating for pupils. The outdoor play area for the nursery is currently unsatisfactory. It is looking dated and is in need of refurbishment. Modern soft-fall surfaces around climbing equipment and storage for the many bikes and ride-on toys are needed to improve safety and access to large toys.
77. Learning resources are good, overall. They are very good for ICT, thanks largely to the school's association with the Sunderland Education Action Zone. The weakness in the level of resources for design and technology identified in the previous report has been corrected. However, a better range of artefacts for the other major religions of the world would add interest to pupils learning about non-western cultures and religions.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

78. This effective school has a bright future. The style of leadership of the headteacher inspires a fierce loyalty from all staff and as a result, teachers work very effectively as a team, supporting one another in their commitment to provide pupils with the best possible all-round education. The many strengths, identified in the previous inspection, have in most cases been improved upon. In order to further improve the quality of education, the governors, headteacher and staff now need to:

(1) Improve provision in the Foundation Stage by:

- improving the standards achieved in children's mathematical development in the reception classes;
- improving the co-ordination of the nursery and reception classes to achieve better continuity of provision;
- establishing uniform assessment procedures in the nursery and reception classes;
- improving the balance in the Foundation Stage curriculum by including planned opportunities for learning in the outdoor environment in all areas of learning in both age groups;
- providing parents of children in the nursery with the same amount of information about their children's progress as those in the reception class by inviting them to parents' evenings, open days and providing them with a yearly report detailing their children's progress towards the early learning goals;
- identifying children with speech and language delays as they start in the nursery and acting promptly to provide them with additional support.

(paragraphs 2, 34, 39, 53, 57, 60, 68, 76, 79-96)

(2) Improve the standard of pupils' writing in the infant classes by:

- giving more emphasis to the teaching of spelling and punctuation;
- making sure pupils transfer their handwriting skills from practice sessions to their everyday work;
- providing pupils with examples of writing which clearly illustrate key literacy skills, writing styles and conventions.

(paragraphs 2, 5, 27, 65, 98, 101, 102)

(3) Prepare and implement a policy for pupils' personal, social and health education to include drugs education.

(paragraphs 37, 65)

It should be noted that key issues one and two come as no surprise to the school as they are already identified as areas for improvement in the current school development planning.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	77
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	11	37	24	2	0	0
Percentage	3.9	14.3	48.0	31.2	2.6	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 one percentage point...

### 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)	25	254
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	49

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12	57

#### 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	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.0

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*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	13	13	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	8	10
	Girls	11	11	12
	Total	20	19	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (96)	73 (93)	85 (93)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	10	8
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	21	21	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (93)	81 (93)	73 (86)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

### 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	24	16	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	15	21
	Girls	12	12	14
	Total	28	27	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (60)	68 (40)	88 (71)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	15	18
	Girls	12	13	14
	Total	25	28	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (63)	70 (49)	80 (63)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	192
Any other minority ethnic group	1

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.8
Average class size	22.9

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	149

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	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

### **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	1	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.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	571,367
Total expenditure	572,397
Expenditure per pupil	2,262
Balance brought forward from previous year	1,046
Balance carried forward to next year	16

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	276
Number of questionnaires returned	52

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	33	6	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	48	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	23	67	4	2	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	58	12	0	4
The teaching is good.	54	40	6	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	48	13	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	35	4	8	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	46	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	27	50	13	8	2
The school is well led and managed.	29	46	13	8	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	52	0	4	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	38	25	8	13

It should be noted that rounding up or down of percentages means that not all columns add up to exactly 100 per cent.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

79. The Foundation Stage comprises the nursery and reception classes. It is based on six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication language and literacy, mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Each area of learning has stages of achievement called stepping stones. For example, as children start in the nursery they are expected to achieve the yellow stepping stones, then blue, green and, by the time they have achieved the nationally agreed early learning goals by the end of the reception class, the grey stepping stones. Children will progress through the stepping stones at different rates according to their stage of development.
80. Children in the nursery are assessed when they start in the nursery in all areas of learning. In addition, they are screened for language delays through the Sunderland Education Action Zone. The most recent screening identified one third of children with unclear speech. Currently, there is no additional support or identification of specialised programmes to support the additional needs of these children who are placed on the school's file to be monitored. This level of support is insufficient for children of nursery age who have the potential to 'catch up' and rectify their speech delays with appropriately targeted support
81. There are 87 children in the Foundation Stage. The 51 nursery children attend the nursery for a part-time session every day in the morning or the afternoon. The remaining 36 children attend full time in two reception classes. Children start in the nursery at the beginning of the term after their third birthday. They may attend the nursery part time for up to 15 months before they start school. The nursery teacher and nursery nurse visit the parents of children about to start the nursery before they start school and are provided with a pack of useful information about the school. The parents are also invited to come into the nursery with their child during the term before they come to the nursery. The parents of children about to start in the reception classes are also visited at home and provided with information about the routines of the reception classes.
82. The children identified with special educational needs in the nursery are well-supported by a child's parent and a learning support assistant. However, there are several children who are being monitored for speech and language delay, emotional and behavioural difficulties and general delay who do not receive additional support or have an individual education plan identifying what they need to learn, or the form of support needed to help them make progress. There are no children in the nursery with English as an additional language.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

83. Standards are typical of all children in the reception class and by the time they start in Year 1 almost all children are on line to achieve the early learning goals. Standards are generally below average when the children start school, but they make good progress in the nursery and standards are average by the time the children leave the nursery. Achievement throughout the reception classes is satisfactory overall. Three-year-olds come happily into the nursery and begin to show care and concern for

others and enjoy choosing what they want to do. They show a high level of trust, especially when they work as a small group of three-year-olds. Many are still playing alone rather than as part of a group. By the time they are reaching the end of the reception class the children can sit quietly and stay interested in one task for longer periods. Relationships are very good. For example, a child was observed holding out an apron for his friend. The children learn to know the consequences of their actions and enjoy talking to other children about their work. However, some children tend to flit around their self-chosen activities and have difficulty sustaining concentration.

84. The quality of teaching is good overall with consistently good teaching in the nursery. Nursery children are encouraged to develop confidence as they find their name card each day and post it or put it into a basket. They learned to co-operate and follow the rules as they went on the teddy bears' picnic. Reception class children can choose their activities for some of the time. They are still learning to take turns and need adult support for this. The children are expected to know the code of behaviour, but, on occasions, they are very slow to obey simple commands in the reception classes.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

85. Standards are typical of all children by the time they leave the reception class in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Attainment on entry is generally below average due to the limited language development of about one third of the children. The children are assessed as they start in the nursery to identify those children with delayed language. A programme of monitoring their performance has started but, as yet, there is no additional support through individual education plans or adult support to help the children with problems to catch up with their peers. Three-year-old children listen to stories and enjoy them. Higher attaining children talk about the places they have been to eat, but overall most responses are single words or phrases, with some children showing difficulty with sounds. A high priority is given to promoting language development in the larger group activities, but some children do not have the confidence to take part and so say very little. The recently introduced 'talk-talk bags' for use by parents at home with their children is very well supported. All parents borrow a bag each week to take home and play games and read stories to their children.
86. Reception-aged children take part in the full literacy hour. They are encouraged to recognise familiar words in stories and have a secure knowledge and understanding of rhyming words and initial letters. They can sequence a story from pictures accurately, and in their independent learning show they know how to write simple three-letter words using play-dough. At times, some of the activities lack challenge for the more able children in the reception classes. For example, the children making c-v-c words with play dough and in the sand had gone beyond this method of recording and are ready to write with a pencil. One boy showed how well he could write independently after he had cut out and stuck the four pictures to sequence a familiar story on a sheet of paper. The quality of teaching is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception classes. The main differences are the lack of challenge for the higher attainers in writing in the reception classes and lack of differentiation in planning for some lessons.

### **Mathematical development**

87. Standards attained by the children in the reception classes are below where they should be. Children are not always effectively building on the work in the nursery where standards are below average when they start but are typical of other children

the same age by the time they leave the nursery. The children know numbers to nine and some know higher numbers. They are not taught to count in tens, to add numbers together or to count on and back, as recommended by the National Numeracy Strategy guidance for reception class children. Pupils are generally achieving the green stepping stones. Worksheets, which expect the children to count and record a single number, have been completed throughout the year. Too much time is given to colouring in and there are many children who do not even record the number they have counted. The scrutiny of work shows that the higher attainers are not progressing well enough. The quality of teaching and learning in the reception classes is satisfactory overall. Relationships between teachers and the children are generally good, lessons are well managed and organised and there is a satisfactory balance between adult-directed and independent activities, although some of the independent activities lack challenge. Expectations overall are too low in both reception classes due to lack of familiarity with the National Numeracy Strategy activities for children in reception.

88. Children, in their daily activities in the nursery, are encouraged to count, for example the number of children attending the session and how many napkins were needed for the picnic. In their play, children were observed counting four sausages and putting them on a plate one-by-one as they counted. The children can identify two-dimensional shapes accurately. The teaching is good and very effectively builds on practical situations to help the children understand the value of numbers to five and beyond. Opportunities to sing number rhymes are very frequent and the children are familiar with several well-known rhymes.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

89. Standards in this area of learning are generally typical of those achieved by children towards the end of the reception year. High standards are achieved in some aspects of ICT, for example the children learn to operate a programmable toy in the reception class with good skill levels as they send it backwards and forwards on command. The quality of teaching is good overall.
90. Children in the nursery explore and investigate as they make sandwiches to take on a picnic. They talk about the apparatus in the park as part of finding out about the local area. Four-year-olds talk about places they have visited and can give information about their teddy bears. The three-year-olds show interest and curiosity as they listen to an account of their trip onto the field. The use of the outdoor environment was used very effectively to promote the children's learning about going on a picnic. In the reception classes the children identify push and pull as they use the ramp to push the cars up and down. Digital photographs were used effectively to show the children how the swings were pushed and the way the children pulled themselves up the climbing frame. During the inspection, good use was made of the outdoor environment. Study of previous plans, however, shows that the children do not make enough use of the outdoors to promote learning in areas other than physical development. This is due to the limitations of the outdoor environment for the nursery and the complete lack of an outdoor area for the children in the reception classes.

### **Physical development**

91. Standards are typical of children the same age in the nursery and the reception classes. The children are likely to have achieved the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and the children make expected levels of progress. The provision in the outdoor area is very

limited. There are no marked roadways, soft surfaces or a sensory garden. Occasional use is made of a nearby adventure playground and the reception children are reported to use the nursery outdoor area for physical activity.

92. Three-year-olds can repeat movements, for example when they take turns to ride the tricycles. The tandem tricycles encourage good levels of co-operation, although the outdoor area is not well designed for this. Four-year-olds can climb confidently and balance and slide with increasing control. They can kneel and slide and keep their feet together. The adult support is mainly concerned about the safety of the children who are not encouraged enough to explore different ways of moving over the apparatus. Children behaved very well as they waited patiently for their turn. The children learned to listen to instructions as they ran from one area of the field to another as part of the teddy bears picnic. The children develop increasing levels of skill as they use the cutters in the play-dough. The quality of teaching in the nursery is satisfactory. Opportunities are not always provided to encourage the children to try different ways of balancing. The children are assessed regularly and the information forms part of their record of achievement.
93. The indoor room in the nursery has a very well resourced area for physical development comprising a ball pool and large area of soft play surfaces. This area is always available for the children in their free choice time, which for some children is quite a large part of their time in the nursery. Boys especially spend a lot of time in this area, which may need to be checked to ensure they have use of the full range of activities provided in the nursery.
94. By the time the children are in the reception class, they show greater levels of control as they carry mats to the appropriate area in the hall and help to set up it up for the lesson. They take responsibility well. There are missed opportunities to discuss the effects on their body of physical activity. The adventure playground in a nearby park was used during the inspection; this was the first time the class had visited it. This was a good chance for the children to scramble, slide and swing and effectively promoted children's learning due to well-targeted teaching and well-managed groups who moved from one series of equipment to another very briskly.

### **Creative development**

95. Standards are generally typical of those achieved by all children of the same age. Three-year-old children can explore with various coloured paints, while four-year-olds in the nursery painted a recognisable teddy bear with a head, ears and paws. Work displayed around the nursery shows that the children have the chance to mix paints in different shades, to make patterns using their fingers in paint, splash with a brush and make bubble patterns. The children are encouraged to become independent as they use the sponge shapes to make teddy bear patterns. The children in the nursery are less confident in their role-play. They were very passive as they prepared for their teddy bears picnic.
96. All the children join in favourite songs and respond to sound with body movements. For example, the children in one reception class acted out the story of the 'Enormous Turnip'. They can repeat some simple musical patterns, but do not explore the sounds of different instruments often enough. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout in this area of learning.

### **ENGLISH**

97. Overall pupils' attainment in English by the age of eleven has been maintained since the previous inspection and standards remain in line with the national average. Pupils achieve particularly well in reading and by the age of eleven, standards are above average in reading. Standards in writing are in line with national averages. In speaking,

standards are average, although standards in listening are above average. More able pupils attain standards which are above average in all aspects of the subject. Pupils' performance in the national tests have fluctuated over the last four years from above to below the national average, but overall the school results have kept broadly in line with the national trend. Results in the 2001 national tests show standards were below the national average and below average in comparison with similar schools. However, when judged against pupils' prior attainment, the school's performance in the tests was close to the average when compared to similar schools.

98. Although there has been some good improvement in the standards attained by infant pupils in reading since the previous inspection, overall standards in English by the age of seven remain below those expected nationally. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in reading by the age of seven were reported to be below the national average. Inspection findings show that this is no longer the case and pupils now attain standards in line with the national average. However, pupils' attainment in writing is much weaker and standards remain below the national average. In the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds the standards achieved by pupils in reading was below the national average and in writing it was well below national average. In comparison with similar schools, the school's performance in both reading and writing was well below the national average.
99. Pupils make satisfactory progress in English in the infants and good progress in the juniors, including those pupils with special educational needs. In the infant classes, pupils with special educational needs benefit from the good support provided by teaching assistants. In the junior classes, the good quality of teaching ensures that all pupils are given work which is well matched to their capabilities and then they are closely supported by their class teacher. Because teachers challenge pupils to give extended answers to questions and provide them with plenty of opportunities to discuss in pairs and groups, pupils soon gain confidence to speak in front of others. As a result, pupils' attainment in speaking is in line with national expectations. They are eager to answer questions and, by the age of eleven, express their viewpoints and ideas clearly and effectively. In listening, pupils' attainment is in line with that expected nationally at the age of seven and above average at the age of eleven. Although pupils in the infants do not always listen with the same amount of sustained concentration as older pupils in the juniors, their listening skills are in line with those expected for pupils of this age. In the juniors, they are much better as pupils listen very attentively in many different situations. They are able to listen with sustained concentration not only to their teachers but also to each other while talking in pairs and when engaged in group discussions.
100. The school has been successful in raising standards in reading throughout the school since the previous inspection. The implementation of guided reading within the literacy hour and improved reading resources across the school has contributed significantly to the higher standards achieved by pupils in reading at both key stages. By the age of seven, standards are in line with the national average and by the age of eleven, standards are above the national average. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were reported to be below average by the age of seven and in line with national expectations by the age of eleven. Across the school, teachers effectively promote reading and, as a result, almost all pupils are enthusiastic readers and read a range of texts, both for pleasure and for information suitable for their ages. By the age of seven, pupils have acquired several strategies in order to read unfamiliar words and, by the age of eleven, pupils read confidently and fluently and have acquired clear preferences about the type of books they like to read. Throughout the school, pupils' research skills are well developed and by the age of eleven, pupils

know how to use an index and glossary and can skim and scan well in order to quickly search for information.

101. Standards in writing are below the national average by the age of seven and in line by the age of eleven. Pupils' attainment in writing is much weaker than in other aspects of the subject in the infants. By the age of seven, pupils' knowledge and understanding and use of basic punctuation, such as full stops, and capital letters to demarcate simple stories and sentences, is weak. The standard of pupils' handwriting is satisfactory in handwriting practice lessons but they do not transfer these skills sufficiently well in their everyday writing tasks. Letters are not always accurately formed or consistent in size and their finger spacing between words is not always consistent. Pupils' attainment in spelling is weak for their age because pupils have not yet sufficiently acquired a secure knowledge and understanding of phonological patterns in order to spell simple words consistently well. The good teaching of basic skills in the juniors contributes significantly to the good progress that junior pupils make in writing. Throughout the juniors, pupils make good progress in understanding punctuation rules and, by the age of eleven, pupils use a range of punctuation such as apostrophes, commas and speech marks consistently well when writing independently. Pupils' attainment in spelling is in line with the national average. Teachers have high expectations of how pupils should present their written work and, as a result, pupils' handwriting and presentational skills are good across the curriculum. Because teachers provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to write in different styles and for different purposes, pupils soon learn to use the correct style when writing. For example, in a piece of argumentative writing about whether pupils should wear school uniform or not, one higher attaining pupil in Year 6 wrote, 'The question arises of whether it would be acceptable for children not to wear their school uniform'. Pupils make good progress in descriptive and poetic writing and show they are able to carefully choose and select specific vocabulary in order to make their writing more interesting to the reader.
102. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors. As a direct result, the quality of learning is satisfactory in the infant classes and good in the juniors. Curriculum planning in the subject is good throughout and well allied to the National Literacy Strategy. Lessons have clear learning objectives. When teaching is most effective, questioning challenges pupils to give extended answers to questions and develops well their thinking and understanding of texts. Across the school, teachers have very good relationships with pupils; they value their responses and manage them well. Pupils make better and more rapid progress in the juniors, particularly in writing, because teachers effectively model and demonstrate key literacy skills, such as writing styles and conventions, consistently well within the literacy hour. As a result, pupils produce much work of a good standard. This, however, is not the case in the infant classes where there is insufficient focus on the teaching of basic literacy skills within guided writing activities. The amount and quality of pupils' writing is adversely affected as a result.
103. The management and co-ordination of the subject is good. Standards and the quality of teaching and learning are effectively monitored by the two co-ordinators for the subject. Assessment procedures in the subject are good and both statutory and non-statutory tests are analysed carefully in order to track pupils' progress and attainment from one year to the next. Individual target setting for pupils is beginning to make pupils more aware of their own learning and enables them to have a better understanding about what it is they must do in order to improve. Resources for the subject are good although the school library is small and this restricts its use as an effective learning resource.

## MATHEMATICS

104. Standards by the age of seven are in line with the national average and, by age eleven, they are above average. The 2001 national tests for eleven-year-olds show that, compared to all other schools, standards are below average and for seven-years-olds they are well below average. However when compared with similar schools, pupils' attainment at age seven is well below average and at age eleven, it is below average. Over the previous five years, results have remained below the national average. The school's predicted results for 2002 indicate that overall standards this year should match the national averages. This takes account of the performance of pupils with special educational needs in the year group. Inspection evidence supports this prediction. Average and higher attaining pupils were found to be attaining above average standards in lessons. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is mainly responsible for the improvement.
105. By age seven, pupils count, read and write numbers and show that they understand place value. They count on and back in twos, fives and tens and most can count in tens from any two-digit number. They show confidence in their knowledge of addition, subtraction of number facts up to ten and understand the words 'addition' and 'subtraction'. With the aid of pictures, objects and coins they solve simple problems and attempt to explain how they solved them. They correctly describe the position of things and confidently name three-dimensional shapes and are beginning to identify their properties.
106. By age eleven, most pupils are good at mental calculation. They understand place value up to 1000 and can order a mixture of numbers with up to three decimal places. They multiply and divide decimals by 10 or 100 and know their multiplication tables and use them for division calculations. They convert common fractions to decimals and vice versa and find fractions of whole numbers. Using their knowledge of areas, they have created interesting plans of gardens displaying their use of mathematical skills to solve problems.
107. Up to the age of seven, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, benefit greatly from the additional support provided by learning support assistants. The junior pupils do not have the same level of support and this means that they have, on occasions, to wait for their teachers' attention, wasting valuable time. However, the good quality of teaching in the junior classes ensures that all pupils make good progress. Overall, the progress pupils make in mathematics from Year 1 to Year 6 is good.
108. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers' planning is thorough and incorporates ongoing assessment, which is used to inform future planning. They set clear learning objectives for each lesson. The first half of each lesson focuses on basic skills, which are taught very well through a variety of carefully chosen activities, including question and answer, discussion and games. Pupils practise recall, mental calculations and thinking skills. They use small wipe clean boards to jot down figures to help their mental calculations or to display their answers. There is a briskness to these sessions and all pupils participate enthusiastically. The teachers are continuously assessing the progress of individuals and select suitable questions and approaches to ensure the involvement of all pupils. Teachers' encouraging comments and keen analysis of the level of challenge required by individual pupils ensures that no pupil is discouraged and all remain keen to participate. One teacher, for example, advised pupils to delve into their brains for a game of bingo, involving the six times table,



money problems and decimal numbers. Some of the youngest pupils in Year 1 sang number songs to help them count back.

109. The remainder of each lesson is used to focus on the reinforcement of particular skills or to introduce new concepts. Pupils often work in ability groups. Activities are designed to match the needs of each group and there are many opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively. Very good or excellent teaching was observed in lessons where there were fewer pupils or where there was a learning support assistant. These conditions allowed greater focus on the progress of the pupils in the different ability groups. At the end of each lesson, teachers effectively review what has been learned, referring back to the learning objectives set at the beginning of the lesson. They carefully assess pupils' progress, inform pupils and make notes for their records.
110. The school has effectively introduced the National Numeracy Strategy and this has provided a consistent approach and a means of ensuring continuous progress through the programme of study over time.
111. The co-ordination of mathematics is good. The co-ordinator makes good use of assessment information and of national data records. He has prepared a subject development plan and has worked with other teachers to set targets for improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving grades that at least match national standards by the time the pupils reach age seven and eleven. Targets have also been set for individual pupils. The co-ordinator carefully monitors teachers' planning and assessment records and gives advice on the delivery of the subject. His full-time teaching commitment does not allow him to monitor the work of other teachers in their classrooms, which would be valuable in ensuring that teachers' expectations remain high and that all pupils are sufficiently challenged, including the least able.
112. ICT is used extensively in mathematics to enhance teaching. For example, in one class the teacher used the class computer and its three monitors to demonstrate how to use a protractor. Other classes have used ICT to collate data, to produce distribution graphs comparing the heights of pupils and have created a useful graph for converting miles to kilometres. Numeracy skills are used well in all subjects of the curriculum and this is evident in displays of work in classrooms and corridors. For example, sequences of historical dates in history, measurements in science and design and technology and work on shape and symmetry in artwork.

## **SCIENCE**

113. Standards by the age of seven are in line with those expected nationally, and by age eleven, they are above the national average. The 2001 national tests for eleven-year-olds show that, compared to all schools nationally, standards are below average and teacher assessments for seven-year-olds show standards are well below average. When compared with similar schools, the standards attained by pupils aged seven and eleven is average and below average respectively. The teacher assessment of pupils aged seven reaching the higher level was close to the national average. These results show that lower attaining pupils are not being sufficiently well challenged. The results have fluctuated over the last five years but, overall, are lower than average. The school has acknowledged the problem of lower standards. The mathematics co-ordinator has recently taken on the role of science co-ordinator and a revised scheme of work for science has been introduced. For the past year there has been a focus on the subject's development by all staff. The predicted national test results for eleven-year-olds are higher than in previous years and are expected to at least match

national averages this year, taking into account the performance of pupils with special educational needs. Teacher assessments for Year 2 pupils in science are likely to be similarly improved. Inspection evidence confirms the improvement in standards. In lessons, most pupils were attaining at an above average level.

114. By age seven, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of scientific enquiry, life processes and living things, materials and physical processes. Year 2 pupils, for example, suggested designs for experiments to show that they hear sounds with their ears. They used terms 'prediction' and 'fair tests' correctly. From their research, using computers, they found that sound waves are like air ripples. Pupils with special educational needs made and demonstrated ear trumpets and one pupil explained that she could hear better because the trumpet gave her a big ear.
115. In all these lessons the extent of the pupils' learning was very good and they recorded their findings by writing and drawing. The amount of recording over two terms did not reflect the amount of work covered. However, teachers records show what children have learned, can do and understand. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.
116. By age eleven, pupils have a broad knowledge and understanding of the aspects of science. They are confident carrying out investigations and understand the concept of a fair test. They make predictions and attempt hypothesising. Many pupils methodically write up experiments while others use guides. A class of eight- and nine-year-old pupils carried out an investigation into forces and the effect of friction. They accurately measured forces using Newton meters. One pupil found out, for example, that more force was needed to pull her weighted container across a piece of carpet and explained that this was because it had bits sticking up that got in the way and that was friction.
117. In a Year 6 class, pupils were given the opportunity to design their own investigations of what makes a good spinner. In discussion, they showed that they understood fair testing. A higher attaining group talked with the teacher about why scientists carry out repeat tests and they included repeat testing into their own investigation. They worked together to plan their investigation, free to develop their enquiry skills. In all lessons, pupils' behaviour was very good and they were all enthusiastic about their work, whether it was done working independently of their teacher, collaboratively or with the teacher. In all cases, the teachers reflect their expertise in delivering science lessons by taking every opportunity to allow pupils to explore their own ideas. As a result, all pupils make good progress in the junior classes in science.
118. The standard of teaching is good and planning is thorough. Teachers consider the need to help pupils to develop enquiring minds and to understand sometimes difficult concepts. They adopt their teaching style to match the needs of pupils with different levels of understanding or experience. The amount of work in younger pupils' books reflects the adequate amount of time allocated to science each week. Teachers in the infant classes need to ensure that pupils record more of their science work in their exercise books or on computers. Insufficient use is made of computers and television to support teaching and enhance pupils' learning.
119. The subject is being well led by the new co-ordinator, who plans to ensure its continued development by establishing a link with a secondary school. As he co-ordinates two core subjects he is applying similar strategies for assessment and target setting for groups of pupils and for individuals. At present, not enough time is

provided on a regular basis to monitor the work of other teachers or evaluate the quality of pupils' learning in other classes throughout the school.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

120. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the previous inspection by the age of eleven and standards remain in line with age-related expectations. Effective promotion and joint planning of the subject with other teachers by the subject co-ordinator in the infants has impacted positively on raising standards since the previous inspection and pupils are now attaining above nationally expected standards for their age by the age of seven. At the time of the previous report, standards were judged to be in line with age-related expectations.
121. Across the school teachers effectively promote observational drawing skills and pupils make good progress in this aspect of the subject. They learn to observe carefully and look for detail and can use shading techniques well to create light and shade in their drawings. For example, Years 1 and 2 pupils show good attention to shape and pattern in their observational drawings of musical instruments and Year 5 pupils effectively use shading techniques to create depth of tone in their observational drawings of a shoe.
122. Throughout the school, pupils experience, and successfully work in, a wide range of media such as paint, clay, chalks, pastels, charcoal and textiles in order to communicate and portray their ideas and observations. For example, Year 6 pupils skillfully use charcoal and pastels to depict features in a landscape, such as trees and rocks, and use different drawing techniques appropriate to this media, such as smudging, in order to create an impression of foliage and texture. In Year 5, pupils skillfully combine a range of media, textiles and techniques such as painting, sewing, and printing in order to create good quality collages depicting the 'twelve labours of Hercules'.
123. Throughout the school, teachers use the work of other artists well to inform pupils' learning and develop their knowledge and understanding of the subject. For example, in their project about buildings and architectural design, Year 2 pupils show a good understanding of the different design features, such as colour, shape and pattern used by Antonio Gaudi in his buildings. They could do this because the teacher had effectively used a range of photographs and pictures of Gaudi's work in order to generate discussion and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. In Year 6, teachers use the work of famous artists, such as Vincent Van Gogh, in order to highlight how different brush techniques can be used to create texture in landscape paintings.
124. Good links are made with other subjects in art and design, but particularly with ICT. Teachers use ICT very effectively to support learning in the subject. For example, in Years 2 and 3, pupils skillfully use the computer to design buildings and sculptures, and in Year 6, pupils use a paint program to create texture in landscapes using a spray-can effect.
125. Opportunities for pupils in three-dimensional work have improved since the previous inspection, and across the school pupils experience different art projects that require them to work in clay and make their own sculptures. For example, in Year 3, pupils observe and use sculptures within the environment very effectively to inform their own designs for sculptures they intend to make out of papier-mâché and, in Year 5, pupils manipulate clay successfully to create pots in the style of the ancient Greeks.

126. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, which enables them to effectively promote specific skills and techniques in lessons. Resources are used well to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding in the subject. As a result, pupils enjoy the tasks set for them and concentrate well in lessons. The subject is effectively co-ordinated and good planning ensures that all aspects of the subject are appropriately covered.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

127. Standards of attainment have improved in the juniors since the previous inspection and are now in line with age-related expectations by the age of eleven. At the time of the last inspection, standards were reported to be below age-related expectations. Standards have been maintained in the infants and remain in line with age-related expectations.
128. Pupils across the school make satisfactory progress in both the design and making aspects of the subject. At the time of the previous inspection pupils made insufficient progress in the design element of the subject in the juniors and their attainment was described as poor. This is no longer the case. Although the quality of designs is variable in different classes across the school the overall progress made by pupils and the attainment they achieve in this aspect is satisfactory by the age of eleven. Across the school, pupils make suitable annotated plans of models they intend to make. For example, in Year 6, pupils produce well-annotated designs for a shelter that are carefully measured to scale. Pupils use their designs effectively to inform the making process and effectively evaluate how successful their designs are against the finished product.
129. Throughout the school, pupils make sound progress in making skills. From an early age pupils learn how to mark out and shape materials by cutting and learn how to assemble and join materials in different ways in order to achieve different effects. For example, in Years 1 and 2, pupils attach string and elastic bands to different junk materials in order to make musical instruments and fasten cut out card shapes onto another piece of card with Sellotape in order to make a Cinderella pop-up card. Junior pupils work with a range of materials and can assemble and join component parts quite accurately and understand how materials must be selected, shaped and joined to a specific design specification or purpose. For example, in their models of shelters, Year 6 pupils measure and saw wood accurately in order to create mitre joints and use triangular shaped card to fix onto the corner joints in order to reinforce and strengthen the structure.
130. Teachers effectively encourage pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of their designs and pupils show they are able to modify their models if necessary in the light of their evaluations. They reflect on their designs as they develop and are aware of how the product is to be used. For example, some Year 5 pupils who wanted their motorised model fairground roundabouts to be as realistic as possible, used a more flexible material than some others when attaching the swings to the roundabout in order to allow them to swing outwards as the speed of the roundabout increased. Pupils show good attention to the quality of their models and they pay good attention and detail to how they are decorated and finished.
131. No lessons were observed in the infants during the inspection so it was not possible to form a judgement on the quality of teaching. In the junior classes the quality of teaching is good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and this enables them to

effectively promote key skills during lessons. Skilful open-ended questioning ensures pupils' thinking is suitably extended. Resources are well prepared and are used effectively to support learning and teachers provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and independently.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

132. Standards have improved by Year 6 since the previous inspection and are now above national expectations, largely due to the quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6. Standards in Year 2 are typical of pupils the same age. Pupils achieve satisfactorily, apart from Years 5 and 6 where achievement is at least good and in the lessons seen, very good. The quality of teaching ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory. Overall, in the junior department it was satisfactory. No teaching was seen in the infants because the subject is alternated with history each half term; history is the focus for this half term. As a result, there was insufficient evidence to form a reliable judgement about the quality of teaching. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory.
133. Pupils learn very effectively in the two older year groups due to very effective teaching, which is characterised by the teachers' excellent subject knowledge. For example, Year 6 pupils have learned to describe the effects of water erosion on rocks using vocabulary, such as hydraulic, corrosive and solvent action, as they explain the action of waves on different coastal landscapes they have visited. Well-planned fieldwork contributes significantly to the very good level of understanding. Pupils can accurately describe arches, stacks and shingle on the photographs taken. Expectations and challenge are very high, with pupils very effectively encouraged to explain their understanding of the different processes. As a result of this teaching, standards are consistently above average. In another Year 6 class, the use of ICT is used to help the pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the way in which human features change land use along a river. Using an interactive whiteboard the teacher demonstrated how the location of a river affects the immediate environment and through comparing photographs the pupils learnt to describe physical and human features of various river sites. Learning was enhanced in the lesson through the use of very high quality supporting materials, such as photographs, as well as the information gathered during a field trip to Durham the week before the inspection. In both of these lessons, pupils were very keen to learn, behaved well and generally had a mature approach to their work. A good proportion of time is allocated to the subject each week in the classes where learning is very good.
134. In part of a lesson seen in the junior section, teaching and learning were unsatisfactory due to problems with the organisation of the lesson and lack of clarity in what the pupils were expected to learn. Using appropriate photographs to describe the similarities and differences between a rural village in India and Sunderland the pupils demonstrated some of the stereotypes the lesson was designed to dispel. For example, when asked to share what he had learned one pupil stated that people living in Sunderland use pens and they do not in India. Due to the time taken to move the pupils around the classroom to look at different photographs there was no discussion of these misunderstandings.
135. Higher attaining pupils are well challenged in Years 5 and 6, but less so in the younger junior classes and in the infants. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with easier work as part of the group activities in Year 6. This is generally effective with the support of an adult to keep the pupils on task, but, in the lessons observed, they were the pupils most likely to waste time and show limited gains in their learning.

136. The subject is appropriately planned using the nationally agreed scheme of work. Work in pupils' books and folders shows the expected coverage throughout the year, apart from Years 2 and 4 where very little work was seen. In the mixed-age Years 1 and 2 class, pupils have learned to compare localities using a story of a girl living on an island in Scotland. They can identify the differences in transport and know how Sunderland differs from the Isle of Struay. The continuous topic on the travels of Barnaby Bear is helping the pupils to learn about the customs of different countries. The pupils have been encouraged to write bold captions to explain where he has travelled. The assessments completed are those recommended as part of the nationally agreed scheme of work. The achievement of the pupils is recorded as they complete each unit of work. This is generally appropriate.
137. The co-ordinator was appointed at the time of the previous inspection. At that time, resources were being assembled to support the units of work. Generally, there is a sufficient amount of resources, including maps, atlases and aerial photographs. There are however, limited resources to reflect contrasting localities for study at Key Stage 2. The monitoring of the subject has been very limited. There are no systems in place to check that all the units planned are taught to the depth required to ensure progression in pupil's learning, especially for the younger pupils in the juniors, where standards are not as high as they should be.

## **HISTORY**

138. Standards attained are typical of pupils' age by ages seven and eleven. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some examples of good teaching in both key stages. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory; the subject has not been a priority in recent years. Resources are sufficient and can be supplemented by borrowing artefacts from other organisations.
139. By Year 2, pupils' knowledge and understanding is typical for their age. Progress is satisfactory. Pupils recognise some differences between the past and present and how things have changed over time. They know, for example, that conditions in hospitals in the time when Florence Nightingale was a nurse were different from conditions today. They know how to use a time line to give the dates of the start of the Crimean war. The pupils have learned about great events in history such as the Great Fire of London.
140. By Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory level of knowledge of different historical periods. They achieve standards that are typical for their age. They learn to develop enquiry skills by using the Internet and analysing census records to undertake research and work independently. For example, Year 5 pupils gathered information about the ancient Greeks using a website. They also gain their knowledge and understanding from information provided by the teacher and good reference books. The pupils learn about life since the 1930s and make good use of the recollections of people they know to provide information about how people used to live in the period after the World War Two. In work on local Victorians, pupils used eighteenth and nineteenth century street maps to locate a street to study, and then using census information discovered the names of the people in houses along a street, what they did for a living and how frequently they changed their occupation. This led to a good understanding of the way people lived in Victorian times.
141. The quality of teaching was generally satisfactory, with some examples of good teaching in the infants and the juniors. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learned about the life of Florence Nightingale. Clear questioning encouraged the pupils to share what they

understood about Florence Nightingale's life. Time for reflection after listening to a story helped the pupils to describe what she did more accurately. The effective use of a video in Year 3 helped pupils learn about Egypt and extended their understanding of life in the past. High expectations of pupils' recording and speaking skills contributed well to improving literacy skills in Year 5. The use of an impromptu role-play depicting a family 'on the dole' helped pupils to relate to life during the depression. Lessons were well planned although they were not adjusted to reflect the wide range of needs in each class, which was generally managed effectively through questioning and support during lessons. Assessments are completed appropriately at the end of each unit.

142. Standards are much the same as at the last inspection. The quality of recorded work has improved by Year 6, which is an improvement. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. There has been very little monitoring of teaching and planning in recent months due to other priorities in the school. The scope for promoting writing skills in the subject has not been explored and there is a need to identify opportunities where this might happen.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

143. Pupils attain standards in line with national expectations in ICT by the age of seven. These standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Standards are above those normally seen by the time pupils are aged eleven and this represents a significant improvement, as they were below average at the time of the previous inspection. The main reasons for this are the school's involvement in the Sunderland Education Action Zone, which has been instrumental in raising the expertise of all staff and the improved resources. Pupils now have very good access to modern computers in their classrooms and in the well-equipped ICT suite. An additional factor is the clear policy statement and scheme of work which now effectively guide teachers' planning. This was lacking at the time of the previous inspection. As a result, all pupils show confidence when using computers and most make good gains in their computer skills by the time they are age eleven.
144. The new opportunities fund has also enabled staff to update their training. This has been supplemented by further training with colleagues in neighbouring schools, through the Sunderland Education Action Zone funding. As a result, teachers have developed good subject knowledge and are now well placed to realise the potential offered by the modern equipment, such as laptop computers and interactive whiteboard, in order to raise standards further. Good planning, with defined opportunities for making use of computers to support learning in all subjects, ensures that pupils are able to develop their skills. In Year 5, for example, they write instructions on how to make a kite in English and Year 1 pupils design buildings in the style of Antonio Gaudi. Complementary equipment, such as a digital camera and mobile programmable toys, promotes a broader understanding among pupils of the everyday uses of ICT.
145. Evidence of completed work was very sparse in the infant classes. By the age of seven, pupils use computers confidently. Most know the functions of the keys on the keyboard and are able to load programs and save work by themselves. In Year 2, for example, pupils used the computer to practise their spellings or to create abstract black and white pictures in art and design, copying the style of the Swiss artist Paul Klee. Pupils in Year 1 sort two- and three-dimensional shapes in mathematics, and design houses as part of their design and technology lessons. In the ICT suite, all quickly learnt how to access information when using the large interactive whiteboard

linked to a laptop computer. They are all familiar with technical terms such as 'icon', 'scroll' and 'cursor'. Extensive labelling on displays in the infant classrooms shows that computers are used in most subjects of the curriculum.

146. By the end of Year 6, it is evident from the amount of completed work they have produced that pupils make good use of computers. They demonstrate good wordprocessing skills and use functions, such as changing font, size or styles, confidently. All competently store, retrieve and present data in different ways, combining text and graphics to enhance their work. This was seen in their mathematics work as they created graphs to show the height of people in their class or produced conversion charts for miles and kilometres. Pupils use the Internet and CD-Rom to research history and geography topics, charting developments in Stoney Lane from 1916 to the present day, for example. Pupils begin to understand how technology can be used to control outcomes, for example by programming the screen 'roamer' to carry out given instructions. However, there is a shortage of equipment to monitor physical data, such as temperature changes of cooling liquids by using sensor equipment, and as a result, this particular aspect is not covered well in school. Fortunately, pupils have access to the excellent facilities in the nearby teachers' centre through their association with the Sunderland Education Action Zone. In one lesson observed, pupils tackled the challenging problem of framing the correct instructions to make their computer control traffic lights. More able pupils faced the task of doing this with more than one set of lights.
147. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in lessons and often paired with more able pupils when working independently of their teacher. Their rate of progress is good.
148. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. In the lessons seen, teaching was never less than good and on one occasion, in a Year 6 class, it was very good. This resulted from the teacher's knowledge and expertise in the subject and very good management of the pupils' learning. The task of writing instructions to make a computer work traffic lights in the correct sequence challenged pupils of all abilities and provided a rigorous test of their ability to think logically. It also tested their road safety knowledge. Learning in that lesson was purposeful and rewarding. Teachers endeavour to link the use of ICT to other subjects, for example by researching facts about the ancient Egyptians or, as in a Year 5 class, designing chairs for Albus Dumbledore, the wizard in the Harry Potter books. Planned tasks are usually challenging enough to sustain pupils' interest for the whole session. Year 6 pupils make good use of the Internet, for example to research facts about the River Wear or find out about microbes on food. As a result, pupils' interest is sustained and most work productively in lessons, concentrating well on the task in hand.
149. National subject guidance is used appropriately to plan a well-structured curriculum whereby pupils can build up skills systematically. Year 3 pupils, for example, are introduced to simple databases, and have designed birthday cards in order to practise combining text and graphics. In Year 4, pupils attempt more complex databases and presentations, using repeated patterns for example. In Year 5, pupils are introduced to spreadsheet modelling and learn to carry out complex data searches.
150. Two teachers share subject leadership and management, one in each department of the school. Appropriate action has been taken to ensure standards are maintained and keep pace with new developments. A clear plan for further developments most notably includes the introduction of a more formal approach to monitoring the standards of teaching and more consistent procedures for assessing pupils'



progress. Resources are very good generally, the only gap being the availability of sensors linked to computers. There are plans to provide one, and possibly two, more of the latest interactive whiteboards for use in classrooms, confirming the commitment of staff to keep abreast of innovations in ICT.

## **MUSIC**

151. Standards are generally typical by ages seven and eleven, with some examples of above average standards in Year 5. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school with some very good teaching at both key stages. Leadership of the subject is good. The quality of teaching and leadership and management has improved since the previous inspection.
152. By the age of seven, pupils can describe sounds and learn to control pitch and tempo to match the sounds of recorded raindrops. The use of alliteration helped pupils to understand how to construct a sequence of sounds. They repeat a short pattern of sounds using a range of instruments and perform to others in their class. The Year 1 pupils in the mixed-age class achieved particularly well.
153. By the age of eleven, pupils understand that sounds can be modified using ICT. Pupils hear the way in which sounds can be improvised to create different effects, for example, as Year 5 pupils listened to the Planet Suite they could identify where the music slowed, the pitch lowered gradually, the music reversed and an echo added. This was effectively related to the improvisation, carried out in the classroom using a tape recorder, of the pupils' own singing. The pupils learn to compose and perform to an accompanying song using percussion instruments. They sing individually with confidence and learn to perform from simple notation and see how different parts combine to achieve an overall effect.
154. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The addition of an effective commercial scheme of work to the existing nationally agreed scheme provides teachers with very clear guidance on how to structure and sequence lessons. The very good lessons observed were based on these plans. In Year 4, pupils confidently used tambourines to perform the notation provided, rhythmically and with an appropriate pulse. Pupils' speaking skills were effectively promoted, as they were encouraged to record their songs with very good clarity and expression in Year 5. In the mixed-age Years 1 and 2 class, pupils were appropriately challenged to provide alternative words as they described the sound of raindrops. Lessons were well managed and progressed at a good pace. The pupils were generally always keen to take part and pupils with special educational needs were effectively included, especially in Year 5. The subject has been enhanced in recent years through the acquisition of high quality percussion and other instruments.
155. Leadership of the subject is effective. All staff have had guidance from the local education authority music support teacher through classroom demonstrations and advice on planning. The introduction of a new scheme of work has contributed to the increased confidence of the staff to teach the subject. A choir comprising about 20 pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 meets weekly. Each year group has the opportunity to perform in a concert each year. In the recent past there have been nativity plays, performances of Bugsy Malone and Rumpelstiltskin.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

156. Standards are in line with those expected for pupils aged seven and above average for eleven-year-olds. For older pupils, this represents an improvement on the previous inspection when standards were average. Standards for seven-year-olds have been maintained and are the same as they were in the previous inspection. Overall, when account is taken of pupils' very good attitude towards the subject, better resources and the boundless enthusiasm of the subject co-ordinator, the level of improvement has been good. The only aspect criticised in 1997, the lack of a policy for physical education, has also been corrected. There is now a clear policy and detailed programme of work to give subject guidance to teachers in all classes. As a result, the quality of teaching is good.
157. By the age of seven, pupils' skills in using bats and balls, in catching and throwing and their knowledge about the effects of exercise are in line with those expected. Over-excitement, particularly on Mondays after a weekend away from school routines means that teachers have to take more time to enforce discipline. This cuts down the amount of time for practising skills in some lessons in the infant classes and is another factor affecting standards. Overall, the behaviour of pupils in lessons is good. By age eleven, pupils are more mature and responsible. They respond quickly to teachers' instructions and work hard in lessons. All show advanced skills when using rackets and most accurately hit a ball to a partner. Both girls and boys in Year 6 are able to throw a hard cricket ball long distances and most are brave enough to try and catch it when it has been thrown from some distance!
158. Teachers take care to ensure that all pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lessons. In common with all other pupils, they enjoy taking part in lessons and work very well together in pairs or small groups. Strengths in teaching, such as teachers' subject knowledge, good class management and the time available for lessons each week, help all pupils to make good progress in acquiring skills and knowledge during lessons. However, teaching in the infant classes is not as consistently good as it is in the junior section of the school, where examples of very good teaching were seen. This accounts for the difference in the standards that pupils' attain. Pupils' knowledge and their skills are developed well by teachers in the junior classes, enabling pupils to make good progress overall.
159. The introduction of the latest curriculum guidance provides for the systematic development of pupils' skills throughout the school. It also ensures that pupils cover the full curriculum, including the non-statutory outdoor and adventurous activities, such as problem solving and orienteering exercises. These are planned into the programme for pupils in the summer term and on residential visits. During the inspection, teachers were taking advantage of the summer-term weather and some of the lessons seen involved pupils working outdoors to improve their games skills. Good use is made of the two school halls for gymnastics. However, no dance lessons were seen. Planning evidence shows that this aspect of the curriculum is provided, but it does not have the same emphasis as other parts of the curriculum. Dance has already been identified as an area for improvement in the co-ordinator's action plan for the coming year.
160. Pupils in Year 5 have three terms of swimming tuition. All benefit from the expert tuition available at the nearby pool with the result that most pupils can swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school. All have the opportunity to practise personal survival skills or develop a range of strokes. Those who fail to learn to swim are given additional lessons when they are in Year 6.
161. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers' secure knowledge and detailed planning ensure that pupils encounter the full range of activities in order to meet statutory

requirements. In very good lessons, teachers use good coaching techniques to extend pupils' learning. Year 4 pupils, for example, are taught how to accurately bat a ball to one another, working in pairs. Their teacher devises challenging activities such as 'mega bounce' where the net is placed at ground level. His enthusiasm, sense of humour and use of praise succeeds in motivating all to work hard to improve their performance and tennis skills.

162. Opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own and others' performances are not always provided in some lessons. Teachers use demonstrations by pupils well to illustrate points and identify how the performance might be improved but some do not give pupils the chance to comment on their own or others' performance.
163. Good class discipline ensures that pupils pay close attention to instructions and work hard. This helps to consolidate and extend their skills and learning. Teachers also take care to ensure that pupils are aware of health and safety issues. Pupils in Year 3 for example know why they need to remove jewellery before lessons begin and in the mixed-age Years 1 and 2 class pupils were careful to remain in their own designated space when using bats and balls. Most lessons are conducted at a good pace but sometimes the pace of lessons is allowed to slow down when the teacher takes too long to give instructions or question pupils about their performance. This reduces the time and opportunities available for practise and allows pupils to cool down again after spending time warming up muscles.
164. Pupils' knowledge of the effects of exercise on their body is a further strength of the teaching programme. Teachers nearly always start lessons with vigorous and sustained warming-up sessions. These extend pupils and leave pupils breathing hard. In all classes, pupils know that the heart beats faster after exercise and the reasons for stretching muscles before exercise. In a Year 6 games lesson, for example, the teacher concentrated on warming up arm and shoulder muscles to better prepare pupils for throwing, catching and batting a ball. The opportunity to play in a team, sometimes against pupils from other schools in the area, gives pupils opportunities to develop games skills in competitive situations. This in turn contributes to the provision for pupils' social development.
165. The very good level of resources for lessons means that all pupils are provided with good opportunities to practise games skills with bats and balls. Both school halls have a good supply of equipment. However, the junior hall needs more vertical apparatus, such as climbing frames, for pupils to use. On occasions, teachers make use of a digital camera to record activities, such as gymnastics, and to enable pupils to evaluate balance positions. Additional facilities, such as a good-sized level field and a large playground, further enhance the opportunities for pupils to learn appropriate skills in this subject. An added benefit would be clearer markings on the yard to mark the boundary of activities. The Year 4 teacher relied on cones and the assistance of imaginary aliens who would disintegrate any pupil who moved out of the agreed area. A passing helicopter was used as a timely reminder for one forgetful pupil!
166. The subject is managed very well by the extremely conscientious, enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject co-ordinator. She successfully supports staff and all work very hard to improve standards in each aspect of physical education. Teachers' planning is checked each term and the quality and condition of resources are reviewed regularly. Time is allocated periodically to monitor the quality of teaching each time the subject is included for review in the school development plan. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular sporting activities also makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. These include football and netball training. In addition, new opportunities funding aimed at raising the profile of physical education in the area, helps to provide

'fitness for fun' sessions twice weekly. These sessions are well attended by boys and girls.