

INSPECTION REPORT

**St. Andrew's Roman Catholic First
School**

Blyth, Northumberland

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique Reference Number: 122304

Headteacher: Mrs C. Duffus

Reporting inspector: Mrs A. Soper
OIN 18148

Dates of inspection: 25th – 27th September 2000

Inspection number: 224807

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 – 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Albion Way Blyth Northumberland
Postcode:	NE24 5BL
Telephone number:	01670 352606
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Fr. J. Lennon
Date of previous inspection:	13 th January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject Responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs A. Soper [18148]	Registered inspector	English	What sort of school is it?
		Information and communication technology	How high are standards?
		Art and design	How well are pupils taught?
		Under fives	
		Equal opportunities	
		Special educational needs	
Mr P. Oldfield [1112]	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr R. Evans [20692]	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		History	
		Music	
Mrs A. Brangan [29381]	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well is the school led and managed?
		Design and technology	
		Geography	
		Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Andrew's Roman Catholic First School is situated in Blyth, Northumberland. It serves a very wide catchment area and many of its pupils travel some distance to school. Pupils, all of whom are from white backgrounds, are aged from three to 9. There are 211 pupils on roll, with almost equal numbers of boys and girls. Almost 17 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is below average. Most of these pupils are in the early stages on the school's register of special educational need. Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year. In the last two years it was below average but at the time of the inspection it was broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. Children in the foundation stage have a good start to their learning in the nursery and reception classes. The very good climate for learning is helping to raise standards. There is a good emphasis on literacy and numeracy across the school. Standards in English and physical education are good by the time pupils leave school. They are good in science by the end of Key Stage 1. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. Leadership and management are good. Pupils are well cared for and feel secure and happy. The school provides good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- ◆ The school is well led and managed.
- ◆ There is a very good climate for learning.
- ◆ There are very good relationships and teachers work hard to provide a good quality of education.
- ◆ The literacy and numeracy hours are well established. They have a positive impact on pupils' progress and in raising standards.
- ◆ The partnership with parents and the community is good.
- ◆ Behaviour is very good.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- ◆ Information and communication technology requires further development.
- ◆ The organisation of support for pupils with special educational needs.
- ◆ Short term planning to take more account of the needs of pupils with differing prior attainment.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1997. The key issues for improvement related to curriculum planning, which was seen to lack progression and continuity, assessment procedures, which needed clarification and the quality of teaching, which varied from unsatisfactory to good. There has been a very good improvement in assessment procedures and a good improvement in curriculum planning. The school now has detailed records of pupils' attainment and their progress is carefully monitored. All staff are involved in reviewing pupils' progress and what they are likely to

achieve in the future. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is now included in planning. A strong emphasis has been placed on planning to ensure progression and continuity, not only in St. Andrew's but also onwards to the middle school. Most planning is good and there are good plans for the future development of subjects in the school's improvement plan. The quality of teaching has improved. There are good procedures for monitoring and evaluating lessons and teachers welcome comments on their performance. Teaching is now at least satisfactory and many good lessons were observed during the inspection. The school is well placed to continue to make further improvements.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	B	B	C	C
Writing	A	A	B	B
Mathematics	C	B	D	D

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

The table shows that in the 1999 National Curriculum assessments pupils' performance in reading was satisfactory and in line with levels expected nationally for pupils aged 7. Pupils' performance in writing was good and above average, but their performance in mathematics was below average. The trend over the last four years has been of above average performance in reading, well above average performance in writing and close to the national average in mathematics. Recent national assessments show a marked improvement in pupils' performance, which has been largely due to the effective implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies. In the year 2000 tests, pupils have achieved well above average results in reading and writing and above average results in mathematics. The school has set suitably challenging targets for 2001 for English and mathematics.

During the inspection, standards were satisfactory and in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1. They were good and above average in English and satisfactory in mathematics by the end of Year 4. The standards seen at the end of Key Stage 1 reflect pupils' lower prior attainment and the significant number of the current Year 2 pupils who have special educational needs. Attainment in science is good by the end of Key Stage 1 and satisfactory by the end of Year 4. This reflects the good impact that the recently reviewed science curriculum is having in the early stages of the school. Standards are good and above average in physical education throughout the school. In other subjects, standards are satisfactory, though there are inconsistencies in the school in pupils' knowledge and understanding in information and communication technology. The school is aware that standards are not high enough in this subject, which has already been identified as a priority in its improvement plan. Overall, standards are high enough in relation to pupils' prior attainment. During the inspection, there were instances where those pupils with higher prior attainment were insufficiently challenged by the lack of appropriate work in some lessons. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. In some lessons the work given to pupils with special educational

needs was inappropriate and they made insufficient progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Positive attitudes to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in class and at play.
Personal development and relationships	Good personal development and very good relationships. The school promotes these effectively.
Attendance	Satisfactory and in line with the national average. Some pupils are persistently late and often miss the start of lessons.

These aspects are strengths of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5 - 7 years	aged 7 - 9 years
Lesson seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. During the inspection, it was very good in seven per cent of lessons seen, good in 42 per cent and satisfactory in the remainder. The teaching of children in the foundation stage is consistently good. Teaching of English and mathematics is good overall. Literacy and numeracy are taught well through different subjects. The main strengths in teaching include good management of pupils and the good teaching of basic skills. Time, support staff and resources are used well. Long and medium term plans are generally good. Teachers' short term plans for their lessons do not always clarify work for pupils with differing prior attainment. As a result, some pupils are not always appropriately challenged and some with special educational needs are insufficiently well supported. Some pupils, particularly in the early stages of Key Stage 2, have not made sufficient progress in information and communication technology, handwriting and presentation.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for children in the nursery and reception classes. Broad and balanced in the school. The school is developing the provision for information and communication technology.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Some review of the organisation and resources required.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. The strong Christian ethos contributes well. Satisfactory provision for pupils' cultural development.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. Good procedures for monitoring progress and personal development and for discipline. Very good procedures for child protection. Some health and safety procedures, such as fire signs, require attention.
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The school works well in partnership with parents. The school provides a good range of early learning experiences for children in the foundation stage. In Key Stages 1 and 2 there is a broad and balanced curriculum, though the programme of work for information and communication technology is in the early stages of development. Pupils with special educational needs receive good additional tuition from the part time teacher but their needs are not always fully met in the classrooms. Pupils' welfare is carefully promoted.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good leadership and management. Good development planning and support for teaching and curriculum development.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body takes an active role in the school. It fulfils its responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Priorities for development are well matched to identified needs.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Efficient use of all resources.

There is a good number of qualified and experienced staff. The accommodation is adequate and is to be enhanced by the imminent building of a new nursery. Learning resources are at least adequate for most subjects, though there is a lack of some resources for music, reading and special educational needs. Leadership and management is good. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy and the governing body. Efficient systems are used to ensure best value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The school expects pupils to work hard. ◆ Their children like school and they make good progress. ◆ The teaching is good. ◆ Behaviour is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Extra-curricular activities after school.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments. A high proportion of the teaching is good. They agree that extra-curricular activities after school have been limited, though the school has recently introduced some activities to enhance the curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In the 1999 National Curriculum assessments, pupils' performance in reading was satisfactory and broadly in line with the national average. Performance in writing was good and above average but in the mathematics assessment, pupils performed less well, with their results being below the national average. The results in 1999 in mathematics were not indicative of a reduction in standards but reflected the pupils' prior attainment. Taking the last four years together, performance in mathematics was close to average. Performance in reading was above the national average, whilst writing was well above average. The trend in results over the last four years has indicated good and above average standards in reading, very good and well above average standards in writing and satisfactory and average standards in mathematics. The most recent assessments of the year 2000 show a marked improvement in performance. Pupils attained well in all three subjects, achieving improved results compared to last year. These results reflect the positive contributions of the literacy and numeracy hours, which have been effectively established.
2. Evidence from the inspection shows that speaking and listening are strengths. Pupils listen attentively and speak clearly. Pupils are encouraged, from an early age, to talk clearly and to take part in a variety of speaking and listening tasks. This was initially seen as a priority in the early stages of the school, to address the significant speech problems that were apparent in some of the youngest children. The strong focus on communication skills has had a positive impact on developing confidence and fluency.
3. Pupils attain satisfactory standards in reading by the end of Key Stage 1. They make good progress and, by the end of Year 4, pupils' reading is good and above average for their age. Good standards are seen in pupils' knowledge and understanding of ways in which they can find information. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know and use a range of strategies, such as looking at the contents and index pages of books to help them to find information. They know about author, publisher, blurb and illustration, and talk knowledgeably about their favourite stories. In writing, pupils sequence their ideas well to tell a story. They often write at length by the end of Key Stage 1. Their handwriting and presentation is slower to develop, with many pupils printing letters well into Year 3. In some classes, pupils' presentation is weak and this is not corrected. By the end of Year 4, pupils' writing is good and above average. Handwriting is joined and presentation good.
4. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is satisfactory by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 4. Standards are rising due to the good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and the priority given to the subject. The school has set challenging targets for improvement in pupils' attainment and is developing appropriate strategies to help achieve these targets. The higher attaining pupils do not always receive appropriate extension work. Standards of attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4 in mental mathematics and basic number are satisfactory for all pupils, including those with special educational needs.
5. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain good standards in science, reflecting the school's improvements to the science curriculum since the last inspection. Here, there is a strong emphasis on pupils learning by investigation and discovery. By the end of Year 4, standards are satisfactory and in line with those expected for their age. At times, across the school, there is insufficient challenge for pupils with higher prior attainment.

6. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in information and communication technology by the end of Key Stage 1. Progress is satisfactory in most aspects of the subject in Key Stage 2 but the school has yet to fully develop its provision for information and communication technology. The group of pupils observed in Year 4 showed good understanding of data handling and were familiar with control. They accessed the Internet successfully. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 were less secure in their understanding of the computer and required considerable support in the lesson observed.

7. Attainment is satisfactory in other subjects, such as art and design, design and technology, history, geography and music. Pupils attain well and above average for their age in physical education. Where there are good schemes of work that provide clear progression and continuity of learning, such as in physical education, pupils achieve well. In history and geography, pupils make sound progress overall, with some good progress in geography at Key Stage 2. They show appropriate knowledge and understanding of the past and of the world. In some instances, their knowledge and understanding was enhanced by the effective teaching methods used to bring to life some current environmental issues. The art and design and design and technology schemes have yet to be developed. As a result, some of the work lacked progression, with teachers relying on their own initiative to plan work and activities. At times, these were not fully successful in helping pupils to understand lesson objectives, such as in a Year 4 art lesson. At other times, in art, work was not well matched to pupils' differing prior experience. Younger pupils required considerable support, for example, to undertake a weaving task.

8. In the foundation stage, children, whose attainment on entry is broadly average, make good progress in the areas of personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and in their physical development. They quickly learn to become increasingly independent, such as in changing for physical activities, choosing and undertaking a variety of tasks. They develop sound understanding of the world around them and in their mathematical and creative development.

9. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. There is a below average number with special educational needs, in comparison with schools nationally. The needs of the pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Need are met well, with good additional support staff. Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress when given additional tuition from the part time teacher. Their individual education plans are detailed. Pupils' attainment and progress in their classrooms sometimes varies, particularly where there is insufficient, or a lack of efficiently organised support.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. This was also seen at the time of the last inspection. The many pupils who travel to the school by bus are cheerful and eager when coming into school. They walk in quickly and enter the school unsupervised. In most lessons observed, pupils showed interest, worked purposefully and were eager to contribute their ideas. They are polite, such as saying, "excuse me" and "please" and listening to others' answers. The school effectively promotes a strong, caring ethos, embedded in the values of the Mission Statement of the school as "a Catholic Christian family where (all) live together, loving and respecting each other, as God's children". Children in the foundation stage are secure and confident. For example, very young pupils were seen taking responsibility for sorting out books and equipment and sharing bricks for building.

11. Throughout the school, pupils listen well to teachers and other adults and willingly undertake a variety of tasks around the school. These include acting as register monitors, tidying up the classroom and sorting reading books. Older pupils are also eager to help younger pupils at all times, such as during wet weather play in the classrooms. They play well together in the playground.

12. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. Good strategies are used to promote positive behaviour, for example, in one class pupils receive silver stars for good work or good behaviour. These are displayed on a chart for all to see. Procedures for pupils' exclusion are effective. There have been no exclusions this term and only one lunchtime exclusion last term. Pupils of all ages, including children in the foundation stage, play and work together well.

13. The standard of supervision offered by all adults is good and is helpful and caring. The discipline policy shows appropriate sanctions but these are rarely needed. The aim is to foster self-esteem and self-discipline and pupils respond very well. The school is an orderly community and adults act as good role models. There are very good arrangements at lunch-time. The young pupils dine before the older pupils. All queue up in a line and happily wait their turn before moving to the dining tables.

14. Most pupils identified as having special educational needs are well supported. They have good individual support when withdrawn for extra tuition by the part time teacher. They take a full part in the life of the school. In some classes, their needs are not always fully met. At times, insufficient use is made of pupils' individual education plans to ensure they have suitable tasks and resources.

15. Pupils are encouraged to listen and communicate. All pupils speak openly and freely, such as when answering teachers' questions. They develop a positive self-image and have a confident attitude to work. Relationships within the school community are very good. Adults provide good role models through their good relationships with each other. Pupils are made to feel welcome and secure.

16. Pupils' personal development is good. The school provides a good environment for learning, free from oppressive behaviour such as bullying, racism or sexism. The accommodation is well maintained and pupils develop respect for property. Pupils know that they are responsible for their own actions and are encouraged by teachers to fully develop these responsibilities. They are kind and courteous to each other, frequently opening doors for fellow pupils and moreover, being thanked by them, in return. Movement around the school is orderly. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of values and beliefs, underlined in the personal and social programme and in assemblies.

17. The pupils' positive attitudes, very good behaviour, satisfactory attendance, together with very good relationships they enjoy with teachers and other adults, as well as their classmates, contribute significantly to their learning and impact well on standards throughout the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory. A high proportion of lessons observed was good, with some very good. During the inspection, seven per cent of lessons seen were very good, 42 per cent were good and 51 per cent were satisfactory.

19. The quality of teaching for children in the foundation stage is consistently good. The high

quality of teaching reflects teachers' good knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage. In the nursery, children from the age of three are encouraged to develop good personal, social and communication skills. They quickly learn to become increasingly independent and to follow routines. This continues well into the reception classes, where the strong emphasis on communication, language and literacy successfully promotes children's ability to take part in discussions with adults and other children. Planning is good for children in the foundation stage, showing clear reference to the six areas of learning and the early learning goals. Non-teaching staff are usually deployed effectively. They contribute to the caring and purposeful atmosphere in these classes. In some cases the use of support staff is not always efficient, such as where they spend considerable periods without direct involvement in the lessons.

20. At Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers knowledge is secure in most subjects, with the exception of information and communications technology, which is in the process of being improved. Teachers have good understanding of English and a secure understanding of mathematics and science. These subjects have been the focus for improvement, following national guidance and the school's effective development of some issues raised about mathematics and science at the time of the last inspection. Teachers' planning and teaching benefit from the guidance in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and from the good curriculum structure that has been developed for science. The teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is good.

21. Teachers have good subject knowledge of physical education. This promotes pupils' good standards from an early age and results in above average performance by the time they leave the school. Subject knowledge is satisfactory in other subjects, though there was some variation in the quality of teaching in art, where some lesson objectives were unclear.

22. The school has worked hard to establish good long and medium term planning formats, which provide continuity and progression for most subjects. Teachers devise these plans carefully to ensure appropriate subject content. Most teachers carefully build upon pupils' prior experience to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. This was especially seen in lessons in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Whilst some teachers plan carefully for pupils' differing prior attainment in different subjects, there are some shortcomings. In the foundation subjects, work planned for some pupils with higher prior attainment is not always sufficiently challenging. In some classes, teachers make insufficient use of the detailed individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs. In many classes there are insufficient additional resources to support these pupils. Because of the emphasis on developing the core subjects in recent years, some subjects remain to be reviewed. In these subjects, particularly art and design and design and technology, teachers lack the support of appropriate schemes of work to support their planning. Appropriately, the school improvement plan highlights the intention to develop schemes in line with new national guidance.

23. Teachers' management of pupils is generally very good. There are high expectations of behaviour and very good relationships. Strategies used by teachers are generally effective in promoting pupils' interest. At times, some methods are less effective, such as where lesson objectives are not fully understood by pupils, or where tasks are insufficiently challenging for some pupils. When these occur, pupils are either confused and require further support, or they use their time doing simple tasks such as colouring work with crayons. Time is used well, for example, the literacy hours are well organised and contain a good range of learning opportunities. Resources are used effectively overall. There is some inefficient use of some support staff in a Key Stage 1 class, where the support assistant often spends considerable time with no designated tasks.

24. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are good. The school has established a detailed procedure that monitors individual progress, sets future targets and makes predictions of

what pupils might be expected to achieve. This has been successfully developed since the time of the last inspection. Pupils with particular expertise or difficulty are effectively identified. Teachers assess pupils' achievements in all subjects regularly throughout the year and information is used to inform parents and the pupils' next teacher. Work is marked conscientiously, though not all provides clear and consistent information to pupils on ways in which they might improve. The use of assessment to inform planning is satisfactory overall. Most teachers ensure that skills are progressively developed and reinforced. They often make good links between subjects, such as in a Year 4 lesson, where role-play and literacy were used in a geography lesson to enhance pupils' understanding of a current environmental issue. In some cases, teachers are unsure of ways in which they can effectively support pupils with special educational needs.

25. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, when some teaching was unsatisfactory. There was a lack of sufficient challenge for pupils with higher prior attainment at the time of the last inspection. There has been a strong focus on improving planning and the school has committed itself to raising teacher expectations of what pupils can do. These aspects of teaching are improving through the regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching by the senior management but still require further attention. In a few cases, work is not accurately matched to pupils' prior attainment. Whilst there is good support for most pupils who are withdrawn for additional tuition in literacy and numeracy, the organisation of classroom support for these pupils requires review in some classes. Teachers do not always have sufficient, additional resources for pupils with special educational needs in their classrooms.

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

26. The school meets statutory requirements in teaching all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The allocation of time to each subject is appropriate to provide a balanced curriculum. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are fully in place. Within individual subjects there is a satisfactory balance, except for information and communication technology, where not all elements are fully taught. Information and communication technology is not systematically taught as a separate skill but is incorporated into the various subjects. The school is aware of the shortcomings of the provision and is taking appropriate steps to improve the provision for the subject. The school has an equal opportunities policy and all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and equal opportunity to learn and make progress.

27. The previous report drew attention to weaknesses in teachers' planning, which had inadequate continuity and progression. Examples were also noted of repetition and overlap in science and mathematics. The school has carefully addressed these issues. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and the use of nationally published material as the basis for its science course have greatly improved the curriculum in these areas. Meetings of the whole staff to discuss the curriculum are designed to eliminate repetition and overlap of learning in the mixed age classes, which change from year to year. The school has worked hard to draw up policies and schemes of work for all subjects, to provide the framework for teachers' planning. There are good examples of subjects contributing to literacy and numeracy development. For example, pupils produce good extended writing in history where they describe personalities and events and science as they write up their investigations. In science, pupils frequently measure quantities and temperature and produce pictographs of data they have assembled.

28. Teachers' long-term planning provides a good overview of the curriculum goals for each subject. Medium-term planning derived from this shows good balance of subject content and the development of skills. There is a weakness in teachers' short-term planning, which insufficiently

indicates objectives for pupils of different attainment. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are rarely referred to in teachers' lesson plans, nor is there always sufficient extension work for pupils with higher prior attainment. The headteacher and subject co-ordinators regularly monitor teachers' planning. The school is fully involved in curriculum planning with another Catholic first school and their associated middle school.

29. There are weaknesses in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The pupils are withdrawn from literacy and numeracy classes for individual teaching and support, which is good. In other lessons, work is carefully adapted to meet their needs. In some classes, teachers lack sufficient guidance and support in ways in which to adapt work. Classes lack an appropriate range of resources for pupils with special educational needs. In one class, the organisation of support is inefficient for the high number of pupils with lower prior attainment.

30. Provision for pupils' personal development is good. All classes have a period of time where pupils sit in a circle to discuss matters that affect their lives. The governors' policy is not to provide specific sex education but to incorporate it into science topics. Health and hygiene, including the use and misuse of drugs, alcohol and tobacco, are also taught through "Healthy Living" topics. Medical and social work staff visit the school to supplement this learning.

31. The extended catchment area of the school and transport requirements restrict the school's opportunities for after-school activities and clubs, but within the school day activities such as professional football coaching and weekly specialist music tuition are provided. The school enriches its curricular provision with regular visits to places of historical, environmental and educational interest. For example, pupils visit museums, a Victorian school, farms, the local coast and Roman sites.

32. Pupils regularly take books home to read. Parents are happy with the amount of homework provided. They receive information about the amount of homework to be undertaken at the start of each school year.

33. Since the last inspection, when pupils' spiritual development through the curriculum was insufficiently planned, the school has worked hard to remedy this deficiency. In-service training has been provided and teachers appropriately refer to spiritual development in their planning. In their lessons, teachers aim to give pupils the opportunity to express their ideas, develop their imagination and raise their self-esteem. Pupils' good writing in English and across the curriculum, art displays and original ideas in music are good examples of this aspect of their development.

34. Overall, the schools' provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school's mission aim is that "St. Andrew's is a Catholic Christian family where (all) live together, loving and respecting each other as God's children". Pupils' good behaviour in the classroom and around the school is evidence of the school's success in fulfilling this. Pupils demonstrate that they have a clear knowledge of the difference between right and wrong behaviour, attitudes and relationships. School rules are simple, understood by everyone, displayed in the classrooms and reinforced by teachers. Teachers, in their good relationships with each other and with the pupils, provide good role models. Wider moral issues such as pollution and injustice are highlighted in assemblies and lessons. For example, in history pupils consider the degrading conditions of child labour in Victorian times. They thoughtfully compare their own lives with those of child workers more than a 100 years ago.

35. There is a strong sense of community in the school. Pupils work and play together well and appreciate each other's company. They share ideas, opinions and materials readily. Parents and governors speak highly of the inclusive ethos of the school which is well recognised by the wider

community. Pupils take responsibility for various tasks such as operating a cassette player in assembly and giving out and collecting registers. They are polite and courteous to each other and adults. They hold doors open for visitors and are eager to discuss their school and their work.

36. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are exploring their own culture through their participation in the local history project. Good use of photographic resources and local visits also develop their awareness of their own cultural heritage. They study world faiths such as Buddhism, Judaism and Hinduism. They have learned about African music, for example, and have studied the lives and cultures in countries such as India and Africa.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school provides satisfactory support for all of its pupils. Effective child protection procedures are in place and staff have a good regard for pupils' well being. There are some health and safety matters that require attention. Generally, there is inadequate signage, and full attention needs to be given to a very recent Fire Officer's Report. The governing body take these matters seriously and before the end of the inspection had taken steps to rectify these observations.

38. Good procedures are in place for attention to minor playground accidents. The school has a high number of adults who have an appropriate first aid qualification. Regular fire drills are held.

39. The school enjoys very good relationships with many specialist agencies, including the school nurse, education welfare officer and the local authority "Under 9's" team. Considerable support has been given to the school by the advisory teacher service. The pupils are well prepared for their transfer to middle school, through effectively developed links between the two schools.

40. Great care is taken to ensure that pupils enjoy school. The staff meet parents before their children start school. There are regular staff meetings and continual informal assessment of pupils' progress. There is time allocated each day for pupils to sit in a circle, where they talk about personal and social matters. The school has had appropriate contact with a social worker attached to the partnership group of schools. The school nurse has contributed information to the healthy eating programme.

41. Each class has its own rules, some of which have been compiled by pupils. Some pupils have commented on such matters as a "happy" or a "sad" playtime. Pupils are very well behaved.

42. Attendance levels are satisfactory. There are good procedures for monitoring attendance, with parents' telephone calls to explain absences being logged and letters kept on file. Registers are marked well. Of some concern is the large number of late pupils who regularly disrupt the start of the school day and do not get a good start to the day. The registers are closed at 9.10 a.m. After this time pupils must enter by the controlled reception area door. No firm records are kept of the exact time pupils arrive after the registers are closed but parents have a responsibility to bring their children at the correct time to more fully support the good work being done by the staff.

43. The school has developed good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. In the core subjects of English and mathematics, apart from the statutory national tests, there are regular tests in reading, spelling and mathematics. Children are also tested on entry to the nursery and reception classes. The results of these tests are used both to track children's progress through the foundation stage and also to predict their potential attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, Year 4 and beyond. The school carefully monitors pupils' future progress at middle school, with which there is a close liaison.

44. A strength of the school's assessment policy is the common format of assessment procedures in all subjects. During and at the end of units of work, specific features of individual pupils' attainment are noted on well-designed attainment sheets. Information from these sheets is transferred to teachers' record books. This enables them throughout the year to build a picture of each pupil's progress in all aspects of each subject. The record books are then passed to the next teacher or the pupil's next school and give a full account of his or her academic and personal achievement. Data from Key Stage 1 and 2 testing is also used well to track pupils' progress in English and mathematics. The use of this good assessment information is not fully translated into effective planning. Whilst the assessment procedures identify high and low attaining pupils, lesson planning does not always sufficiently recognise the need to plan for pupils of differing attainment.

45. The marking of pupils' work across subjects and classes is inconsistent. Teachers provide oral feedback and, in several classes, provide informative comments to pupils on how to improve their work. In some cases, opportunities are missed to highlight pupils' repeated misunderstandings.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Parents are generally very happy with the standards their children achieve and the work they produce. Attendance by parents at consultation or curricular events is always very good. A very few parents expressed concern about the amount of lack of homework but evidence shows that the school policy is followed appropriately. Home-school agreements are in place. A very high number of returns were received from parents; this highlights their support of the school. The school is held in high esteem within the local community. Some parents choose to send their children to St. Andrew's though other local schools are nearer.

47. The school recognises its partnership with parents and the parish and has actively encouraged parents to become involved in activities. The Parent Teacher Association has provided excellent support to the school, by raising funds to purchase resources such as books and equipment. Some events, such as the forthcoming barbecue, are events well supported by the community.

48. Many parents feel that they are very well informed about the school. Each class sends parents a termly newsletter containing dates about specific events. A number of parents regularly help in classes and their support is valued. Parents also help regularly in supervising pupils as they walk to the local leisure centre for swimming. The school brochure and governors' annual report to parents contain good information about the school. The good quality information is appreciated by a large majority of parents.

49. Parents are involved in children's learning at home. A home reading partnership is encouraged and younger pupils keep a reading record book until they achieve an appropriate level of reading.

50. The school has addressed the issue of making better use of the local area and community, as stated in the last inspection report. Weekly visits are made to the local leisure centre for swimming and class visits have been made to the local park. There has also been an in-depth history project and study of the local town centre.

51. The school is a welcome part of the local community and has a close liaison with other local schools. It enjoys strong church links. The members of the governing body show a strong sense of involvement and interest. These good links consolidate and extend pupils' learning and make a

valuable contribution to the community the school serves. The Parent Teacher Association and school have plans to develop an adventure playground and, with planned building work for a new nursery, exciting times are ahead.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The headteacher, staff and governing body co-operate well together to provide strong leadership. This contributes positively to the educational standards achieved by pupils and to the quality of education provided. This leadership is well respected by parents.

53. The previous inspection report required the school to improve the development plan by being clearer about the order of priorities in the plan and more precise about the potential costs, in both time and money. The format of the school improvement plan was thoroughly revised by the headteacher, senior management and the governing body. It is now a detailed document that places developments in a framework of values based on the school's mission statement. It is structured, with time scales, costs and evaluation procedures.

54. Members of the governing body play an active role in the school's development. The subcommittees operate effectively, debating issues carefully before presenting proposals to the full governing body. Minutes of meetings are well written and convey a flavour of the positive discussions that take place. Some governors visit the school regularly. They have observed the new literacy and numeracy strategies in classes, given feedback to the teachers and compiled a report on their findings. Governors and staff have good relationships. The school values the governors' role as a "critical friend", in such areas as reviewing results of the national tests.

55. The commitment to provide equal opportunities for all pupils is reflected in the aims, objectives and mission statement of the school and is successfully achieved. The ethos of the school is based on the Christian teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. The school is very successful in providing a safe and secure environment, which has a significant impact on the teaching and learning.

56. The headteacher and staff analyse carefully the results of the National Curriculum assessments. They use these and their knowledge of individual pupils, to set precise targets for the next round of assessments. This detailed knowledge is being used to provide special help for lower attaining pupils in literacy and numeracy in Year 2 in order to raise standards. The impact of this help is apparent in the improved standards of pupils who undertook the national tests this year.

57. There is an appropriate number of staff, although there is a need to maximise the efficient use of the time of some classroom support staff. Co-ordinators are well qualified and matched to their roles either by basic qualification or by training and experience. The headteacher effectively monitors teaching and learning, especially in literacy and numeracy and gives verbal and written feedback to the teachers. Every teacher is monitored once a term for teaching literacy and numeracy. The headteacher's monitoring procedures have been supported well by observation from the link advisor.

58. There is an experienced special educational needs teacher and classroom assistants support the work with pupils with special educational needs. Some of the procedures for supporting these pupils require review. For example, not all teachers make effective use of pupils' individual educational plans when planning work for them. Some classroom support is inefficiently organised. Appraisal procedures have been replaced with the systematic monitoring of teaching and the introduction of performance management. A performance management training day for

staff is being held in October. Many of the governors are undergoing training for this aspect. Good induction procedures are in place for any newly qualified teachers, who have the support of the senior management and much informal help from the whole staff. A staff handbook effectively informs staff of aims, routines and code of conduct. The staff work well together, informally sharing their expertise to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

59. The arrangements for professional development are satisfactory and focused on recent curricular developments. Whole school training is provided in key areas and members of staff have opportunities to attend courses of specific relevance to their work. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have had a major impact on teaching techniques and standards. As acknowledged in the school improvement plan and school targets, the school is striving to reach even higher standards. Staff training for teaching information and communication technology is an identified priority in the school improvement plan.

60. Over the years, the school has had problems with the building, which has caused some upheaval, especially in the last academic year. The quality of the accommodation has improved since the last inspection, with repairs of the roof now completed. Classrooms are adequate for successful teaching and learning and good use made of the attached areas. The hall is used well for physical education, music, lunch and for assemblies. It is well maintained and the floor provides an excellent surface for physical education lessons. Many areas are available for small group work. In the near future when the new nursery is completed, a spare classroom has been designated for use as a library and information and communication technology suite. The outdoor area provides ample space for physical education and recreation, with a hard surfaced playground and large playing fields to the rear of the school.

61. The level of learning resources is generally good but there is an insufficiently wide range of fiction books for older pupils and a lack of varied classroom resources for pupils with special educational needs. There are insufficient tuned instruments for music. Resources are well cared for and are easily accessible.

62. The headteacher and the finance committee take responsibility for monitoring the school's budget. The budget is approved by the finance committee and then presented to the full governing body. Funds are appropriately allocated for the support of pupils with special educational needs. Specific grants are used effectively for their designated purposes. The headteacher and governors plan ahead carefully to develop resources in line with the school's priorities, with appropriate consideration being given to the principles of best value.

63. The day-to-day administration of the school is good. The school secretary has a good understanding of both the school and the local education authority systems. She makes a positive contribution to the efficient running of the school, ensuring that the best value is achieved when ordering stock and buying in services. Both the headteacher and the secretary are being trained in October for using new office technology that will link the school directly with County Hall. The school's audit was completed in July 2000 and the minor recommendations are now in place. The school has not yet received the printed audit. The school fund account is audited annually. The school is bright, orderly and tidy and benefits from the conscientious care and commitment of the caretaker and the cleaning staff. Pupils receive good support from the efficient kitchen and supervisory staff.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to further raise standards and the quality of education, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- ◆ continue with existing plans to improve the provision for information and communication technology by;

- *acquiring additional computers;*
- *developing a clear, progressive scheme of work;*
- *enhancing teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject;*

(paragraphs 6, 20, 26, 59, 116, 120 and 121)

- ◆ continue to monitor and evaluate planning and teaching to ensure;

- *appropriate challenge is consistently provided for pupils with differing prior attainment;*

(paragraphs 4, 5, 14, 22, 23, 28, 44, 86, 95, 105, 114 and 131)

- review the provision for pupils with special educational needs to ensure:

- *there is efficient and effective support for pupils with special educational needs in their classrooms;*
- *appropriate resources are available in classrooms to support their learning*

(paragraphs 9, 24, 25, 29, 58 and 90)

In addition to the key issues above, the school should include the following less important weaknesses for improvement. These can be found in paragraphs 45, 89, 95 and 97:

- ◆ develop a more consistent approach to marking.
- ◆ improve the range of fiction available for older pupils.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	7	42	51	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll	211
Number of pupils eligible for free school meals	29

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	35

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

Pupils mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	9	20	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 or above	Boys	7	7	8
	Girls	19	19	19
	Total	26	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (84)	90 (92)	93 (84)
	National	n/a (82)	n/a (83)	n/a (87)

Teacher Assessments		Reading	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 or above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	19	19	20
	Total	27	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (88)	93 (92)	96 (92)
	National	n/a (82)	n/a (86)	n/a (87)

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

At the time of publication the national percentage results for 2000 were unavailable.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	161
Any other minority ethnic group	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	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.5 : 1
Average class size	27.3

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	58

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	16

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/00
	£
Total income	323,842
Total expenditure	321,579
Expenditure per pupil	1,554
Balance brought forward from previous year	14,758
Balance carried forward to next year	17,021

Results of the survey of parents' and carers'

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out:

228

Number of questionnaires returned:

106

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school	69	28	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school	62	35	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good	53	43	1	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	30	46	11	4	9
The teaching is good	66	30	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	52	38	8	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	61	31	5	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	72	26	1	0	1
The school is well led and managed	50	37	6	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	50	46	3	0	1
The school provides as interesting range of activities outside lessons	16	32	26	9	17

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

64. Children in the foundation stage are taught in the nursery and the reception classes. There have been several improvements to the provision for children in the foundation stage since the last inspection. At that time, children in the reception class were seen to lack sufficient opportunities for using their own initiative and imagination. This has been fully addressed and children have good opportunities to use these skills. Early assessments show that the youngest children benefit well from the time spent in the nursery, where they make good progress. Children's attainment on entry varies from year to year but is broadly average in the current year. By the end of the foundation stage, children's personal, social and emotional development is good for their age. Their speaking and listening skills and their physical development are good. By the end of the foundation stage, children achieve the early learning goals in all other areas of learning.

65. Nearly all nursery aged children have either a morning or afternoon session in the nursery before transferring to the reception class in the academic year in which they become five. At the time of the inspection 14 children attended each session. Two further groups of children will join the nursery during the academic year. Children are taught by a qualified teacher, who is well supported by a nursery nurse.

66. The quality of teaching in the nursery and in the reception classes is good in most areas of learning. The teaching of music is satisfactory. Teachers are successfully following national guidance for the foundation curriculum, planning and teaching in line with the illustrated stepping stones. They have good understanding of the ways in which young children learn and plan activities accordingly. Teachers and non-teaching staff plan and work together closely.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. In the personal and social area of learning, there is a strong emphasis on encouraging children to develop independence from the time they come to school. This is seen in the way that they quickly settle to routines in the nursery. Children are taught about basic hygiene and are encouraged to become increasingly independent, such as in changing for physical activities. Children are sensitively encouraged to take part in the good range of activities that are provided for them. At the time of the inspection, which took place early in the new school term, most children could choose and take part successfully in a range of activities. The teacher and the nursery nurse guided the few, less confident children, ensuring all had equal opportunities.

68. In both the nursery and the reception classes, children have good relationships with each other and with adults. They are polite and helpful, such as in saying "please, thank you" and "excuse me". Children confidently relate to each other when sharing resources. For example, in role-play, in the "kitchen", children take turns to prepare meals and feed the babies. They determine their roles as members of a family, undertaking household tasks and holding sustained conversations with each other. In the reception classes, children take turns to tell the others their news. They listen carefully and show appreciation. All have opportunities to take responsibility, such as in taking messages to other classes. In keeping with the school's strong Christian ethos, children pray and sing praises together, clearly and confidently.

69. The school's caring ethos effectively enhances children's personal, social and emotional development. All children are valued and the school actively encourages them to become confident

and secure. From the time they enter the nursery, children are sensitively guided towards developing confidence and independence. Children's varying prior experiences are considered in planning and teaching. A strong focus is placed on ensuring equal opportunity for all children. Good relationships are established and there is a high standard of behaviour that continues throughout the school.

Communication, language and literacy

70. In communication, language and literacy, children's speaking and listening skills are good. The school works hard to help children to become clear, confident speakers. Teachers and support staff in the nursery and reception classes provide good models for children by using appropriate language. All activities are explained and good use is made of questioning to promote discussion. For example, during an early morning lesson, children in one reception class talked confidently about their holidays, swimming and the weather. They organised their talk to describe their experiences and were eager to share these with others. The teacher's positive encouragement ensured that all children had opportunities to contribute. In role-play, children use language imaginatively, such as in using the telephone to hold an extended conversation.

71. Children develop an enjoyment of reading, showing increasing understanding of ways in which they can gain meaning. For example, in one reception class lesson about the letter "s", children learned that pictures provide information. Children identified seagulls, sand and sea and recognised the connection between spoken and written letters of the alphabet. They showed enthusiasm when learning the new word, "submarine". Children develop sound writing skills, learning the correct direction for writing letters and recognising that words have spaces around them. They are encouraged to write independently, using a range of writing tools. By the end of the foundation stage, children recognise and write several letters of the alphabet and begin to write their names. They begin to read a few familiar words from labels, the computer and books. Children copy the teacher's writing, such as when writing a sentence about their pictures.

72. The school has recognised the need to focus particularly on children's early speaking skills and teachers use a consistent approach to developing these throughout the early years. They are sensitive to children's varying needs and adapt their language appropriately to ensure understanding. For example, this was seen in a lesson on movement, where a few children's lack of understanding was quickly overcome by individual encouragement from the teacher. The children were skilfully encouraged to join in with the others and their sense of achievement was clearly apparent. Teachers are fully conversant with National Strategies for Literacy with reception classes using elements appropriate to the ages of the children. In the reception classes, the basic skills are taught well. Children are taught letter names and sounds and their formation through good strategies. For example, letters are discussed, "drawn" in the air and demonstrated by teachers. A range of learning games, including computer programs, are used to reinforce children's understanding. Books, captions and labels are displayed in all classrooms and children are encouraged to use writing corners for their personal mark making and writing. In all lessons seen, teachers effectively combined listening, talking, reading and writing.

Mathematical development

73. In the mathematical area of learning, the youngest children begin to recognise patterns and different colours. They sort and match objects, such as when selecting construction bricks to make models. Children begin to count up to 10. Good opportunities are provided to promote children's numeracy skills. For example, when they have their snacks, children take turns to count those present, the number of bottles of milk and to determine if there is sufficient for all. In the reception classes, children continue to develop a secure understanding of number, recognising firstly,

numbers up to five and secondly those up to 10. Children use an increasing range of mathematical vocabulary, such as “between” and understand the teacher’s use of words such as “order”.

74. Teachers build systematically on children’s early numeracy skills and are fully conversant with National Strategies for Numeracy. Planning carefully links activities that reinforce children’s mathematical understanding. For example, in the nursery, children sort objects such as doll’s house furniture and play people and begin to use simple mathematical language. They sing number rhymes, songs and stories and make shapes using play dough. Opportunities for including numeracy in different activities are carefully planned. For example, during early morning speaking and listening time, children are involved in counting and checking the numbers present and numbers requiring lunch. The daily calendar marks, such as 25th September, are used to count back and forward.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

75. Children have a sound knowledge and understanding of the world by the end of the foundation stage. They recognise differences in the weather at different times of the year. They know the main features of their own surroundings and understand that places differ. In studying their families, children recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others and that they change as they grow. They begin to understand about healthy eating, such as in one reception class lesson where children discussed pictures and selected their favourite foods. Computer programs are used successfully to support children’s learning. For example, children in the nursery begin to use the mouse in such tasks as dressing “Teddy”. By the end of the foundation stage, children confidently use the mouse in a variety of programs, including “Tizzy’s Toybox”.

76. Planning ensures that activities provide a wealth of opportunities for children to investigate and explore and to ask questions. For example, children in the nursery were observed investigating soap and what happens to it when placed in the water tray. One child showed delight when his painted hand coloured the water red and asked why this had happened. These activities are ably supported by non-teaching staff and volunteers, who work with small groups of children and who are fully briefed about the learning objectives. Teachers help children to become observant about the world around them. For example, during one discussion, the teacher passed around conkers and berries for children to touch and observe. Children described the appearance and feel and began to understand how seeds are dispersed.

Physical development

77. In their physical development, children develop good awareness of space when undertaking activities in the school hall. The youngest children show increasing control, such as when they shake, stretch and jump. In a lesson seen, tasks were well matched to children’s understanding. The names of parts of their bodies were carefully repeated for those who were initially uncertain and by the end of the lesson all children made good progress. In another reception class lesson children followed instructions very well, jumping and bending their knees on landing. They listened attentively and tried hard to improve their movements. Children in the nursery and reception classes benefit from a wide range of activities that foster their physical development. There are ample opportunities for them to use construction and malleable materials and to paint, draw and write. In one lesson seen, for example, children were engrossed in manipulating and cutting play dough. Children placed pegs to make pegboard patterns whilst others completed jigsaws successfully.

78. Physical development is taught well. Teachers effectively manage activities in the hall, where children quickly learn how to make use of space and show an awareness of others. Children are encouraged to dress themselves and to walk quietly and sensibly to and from the hall.

Children's work is praised and they are encouraged to refine and improve their performance. At present, until the new nursery is built, there is no designated outdoor area for the children, but teachers make good use of the school hall for regular play.

Creative development

79. Children are encouraged to learn a range of creative skills through art. For example, they have regular opportunities to paint and draw, using different techniques such as printing. In the nursery, children learn to control a brush through, for example, painting their hands to make handprints. Here and in the reception classes, children paint and draw recognisable houses and portraits. Children learn to observe, such as in looking closely at their own faces in a mirror and when sketching such activities as running, playing and bouncing in a Bouncy Castle. In music, children in the nursery learn to produce sounds with simple instruments, to accompany actions. For example, they choose words to sing about, such as "hat, coat" and "shoes", playing instruments to illustrate walking. In the reception classes, children continue to learn a good number of action songs, clapping the rhythm and holding a steady beat.

80. Teachers provide a wide range of creative activities for children, many of which allow children to investigate and experiment. For example, children are encouraged to create and develop their own ideas, using paint, chalk and crayons. Children are encouraged to develop their observation skills, such as when making portraits and pictures of houses. Role-play plays a significant part in developing children's imagination and their social and communication skills. Musical instruments are used to encourage children's ability to create particular effects. Children are taught a wide range of songs, though, in some instances it would be beneficial for the songs to be pitched higher. Resources are good and are used well to promote children's creative development. Time and support staff are used effectively.

81. Overall, children make good progress in the foundation stage, as a direct result of the good quality of teaching. Planning is detailed and children's progress in all areas of learning is carefully monitored. Methods are effective in promoting learning. Teachers and other adults interact well with children and activities are well organised and resourced. The teaching in the early stages provides a good foundation for children's further learning in the National Curriculum programmes of study.

ENGLISH

82. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment was very good. These results show a considerable improvement in reading from 1999, where pupils' performance was satisfactory and in line with the national average. There has also been an improvement in writing, which was above average in 1999. In 1999, pupils' performance in reading was broadly average and their performance in writing was above average in comparison with similar schools. Taking the four years from 1996 to 1999 together, pupils' performance in reading was above the national average, whilst their performance in writing was well above the national average.

83. At the time of the last inspection, in 1997, pupils' attainment was above average in all aspects of English. The trend of at least good and above average performance has continued, though the 1999 results in reading were closer to average performance. The school has directed additional literacy support for those pupils whose performance did not meet expected levels. The literacy hour is having a positive effect on further raising pupils' attainment in reading and writing, across the school, as seen in the good quality of work being produced. Pupils in Year 4 are likely

to attain well above average standards in reading and writing by the time they leave the school. Evidence from the current inspection shows that the current Year 2 pupils are likely to attain satisfactory standards in reading and writing, in line with the national average. This reflects the large number of pupils with lower prior attainment in Year 2. A significant number of these pupils have special educational needs.

84. The school has taken a proactive role in improving pupils' communication skills by placing a strong focus on speaking and listening across the curriculum. This has ensured that by the end of the foundation stage children are confident speakers and attentive listeners. In the lessons observed, pupils talked clearly, using increasingly complex vocabulary. For example, in Year 1 pupils clearly expressed their ideas and opinions about model houses. In Years 2 and 3, pupils undertook a survey, asking up to nine friends about their favourite foods. They were polite, asked questions and answered in complete sentences. In a particularly effective literacy hour, Year 3 pupils talked knowledgeably about poetry, stating their preferences and opinions. Some used elaborate vocabulary, such as "exquisite" to describe their favourite poem. In another particularly good lesson, Year 4 pupils offered their opinions about a geographical site, in their study of the local area. They adopted the roles of characters involved in a debate, producing realistic arguments for and against a road building scheme.

85. Pupils' reading is likely to be satisfactory by the time they are 7. Pupils with higher prior attainment are likely to achieve above average standards by this time. Pupils in Year 4 read fluently and are likely to attain well above average standards in reading by the time they leave the school. In Year 1, pupils know the various features of books, including the terms "author, illustrator, publisher" and "blurb". They learn to anticipate what the book is about by using the cover illustration. For example, in a lesson observed, pupils looked at the big book, "Suddenly" and gave many suggestions about its contents.

86. In the Year 2 and 3 class, pupils know the functions of the contents and index pages. They look at and read the big book "Round the World Cookbook" together, learning key words such as "utensils" and "ingredients". In this class, Year 2 pupils read at a satisfactory level for their age. In the other Year 2 class, most pupils show sound understanding of letter patterns and ways in which words are composed. In the lesson seen on "oo" patterns, pupils satisfactorily completed worksheets by inserting these letters. Whilst this work was appropriate for many of the pupils it insufficiently challenged the few with higher prior attainment. They became restless and lacked motivation.

87. Pupils in Year 3 attained well in their knowledge and understanding of different kinds of poems. The effective combination of direct teaching, questioning, brainstorming and demonstration effectively ensured pupils' continued interest and attention. Pupils suggested many alternatives for words to produce a required effect. For example, they suggested words such as pouring, heaving, splashing and flooding, to describe rain. They subsequently produced their own "shape" poems, which were of a high standard. By Year 4, pupils know and use a variety of sources to find information. They undertake research independently, such as when looking for information about Victorian times. In a history lesson observed, pupils used books and the computer program to search for information. They read and gathered a wealth of relevant information, which they then summarised in their books.

88. In writing, younger pupils show a good understanding of how letters are formed as a direct result of good teaching. Pupils quickly begin to write sentences and most organise their ideas into a sequence to tell a simple story by the end of Year 1. Pupils make good progress in using a range of ways to join sentences, though their use of correct punctuation is less well established by Year 2. The school does not introduce joined handwriting before pupils reach the age of 7. In some classes in Key Stage 1, work is weakly presented in pupils' books. Pupils write for a range of

purposes, including storytelling. By Year 3, pupils begin to use dialogue to make their stories more interesting, whilst those with higher prior attainment write complex sentences containing interesting vocabulary. By Year 4, pupils understand and use plans, containing characters, setting and plot, before writing a story. This has been thoroughly addressed since the last inspection, where planning and redrafting was not seen. Those with higher prior attainment know the conventions for writing dialogue, such as using a separate line for each character's words.

89. Progress in reading and writing is good overall, with a few exceptions. There are good opportunities to write for a range of purposes, using a variety of formats. Creative writing is developed well, showing good progress in pupils' imagination and ability to sequence their ideas. There is slow progress in the development of fluent, joined handwriting and in the neat presentation of written work. Progress in the consistent use of accurate punctuation is slow in Key Stage 1. Pupils generally make good progress in reading, though the school lacks a wide range of good quality fiction for older pupils.

90. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. Their progress is often good where effective individual support is provided, either in class or when they are withdrawn for extra tuition by the part time, special educational needs teacher. The rate of progress is less successful where teachers are unsure of ways in which to support them. For example, in several lessons seen, pupils with special educational needs undertook inappropriate work. Insufficient resources were available to meet their individual needs in the classroom. In some cases, pupils' individual education plans are insufficiently used to plan and teach towards identified targets. The organisation of support for the significant number of pupils with special educational needs in the Year 2 class is inefficient and requires review. The class has an additional support assistant who helps with groups of pupils but during the inspection, much of her time in lessons was inefficiently used to support pupils' learning.

91. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are stored in the part time special educational needs teacher's tutorial room. There is a shortage of suitable learning resources in classrooms, such as computer programs, educational games, workbooks and reading books for pupils with literacy difficulties.

92. Pupils who receive additional literacy support make good progress. The school has carefully identified the needs of pupils requiring extra tuition and their regular practice is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. For example, in one group lesson observed, pupils successfully followed the programme of work involving the "Dream Team". By the end of the lesson, they identified "ee" and "ea" patterns in words.

93. Most pupils with higher prior attainment make good progress in reading and writing. They are encouraged to extend their learning through challenging tasks in most classes. In a few instances, there is insufficient challenge, such as in a Year 1 lesson, where pupils completed worksheets very quickly and spent the remainder of the time colouring pictures.

94. Pupils generally respond well. They enjoy the literacy hour reading activities, listening attentively to stories and to the teacher. Pupils' behaviour is very good overall. In a few cases, pupils with behaviour-related special educational needs have difficulty in maintaining concentration. Teachers work hard and usually manage pupils well, though a few lack knowledge of a range of strategies for managing those with behavioural difficulties. Pupils are generally conscientious and they have positive attitudes to their work. The careful planning of most lessons helps to promote enthusiasm. Relationships are good between pupils and their teachers. Pupils are encouraged to contribute their ideas and willingly participate in all activities.

95. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers have worked hard to establish the literacy hour. They plan carefully, using the National Literacy Strategy guidance for organising their lessons and for planning work. Teachers have good subject knowledge and have all undertaken training to implement the literacy hour. Teachers manage pupils well and have good relationships with them. Ongoing assessment is undertaken conscientiously and teachers keep records of pupils' progress. Pupils' work is marked regularly, though opportunities are sometimes missed to highlight recurring misunderstandings. For example, the scrutiny of pupils' work shows that some errors perpetuate and opportunities are missed to suggest ways in which pupils can improve. Long term and medium term planning is good. In some instances, lesson plans have insufficient detail about the work that is to be undertaken by pupils with differing prior attainment. This sometimes reflects inappropriate expectations for some pupils, particularly those with higher prior attainment. Whilst teachers have individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs, these are not always used effectively to inform planning and teaching.

96. There is good leadership of English. The deputy headteacher, as co-ordinator is well qualified to lead the subject and takes a very active role in developing English across the school. Along with the headteacher and the local education authority adviser, she has observed lessons and supported colleagues during the introduction of the literacy hour. More recently, she has had less involvement in monitoring teaching in classrooms. The co-ordinator monitors planning and pupils' progress over time. The school keeps detailed records and uses these to analyse how well pupils make progress. Results of national tests and other assessments are used to track progress and to determine which pupils require additional support. All teachers are familiar with these and with targets set for pupils.

97. Resources are good for the literacy hour. There are good quality books and materials. The school's reading schemes are good. The school lacks a range of fiction for older pupils and alternative reading books for pupils with literacy difficulties and special educational needs. There are adequate computer programs to support literacy, though each class has only one computer to be shared by classes of up to 34 pupils. The accommodation is satisfactory for teaching English.

MATHEMATICS

98. National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 indicate that the number of pupils achieving average results was below the national average. The number of pupils attaining higher than average results was also below the national average. The results in 1999 in mathematics were not indicative of a reduction in standards but reflected the pupils' prior attainment. Taking the last four years together, standards are satisfactory and in line with the national average. In the most recent national assessments in 2000, pupils' performance was significantly better. Pupils' attainment was good and above the national average.

99. Inspection findings show that attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and the end of Year 4 are satisfactory and in line with the national average. Standards are rising due to the good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and the priority given to the subject. The school has set challenging targets for improvement in pupils' attainment and is developing appropriate strategies to help achieve these targets. Results are steadily improving. Standards of attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4 in mental mathematics and basic number are satisfactory for all pupils, including those with special educational needs.

100. At Key Stage 1, Year 1 pupils know how to add on, using numbers such as 25 and 5. They understand symmetry and identify two-dimensional shapes, such as triangles, rectangles and squares. Year 2 pupils are improving their knowledge of numbers to 100. They know how to

double and half numbers. Higher attaining pupils solve money problems; they try different approaches to overcome their difficulties. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are acquiring an understanding of basic number and number patterns. They recognise some mathematical shapes and can measure appropriate units. Many show skill when estimating, solving numerical problems, recording and interpreting data and using graphs.

101. At Key Stage 2, Year 3 pupils are developing oral and mental skills, using a range of addition and subtraction strategies. They break down numbers to help with addition, for example, 175 is $100+50+25$. Others work out the number by using brackets, for example, $100+(7\times 10)+5$. Year 4 pupils discover and continue number patterns. The lower attaining

pupils use sticks to aid sequencing. The higher attaining pupils discover the rule for complicated sequence patterns and then make up their own. By the end of Year 4, pupils count in larger numbers up to a 1000. They know how to describe angles as obtuse, right and acute. They have some experience of reflective symmetry and use tallying to complete frequency charts.

102. Progress is good for the majority of pupils and satisfactory for those with special educational needs. Most pupils are becoming competent at using their multiplication tables and are developing strategies to solve problems using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Pupils interpret data and illustrate their findings in graph form; they solve problems mentally and are able to explain different strategies used to reach their answers. Some of the average and lower attaining pupils in Year 2, 3 and 4 make slower progress with the logic of problem solving and investigative mathematics.

103. Most pupils have positive attitudes to work. They show interest, respond well and are generally appreciative of others' achievements. Pupils show genuine pleasure at others' success. For example, Year 4 applauded the pupil who worked out the most complicated number pattern on the white board. Very good relationships are established between teachers and pupils. Most pupils confidently share their ideas with each other.

104. Overall the teaching is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection where some unsatisfactory teaching was seen. All teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives and activities. Some good teaching strategies are used. For example, in Year 1 identifying two-dimensional shapes is made into a game by the teacher. Another teacher used one pupil's mistake to explain the correct answer. The pupil misunderstood the value of 25p and the teacher instantly seized this opportunity to revise numbers greater than 10. Where the quality of teaching is good, work carefully built on previous tasks. Pupils knew and used mathematical terms like plus, double and total, when answering questions or explaining their strategies.

105. Regular work in mental mathematics contributes to the satisfactory standards of numeracy attained by most pupils. Homework is used to supplement the class work and this makes a contribution to the standards attained. Where teaching has shortcomings, these relate to higher attaining pupils being insufficiently challenged. For example, in some lessons seen, they spent time playing a simple counting game with a partner, or colouring in columns containing number patterns. Valuable mathematics time was wasted. Limited chances are given to the pupils to use the computer to investigate mathematical patterns and consolidate their learning.

106. The policy is reviewed and updated annually. The scheme of work is taken from the National Numeracy Strategy and the school has made a good start in implementing this strategy. The school uses a range of methods to assess pupils' progress, including the optional national tests for Years 3 and 4. Targets are predicted for these pupils and reviewed continually.

107. The subject is effectively co-ordinated with teachers' planning being monitored regularly. Teaching is monitored each term and oral and written comments are given to the teachers. Good links are established between the governing body and the staff. The nominated governor for numeracy has observed lessons and reported back to the headteacher and class teachers. Staff have been well prepared through in-service and in-school activities for the National Numeracy Strategy. The subject is well resourced.

SCIENCE

108. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above national averages. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 their attainment and progress are sound. Results of teacher assessments in the 1999 national assessments were above the national average for the expected level 2 but below for the higher level 3. Indications are that these results have been exceeded in 2000. Overall this represents an improvement since the previous inspection.

109. In the lessons observed, pupils' attainment was at least sound. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 make good predictions, such as changes in the state of ingredients of a chocolate cake as they are heated and mixed. They observe and carefully record contrast in the consistency of the melted chocolate, margarine, eggs and sugar as they are mixed together. They note how the mixture changes in shape and texture as it is cooked. Other pupils, in a well-devised experiment explore the sense of hearing. With their eyes closed, sitting in a circle, pupils listen intently to hear when one of them tries to remove a bunch of keys without making a sound. Also in the lesson they match taped sounds to appropriate pictures. Most were successful in this. In these lessons pupils make satisfactory progress.

110. Scrutiny of their work over the past year shows that pupils make good progress in their scientific knowledge. They also develop a good understanding of scientific methods and vocabulary. Pupils carefully draw and label diagrams, for example of plants, circuits and activities involving push and pull forces. There is good coverage of living things, materials and physical processes. A good feature is the developing use of data handling, for example, in tabulating the colours of pupils' eyes. There is a strong emphasis on pupils' learning by investigation and discovery.

111. In Years 3 and 4 this emphasis on the experimental approach continues well. For example, pupils consider how to arrange a fair test to evaluate the kind of shadow cast by different textures of paper. They successfully discuss what factors must be made constant. The work links well with a previous activity of creating shadow portraits and future work in making shadow puppets. Pupils show good ability to reason out the processes and write down the procedures they will need for the fair test. Other pupils working in groups successfully conduct an experiment to discover how water is transmitted through plants. Again, the principle of fair testing is applied as the plants are given the same amount of water and dye and time for observation. By the end of the lesson pupils note how coloured water is beginning to move up stems of celery and they predict correctly how the dyed water will eventually manifest itself in carnation flowers.

112. The scrutiny of pupils' work in Key Stage 2 shows sound development from their achievement in Key Stage 1. Their attainment is well in line with expectations for their age. They write satisfactory and sometimes good accounts of their investigations using correct formats and vocabulary. There is balanced coverage of the curriculum attainment targets. Pupils' writing in science makes a useful contribution to their literacy skills.

113. Pupils' attitude to science is good at both key stages. The practical approach motivates

their interest and enthusiasm. They work well together in groups, share ideas readily and handle materials and equipment with care. Overall, presentation of their written work is satisfactory. There are many good examples of careful writing, labelled diagrams and experiment findings.

114. Teaching of science is satisfactory and on occasion good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when the quality of teaching overall was found to be unsatisfactory in some areas. Long and medium-term planning is based on nationally published material, designed to cover all the aspects of the science curriculum. In their short-term planning, teachers plan for the whole class to undertake the same work. There are insufficient explicit references to objectives for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. These pupils receive good support from special educational needs assistants in some lessons and they make satisfactory progress. Extension activities for high attaining pupils sometimes occur in teachers' planning but in the lessons observed these were not achieved. There are good procedures for the regular assessment of pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers use these to influence the planning of the curriculum but make insufficient use of them to plan work for pupils of different ability. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is satisfactory, supported by the good curriculum structure. Their investigative approach to pupils' learning is good and they manage whole-class teaching and group activities well.

115. Resources for science are very well organised. There is a helpful inventory in the science cupboard and all topic boxes are clearly labelled and easily accessible. Teachers make good use of these resources.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

116. At the time of the last inspection, standards achieved in information technology were satisfactory and in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. They were unsatisfactory by the end of Year 4, with slow progress having been made in Year 3. Evidence from the current inspection shows that pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. Progress is satisfactory in most aspects of the subject in Key Stage 2 but the school has yet to fully develop its provision for information and communication technology.

117. During the inspection only two lessons were seen where teachers were involved in the direct teaching of computer skills. In other lessons, pupils were seen using the computer to support their learning in different subjects. In the Year 2 and 3 class lesson, the teacher's aims were to develop pupils' use of the mouse, their confidence and their hand to eye co-ordination. The teacher used games to demonstrate procedures such as opening a file, using a menu and using the mouse. About one half of those pupils present understood terms such as menu, drag and click. In this class, pupils have previously come from three prior classes, with varying experience in using computers. This lesson was intended to be an introductory lesson to help assess pupils' understanding.

118. In the second lesson, a group of Year 4 pupils were learning about different types of graphs and were asked to determine which would be the most suitable for representing different kinds of information. Pupils showed good understanding of handling data. They could start and run a program, mark tools, click on a spreadsheet and input choices. They knew how to highlight and drag across the screen. They made good progress in their understanding of information and control technology.

119. Pupils show interest in using computers. Those with good understanding willingly share their expertise with others who are less secure. A few pupils indicated that they have had very little opportunity to use computers.

120. In several lessons observed, pupils were seen using the computer during work in different subjects. For example, some younger pupils used the “Starspell” program to enhance their knowledge and understanding during the literacy hour. Pupils in Year 4 used the Internet and the CD-ROM to find information about working conditions in Victorian times. Planning shows that the use of information and control technology is incorporated into topic work. Pupils use the computer for word processing, manipulating colour and shape using a Paint program and for accessing the Internet to locate information. Planning for the subject is brief in some cases. In several classes in both key stages, during the week of the inspection, computers were rarely used.

121. There was insufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching across the school. From some observations of teachers’ input, some are unsure of ways in which to help pupils or in loading programs. Discussions show that they are becoming increasingly more confident but that there is a need for further training.

122. The evidence shows that there is still work to be done on providing the progressive development of skills and capabilities. This has been identified by the school as a priority for development and is highlighted in its improvement plan. At present, there are too few computers for the numbers of pupils. Though classes have record charts to show which pupils have used the computer, in some cases these are completely blank. Most timetables do not indicate when information and communication technology is to be taught.

123. Insufficient use is made of commercially available software to support pupils with special educational needs. Opportunities are missed to use other technology, such as tape-recorders and other audiovisual aids to support their learning. For example, pupils who require reinforcement of their reading skills have few listening and reading activity material, such as recorded stories that can be read alongside books.

124. The school hopes to install a computer suite once the new nursery is built, which will release space for teaching computer skills. It is looking for funding to improve resources and raise standards. Teachers are becoming more confident and willingly undertake training courses. As a part of their active involvement in monitoring and evaluating the school, governors have visited and reported on information and communication technology provision. They have made appropriate suggestions for ways in which to improve this.

ART AND DESIGN

125. Standards in art and design are satisfactory by the time pupils are 7 and 9. This reflects the judgement of the last inspection. Evidence from the current inspection shows that pupils make satisfactory progress in art and design. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall, though, where explanations are unclear, they require considerable reassurance and support. Pupils learn to use a variety of techniques and materials, for example, the younger pupils in Key Stage 1 have recently studied fabrics, made collages and have learned weaving techniques. Pupils in Year 2 and 3 have drawn and painted foods as part of their topic about healthy eating and have produced a plan view of a shoe. Older pupils have designed ways in which to display their poems about “The Door”.

126. Pupils develop satisfactory observation skills, such as in sketching and painting views in a local park and portraits of famous people in the past. In one lesson seen, in the Year 2 and 3 class, pupils recalled the artist, Guiseppe Arcimboldo’s preferred use of fruit and vegetables as subjects for his work. They subsequently produced good examples of still life sketches, using charcoal.

They learned how to highlight tone and shape by looking carefully at the vegetables provided for the task and by following the teacher's stimulating lesson.

127. In the Year 1 and 2 class, pupils continued to learn about weaving, using card and wool, with a weaving implement. Though some achieved satisfactory results, the majority of pupils found the task too difficult. Many were unsure how to begin the task of creating a basis for weaving and few understood what was meant by warp and weft. There were three adults involved in this lesson but even they were unable to provide the amount of support needed by the pupils.

128. In the Year 4 class, pupils were set the task of composing pictures with silhouettes and prints. Small groups worked outside the classroom to print with leaves and sponges. They

used printing ink as a medium. Those in the classroom were asked to make backgrounds for the prints. From the outset, several pupils were confused about the lesson objective and required further explanation. The volunteer helper was equally unclear about the purpose of the task. By the end of the lesson, pupils drew and cut out silhouettes, such as an octopus, sunset, a hill scene and trees and several had experience in printing.

129. Displays around the school show that pupils experience a range of art and design work. They study famous artists and have opportunities to use their imagination. Pupils' work is well displayed and enhances the accommodation. Most displays do not provide useful information for pupils about how results were achieved.

130. Pupils follow instructions carefully. Their behaviour is good and they work conscientiously. They share materials and show appreciation of others' work. They have positive attitudes, though in some lessons seen, pupils lacked confidence, particularly where they were unsure about what was expected of them.

131. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed varied. The very good lesson seen in the Year 2 and 3 class combined effective planning, firm management, good relationships and clear explanations. The teacher built successfully on pupils' prior experience and learning, for example, she clearly referred to similar work undertaken previously and explained the way in which the lesson would extend what pupils had already learned. She used appropriate vocabulary to ensure pupils focussed on texture. Pupils with differing prior attainment were integrated well. Pupils were fully attentive and they responded well. In the other lessons, there was insufficient explanation and discussion, which limited the extent to which pupils could progress. Objectives were unclear and planning was vague.

132. Teachers plan their art and design work as part of their topics. There is no scheme of work for the subject, though there is a general planning outline. The school has rightly focussed on literacy and numeracy development in recent years and has yet to develop a progressive scheme for art. The school improvement plan shows that this is to be addressed in the current academic year. Classes are reorganised each year, with new combinations of different year groups, which also provides some difficulty when teaching art and design as part of topic work.

133. Leadership of art is sound. The subject has not had high priority in recent years and there are no opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching. She is supportive of her colleagues and has an overview of pupils' work, such as in work displayed. Resources for art and design are good and there is adequate accommodation.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

134. No design and technology teaching was seen being taught during the inspection. Evidence of attainment was gathered from a variety of other sources, including work in displays around the school, scrutiny of pupils' previous work, discussions with pupils and an interview with the subject co-ordinator. From this evidence, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 4 is satisfactory and in line with national expectations. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall.

135. At Key Stage 1 pupils designed detailed plans for a Jack in the Box. These included plans for a movable head using split pins and paper hinges. Kites of various designs were made and flown. Pupils designed a scarf for a penguin, from the story, "Penguin Small", discussing the suitability of fabrics. They know about basic mechanisms, for example, making model of toys using wheels and a wooden axle. By the end of the key stage they use scissors correctly. They make hinges, choose materials, tools and techniques and identify strengths and weaknesses as their products develop.

136. At Key Stage 2 pupils continue to develop designing and making skills and show sound understanding of ways in which they can evaluate their products. They have made moveable trucks and have designed a "healthy sandwich" competition. In their study of the Vikings, pupils designed and made helmets. They made three-dimensional structures, such as longboats, using appropriate materials, tools and techniques. By the end of Year 4, pupils have made a range of products. Many of these follow similar designs, which limits pupils' ability to solve design problems.

137. Design and technology is used by the teachers to support a range of subjects in the curriculum, for example, the Year 1 scarf made for "Penguin Small" was linked to their work in literacy. In Year 2, the food technology study was linked with science. Here, the pupils designed different flavoured yoghurts and various fruit salads for "School Celebration Day".

138. There is good evidence of Year 1 pupils designing and making models of homes for homework, using a variety of materials. One pupil's model with a sloping roof was used to illustrate in the geography lesson how climate affects the way in which our homes are built.

139. There is no scheme of work and staff produce their own planning after discussion with the co-ordinator. Formal assessment sheets of pupils' work and achievements are maintained. There is insufficient systematic planning for the appropriate development of skills, knowledge and understanding. The policy statement was discussed and reviewed in January 1999. Resources are satisfactory and stored conveniently so as to be available in all areas. Pupils sometimes bring in resources and there is an adequate quantity and range to allow all areas of the design and technology curriculum to be provided for.

GEOGRAPHY

140. Standards of attainment are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 4. Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2. Those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall.

141. At Key Stage 1, Year 1 pupils know that climate affects the way houses are built and compare the flat roofed houses in India with our own sloping roofed houses. In one lesson, the teacher highlighted the present plight of India with the recent floods. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils show sound knowledge and awareness of their homes, their locality and places further afield.

142. Year 3 pupils are familiar with aerial plan views and know how to draw an aerial view of classroom objects approximately to scale. They look for surfaces, outline and position to fit objects into their map. The other Year 3 pupils used holiday brochures to compare and contrast different localities. They know about countries with hot and cold climates and use geographical terms, such as “temperate” effectively. Good use was made of topical news about the Olympic Games when Australia was mentioned. Year 4 pupils offered opinions about a local geographical issue and respected the opinions of others. The teacher acted as chairperson and the class assumed the role of local residents. All remained in character throughout the lesson. To complement this lesson there was a good geographical display of Blyth town centre and a geographical enquiry about town centre traffic congestion.

143. Pupils demonstrate an awareness of localities beyond their own and are confident in expressing views on environmental issues. By the end of Year 4 they talk about their holiday venues, such as Florida, and can locate these on a world map. Pupils carry out field studies and liaise with the middle school to compare the village of Felton with Blyth. They planned together an activity called “Land conflict at Felton”. A liaison day with two other first schools was arranged last term at Druridge Bay. All pupils walked around the lake, making plans for tourists and improvements for the area. This was to be included in a brochure promoting the area. Pupils developed their mapping skills and understanding of environmental management and maintenance.

144. Pupils show good attitudes to their work. They are enthusiastic and involved in their tasks. They undertake research at home to support their learning. For example, Year 4 pupils collected information about how pollution in Blyth affects not only the North East but the world.

145. The teaching of geography is satisfactory overall. Teachers plan the work carefully and use opportunities to include current news affairs about global issues. In the Key Stage 2 lesson, where pupils were asked to make judgements on a local environmental issue, the teacher identified clear learning objectives and had high expectations of pupils. The pace of learning in this lesson was brisk and pupils had positive attitudes. In some lessons when teachers' expectations are insufficiently high and the pace of work is slow, pupils are less positive in their work and learning is slow.

146. Geography is effectively co-ordinated. The humanities policy is to be updated in 2001. At present, a commercial scheme of work is followed and planning at Key Stage 1 covers a two year programme. Resources for teaching the subject are good and easily accessible.

HISTORY

147. Pupils' attainment in history is in line with expectation for their age and they make sound progress across the key stages. Pupils in Year 4 produced some good work in their study of the Victorian era.

148. In Key Stage 1, younger pupils have an understanding of the passage of time through talking about the various generations of their families. Looking at displays of photographs, pupils discuss family celebrations, past events and holidays. At the end of the key stage, pupils successfully discuss what evidence there is for present and past historical personalities and events. They know about Queen Elizabeth II from television and newspapers. Some pupils have seen Buckingham Palace, whilst a few know people who have seen the Queen. They understand that they can learn about Queen Elizabeth I only from pictures, books and films. In a good lesson pupils watched a

video about her being imprisoned in the Tower before she became Queen. They derived good information for their topic about historical events, clothing and customs of the time.

149. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue the study of pictorial evidence to learn about the past. Using good resources from the Beamish Museum, groups of pupils share ideas about conditions and the lives of children in Victorian times. They develop good awareness of similarities and differences between their own lives and those of Victorian children. The groups share their findings with the whole class. Other pupils develop their study skills well as they research information on Lord Shaftesbury's work in improving child labour conditions during the same period. Pupils use a CD-ROM and resource books well and record the information they have found.

150. Scrutiny of pupils' written work shows that their studies in history make a good contribution to the development of their literacy skills. There is a good range of writing on historical topics, including description, letters and reporting. The presentation of pupils' work overall is satisfactory. Many draw careful illustrations and diagrams.

151. Pupils show great interest in the topics. The use of good video and research resources motivates them to work hard, discover information for themselves and to form and express their own ideas and opinions. Their attitude to history and behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils with special educational needs participate in the work although teachers' planning does not specify particular tasks or objectives for them.

152. Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. Planning is satisfactory, supported by a good scheme of work. There is insufficient planning for the needs of pupils of different levels of attainment. The lessons observed had a good balance of direct teaching and pupils' activities. Teachers made good use of resources to stimulate pupils' interest and motivate their learning. This impacted well on the pupils' progress. A good number of displays around the school provide historical information and evidence. These include Victorian dress and photographs, full-size figures of Roman soldiers and Viking invaders and models of Viking villages made by the pupils.

153. There is a good system of assessment by which teachers record individual pupils' attainment and progress. Resources are good. The curriculum is enhanced by pupils' visits to museums and the Victorian school at Seghill. Here they re-enact what it was like to be in a Victorian classroom. In conjunction with other local schools, the school is participating in a local history project organised by the Museum of Antiquities. It is intended that the project will produce a CD-ROM containing evidence of the past history of the locality. The schools will use information and communication technology for video conferences and send information to each other by e-mail.

MUSIC

154. Pupils' progress in music is satisfactory. They sing with satisfactory pitch and tone, play rhythmic and tuned percussion instruments with confidence and choose instruments to experiment with the sounds they make.

155. In Key Stage 1, younger pupils successfully sing songs with rhythmic actions, maintain a steady beat and keep in pitch. Some pupils successfully play a simple melody, using chime bars, and this combines well with the singing. In the song "What is the weather today?" pupils choose an untuned instrument to represent different kinds of weather, for example rain, wind, hail and sunshine. The pupils are quickly learning a repertoire of songs and nursery rhymes, although at times teachers pitch the songs too low for the range of the pupils' voices. Sometimes pupils choose a song and are prepared to sing it by themselves.

156. In Key Stage 2, pupils sing songs from the newly introduced scheme. In one lesson, two

pupils successfully played simple independent accompaniments on tuned classroom instruments. Other pupils played rhythmic accompaniments with satisfactory control. They showed imagination in making up their own words to fit the rhythm of a song. Their singing is satisfactorily focused in pitch. Pupils with special educational needs play a full part in the lesson and make satisfactory progress.

157. Pupils enjoy music. They join in the singing with enthusiasm. They are anxious to choose and play the classroom instruments. Younger pupils know the names of the instruments and understand what kinds of sounds they make. All pupils are developing good control in playing the instruments and treat them with care. They take turns willingly and their behaviour in music lessons is good. They take pride in performing successfully.

158. Teaching is satisfactory. The introduction of a new local education authority scheme has increased teachers' confidence and skills. It also provides a consistent approach to the

teaching of music throughout the school. Teachers have benefited from the local education authority in-service training to introduce the scheme. They are using its contents well to develop pupils' skills of singing and playing and to support pupils' ideas in composing their own music. Teachers manage their lessons well. They are satisfactorily planned and there is a good range and balance of activities. Assessment follows the school's policy of teachers recording individual pupils' attitudes, attainment and progress. Two assemblies for Key Stage 1 pupils were observed during the inspection. In one the teacher taught the pupils a new song "He gave me eyes". Pupils quickly learned and enjoyed the song. In the other pupils did not sing but listened to music as they entered and left the assembly. However, the pupils were not given any information about the music.

159. Musicians visiting the school have included a small orchestra, who performed to the whole school, and a Diocesan Mission team, who enriched the school's liturgies by teaching a range of new songs. Specialist instrumental tuition has very recently commenced for Key Stage 2 pupils who wish to undertake it on violin, guitar or keyboard.

160. Classroom instrumental resources have been purchased to support the new scheme but there are insufficient tuned instruments to maximise its impact on pupils' enjoyment, learning and progress.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

161. Lessons were observed in gymnastics and games at Key Stage 1 and swimming at Key Stage 2 during the inspection. Plans show that all the requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study are met. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress overall to attain standards that are high in comparison with pupils of similar ages. This is a good improvement since the last report.

162. Year 1 pupils are improving their skills at throwing and catching a ball. A few pupils have the expertise to throw a ball to head height and catch with one hand. They are learning to play fairly and obey the rules. Year 2 pupils know two different ways of moving whilst travelling, using small apparatus. They have good understanding of this skill and demonstrate well to their peers. The other Year 2 pupils improve the way they co-ordinate and control their bodies. They are developing good attacking and defending skills and are learning to play games fairly, working as a team.

163. Year 3 pupils make sound progress in swimming because they receive good tuition. The

lesson seen was pupils' third lesson. Nine pupils are nearly able to complete a length of the learner pool. All pupils enter the water confidently and all are prepared to float on their backs with the help of floats. A parent helps to supervise the pupils during the changing and transport.

164. Pupils enjoy physical education throughout the school. Most pupils listen attentively and behave well. They are keen to explore tasks set and work successfully. They put out apparatus enthusiastically but safely. Routines are well established. Pupils display concentration and good social interaction.

165. The overall quality of teaching is good, impacting on the learning and enabling pupils to improve their performance. Most teachers set high expectations, willingly demonstrate to the pupils and make regular use of demonstrations by pupils to illustrate good practice. Lessons are well planned, with a clear progression of activities that build upon previous skills and experience. Health and safety procedures are followed. For example, all pupils wear bathing caps when swimming and earrings are covered up with tape during indoor games lessons. Throughout most lessons a good pace of work is maintained and appropriate apparatus provided.

166. The policy was revised last year and is updated annually. After discussions with staff, a commercially produced scheme of work by another authority has been adopted. The school has good planning for all three areas of physical education. Assessment is mainly informal. Pupils are also encouraged to become involved in assessing performance. For example, Year 2 pupils observed and commented constructively on ways for their classmates to improve their performance in attacking and defending skills. Year 4 pupils devise activities and games and demonstrate these to younger pupils, showing how to work as a team. Some monitoring of the subject has taken place with lessons being observed by the co-ordinator.

167. Year 3 and 4 pupils have friendly mixed football matches and an annual Swimming Gala with other primary schools. Last term, an after school tap dance club was attended by boys and girls. The school would like to have extra-curricular sports activities after school but is constrained by the fact that most pupils travel to and from school by bus. This issue is still being discussed. Sunderland football coaches come into school weekly to coach pupils in Key Stage 2. An adventure trail for all pupils, which would include orienteering, is being planned and funds are being raised for this.

168. The subject is effectively co-ordinated. Resources are satisfactory overall, though there is a shortage of some sports equipment, such as netball posts. The school has good facilities for both indoor and outdoor activities. There is a large hall, hard playground and extensive playing field.