

INSPECTION REPORT

St. Mary's RC Primary School

Sunderland

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108840

Headteacher: Miss C Taylor

Reporting inspector: Mr. G R Alston
20794

Dates of inspection: 13 – 15 November 2000

Inspection number: 224881

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Meadowside Thornholme Road Sunderland
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Appropriate authority: Name of chair of governors:	The Governing Body Rev Fr C Jackson
Date of previous inspection:	October 1996

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	10
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	16
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's RC School is an above average size primary school with 379 pupils ranging from 4 – 11 years in age. In the reception classes there are 52 children under the age of six who entered the school in September. There are very few pupils with parents from other cultures, and there are two pupils for whom English is an additional language. The number of pupils entitled to free meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs due to learning or behavioral difficulties is less than that found in most schools. Pupils' attainment on entry is above the expected level. There are three pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. This is a popular school and in recent years, due to an increase in pupil numbers, has modified and added additional teaching areas. Since the last inspection the school has introduced an inclusion programme and has successfully accepted pupils with physical disabilities into school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school where pupils are greatly valued. It is effective because staff, pupils and parents enthusiastically contribute to the life of the school. The pupils achieve high standards in all aspects of their education. The quality of teaching is good, providing pupils of all abilities with challenging tasks. The headteacher provides good leadership and ensures that the money the school receives is used effectively, enabling the school to give very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The 2000 national test results at the end of Key Stage 2 are well above the national average in English and science and very high in mathematics.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good; they form warm, sincere relationships, try hard with their work and accept responsibility well.
- The quality of teaching is very good; in almost 25 per cent of the lessons seen it was very good. No teaching was unsatisfactory. Teachers build well on past learning and pupils' efforts and contributions are greatly valued; this leads to good progress and high standards.
- The school provides a strong pastoral system that helps develop sensitive, responsible pupils. A very good range of experiences develops pupils well, both socially and morally.
- The headteacher has steered the school through a period of considerable growth and development effectively, and with the support of a conscientious team of teachers continues to strive to further improve the education the pupils receive.

What could be improved

- Pupils' skills in spelling and handwriting and the presentation of their work.
- The quality of assessment and recording of pupils' achievements and teachers' planning of lessons in a minority of classrooms.
- The effectiveness of monitoring by co-ordinators and its impact on making the teaching and learning even better.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since its last inspection in October 1996 the school has made good improvement in the areas of concern highlighted in the report and almost all of them have been dealt with fully. There has been a concerted effort to improve the quality of individual education plans for pupils who have special educational needs. These now meet statutory requirements and provide clear guidance on how pupils' needs are to be met. Due to an extensive building programme it has not been possible to provide an outside play area for children who are under five. There are plans to develop an area in the next phase of building. The length of lunchtimes has been reduced; lunchtimes now provide good opportunities for pupils to socialise and enjoy the improved facilities for structured play on the playground. The organisation and planning of history and geography have been clarified and pupils receive worthwhile experiences in these subjects. Development planning, which was identified as a

area for development in the last inspection has significantly improved. The school development plan is based on a careful review of the schools' strengths and weaknesses. In most areas it has clear programmes for action that have deadlines for completion and criteria by which to measure success. The responsibilities for taking the necessary action are appropriately allocated and targets are clearly linked to appropriate budgets. All teaching staff contribute to the plan of action appropriate to their areas of responsibility. The quality of teaching has significantly improved and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. The school is well placed to continue to improve and has a strong commitment to this.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	
English	B	A	A	A
Mathematics	A	A	A	A*
science	C	A	A	A

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

The information above shows that results in English, mathematics and science are well above the national average. Compared with schools which have pupils with a similar background, results are much better in all three subjects. Trends over time show a gradual improvement and results have been consistently above the national average. The results of the 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds show that results are well above average in reading, above average in writing and average in mathematics. When the school's results are compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds they are well above average in reading, above average in writing and average in mathematics. Although results have fluctuated slightly over the past three years, they have been consistently above the national average. Results were not as good in 2000 due to lower numbers of higher attaining pupils in the Year 2 classes who took the test than is normal for the school. As a result, the numbers of pupils achieving the higher level (Level 3) fell. Also, the results in mathematics were affected by the absence of one class teacher on the day that pupils took the test. At the end of Key Stage 1, the scrutiny of pupils' work and observing pupils in lessons indicate above average standards of achievement are developing, and well above average standards by the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics. There is no significant difference between the standards that boys achieve in comparison with girls. Trends in results over the past five years have risen at a better pace to that found in most schools locally and nationally. Standards in English and mathematics are sufficiently high. However, pupils' spelling and handwriting skills are not as high in comparison with other language skills. In other lessons observed, high standards were achieved in history and music, and evidence from displays indicates pupils achieve well in art. The school has already met the high targets it was set in national tests and is on line to achieve future targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are eager to learn, settle quickly to their tasks and sustain concentration well. They are proud of their school and give of their best at all times.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	All pupils behave very well in all situations. They are courteous and polite to one another and to adults. In recent times two pupils have been excluded from the school
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good and are built successfully on mutual respect. Pupils are very mature and sensible; they organise themselves purposefully and readily show initiative both in and out of lessons.
Attendance	Attendance is very good and pupils enjoy coming to school, often arriving early.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The teaching in the school is consistently of a high quality in nearly all classrooms and the needs of all pupils are well met. No teaching was unsatisfactory and in almost 25 per cent of lessons the teaching was very good. The teaching seen was mainly in English and mathematics lessons taken by members of the senior management team or the co-ordinators of these subjects. In these classes, English and mathematics are well taught with strong emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. These skills are taught very well. However, the teaching of handwriting and spelling is not effective in developing pupils' skills to a high enough standard. The teachers build well on past learning, provide good resources for pupils to use, and set challenging tasks. All pupils feel valued and as a result confidently contribute to the lesson. Pupils are set appropriate targets to which they respond positively by working hard producing good quality work that is matched to their ability. At times, the quality of teaching is restricted when the teacher's lesson plan does not clearly identify what pupils are to learn or assessment does not provide a detailed picture of pupils' achievements. The good teaching is instrumental in helping all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, make good, and at times, very good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good; effective planning by most teachers; strong emphasis on numeracy and literacy. The curriculum caters well for pupils' interests and needs; many opportunities for pupils to contribute in lessons and become confident in themselves. An appropriate range of out of school activities, many trips and visitors enrich pupils' learning. There remains a lack of outdoor play facilities for children under five.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Teachers plan valuable tasks and provide well-matched activities based on clear targets that enable pupils to learn effectively. Classroom assistants provide good support. The physically disabled pupils who have joined the school through the school's inclusion provision are well catered for.
Provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language	These pupils are well supported by both the staff and other pupils. They quickly become confident and make good progress.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There are many opportunities in lessons for pupils to show initiative and be responsible for their own learning. Good role models from staff, very clear expectations of behaviour. Mutual respect between everyone in the school ensures pupils develop a mature understanding of their social and moral responsibilities.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are sensitively looked after in a warm, caring environment. Teachers know pupils well. There is good assessment in English and mathematics but it is not consistent across the school.

Parents support the school well, both in raising funds and by helping pupils at home or in school with their work. The school tries hard and successfully keeps parents informed about the work of the school and of their children's progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership and has dealt admirably with the changes in the building and increasing pupil numbers. There is a very good team approach in decision making and day-to-day organisation.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive and carry out their duties purposefully. They rely on the headteacher to monitor and analyse the work of the school but are kept fully informed. The school considers carefully how it can get best value in purchasing equipment and services.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school carefully evaluates its performance. Where areas for improvement have been identified the school considers and implements ways to raise standards. Co-ordinators conscientiously manage their subjects but their effectiveness and skills in monitoring and further improving the teaching and learning is not consistent in all subjects.
The strategic use of resources	The money the school receives is used well and resources are effectively deployed. In view of the above average standards achieved, the average income, effective teaching, and the good progress made by pupils, the school gives very good 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 good quality of teaching • The good behaviour of pupils • The good progress pupils make • The good management and leadership of the school • The information the school provides • That the school is approachable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework pupils receive • The range of out of school activities

The inspectors' judgements support the parents' positive views. However, it does not support the views in which parents expressed concern. Homework is consistently given and supports pupils' learning well. The school provides a similar range of out of school activities to that found in most schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The 2000 national test results at the end of Key Stage 2 are well above the national average in English, mathematics and science.

1. In the 2000 national tests the proportion of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 reaching the expected level (Level 2) and above was well above the national average in reading and writing and above in mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level (Level 3) was close to the national average in reading and writing and below the national average in mathematics. When compared with schools with pupils of a similar background the school's results were well above average in reading, above in writing and similar in mathematics. Results in 2000 are not as good because the proportion of higher attaining pupils in the Year 2 classes taking the test was below that found normally in other classes across the school. Also, the results in mathematics were affected by the absence of one class teacher on the day that pupils took the test. Although results have fluctuated slightly over the past three years, they have been consistently above the national average.
2. At the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level (Level 4) was well above the national average in English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level (Level 5) was above the national average in English and well above in mathematics. When compared with schools that have pupils with similar backgrounds, results in English are well above average and very high in mathematics. Trends over the past three years show a gradual rise and the trend in the school's National Curriculum points was above the national trend.
3. Inspection findings show that overall, pupils achieve well in English and by the end of both key stages pupils' attainment is well above the national average in speaking and listening and reading. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in writing is above average and well above by the end of Key Stage 2. Progress is good in speaking and listening, writing and reading. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils listen carefully, and the majority speak confidently when making responses. By the end of Key Stage 2, the majority contribute well to class discussions and are able to explain clearly what their views are. For example, in a pastoral group session, a Year 6 pupil confidently explained what had been discussed at the latest meeting of the school' council. In reading, all pupils show a developing enthusiasm for books and display an appropriate range of strategies to become independent readers. By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils can successfully read from a range of texts. The most fluent, confident readers can discuss the meaning of what they have read and explain which parts they have particularly enjoyed. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils recognise the differences and similarities between the structure of a story and instructional writing. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have good library skills and are able to use scanning and skimming skills successfully to find information. They are enthusiastic readers and can talk about their favourite authors and what they like about their books. A higher attaining Year 6 pupils explained she liked J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter books 'because the way the descriptions help paint a picture in your head' and had read several books in the series. Many pupils can infer from the text, as was the case when Year 6 pupils offered their opinions about 'Henry's letter' by Charles Dickens.
4. In writing, by the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils express their ideas clearly using sentences and a good range of vocabulary. Standards in the use of grammar and punctuation are good but pupils' skills in handwriting and spelling are not as good as their other language skills. The quality of presentation of work suffers from weak

handwriting skills. By the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils can write for different purposes producing interesting, lively accounts. However, pupils' skills in spelling and handwriting are still not as good as their other language skills. Higher attaining pupils produce a range of writing including stories, poems, and book reviews and formal/informal letters. They use colourful vocabulary well; for example, in a poem about 'This is me' a Year 4 pupil wrote 'There is in me a fresh morning sun trying to wake me up'. Another pupil explained he wrote 'There is in me a teddy bear who has been left in a box and not played with for a week' when he feels sad. Many pupils are adept at writing poems and stories and examples of good quality were seen in most classrooms.

5. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is above the national average by the end of Key Stage 1 and well above by the end of Key Stage 2. All pupils make good progress in both key stages. In Key Stage 1, pupils are competent in shape recognition and using mathematical language. They have a good understanding of the place value of tens and units and can competently add and subtract these with decomposition. Higher attaining pupils understand reflective symmetry and confidently count backwards and forwards in fives and tens up to 100. By the end of Key Stage 1, good progress is being made in number and in solving problems. All pupils measure using non-standard measures well and are starting to use standard units effectively. Pupils collect data using tally charts and represent their results on pictograms, bar charts and Carroll diagrams successfully. They interpret bar charts competently. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are confident with mental recall of their tables and multiply and divide large numbers accurately. Most pupils are developing their own strategies for solving problems and explain their reasoning. For example, pupils successfully convert fractions to decimals using division. In doing so pupils show they can organise their work and in discussion are able to articulate their reasoning using the correct mathematical terms. All pupils make good progress in probability, fractions, decimals, and graphs reaching levels above those expected for their age. Data handling skills are good and in many instances pupils use appropriate computer programs well. Pupils' knowledge of shape, space and measures is good.

Pupils' behaviour is very good; they form warm, sincere relationships, try hard with their work and accept responsibility well.

6. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good throughout the school. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson pupils displayed high levels of interest in first considering the conventions of journalism and then using a journalistic style in re-writing the story of 'The Three Bears'. The teacher used humour well and pupils could hardly wait to start the task. In the classroom, pupils listen attentively to their teacher as well as each other. They are very interested in their work, particularly when it provides them with pace and challenge as for example, in a Year 1 music lesson, pupils were excited but totally focused as they used percussion instruments to explore long and short sounds. Pupils are proud of their work, and are eager to show it to visitors. They are co-operative both in the classroom and at break and lunchtimes. Where the curriculum or teaching provides for paired or group work, pupils respond well, supporting one another with positive and kind comments.
7. Overall, pupils behaviour is very good. Children under five are well integrated into the school and mix very well with all age ranges within the school. For example, at lunchtimes pupils interact across all the school years in a harmonious manner with each other. During the inspection period pupils were seen to behave well and quickly settled to work with positive effort. For example, in a Year 4 class studying life in Tudor times, the mixed groups worked very well collaboratively. They discussed their ideas

sensibly and showed great maturity particularly when their views did not agree as to what was happening in the picture they were studying. Pupils are courteous and polite both in the classroom and in other areas around the school and grounds. They know the difference between right and wrong. They show respect for their own and other people's property as well as to others' values and beliefs. There have been two exclusions in recent years from the school, which were effective in improving these pupils behaviour.

8. Relationships between adults and pupils and between the pupils themselves are very good. This was a strength of the school acknowledged by parents. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of their pupils and pupils respond positively to being valued as individuals. This was evidenced by the polite and pleasant manner in which adults, including the inspectors were treated both in the classroom and around the school. For example, in the dining hall at lunchtime pupils are respectful to mid-day supervisors and eager to explain the inspectors lunchtime system. In lessons pupils readily applaud one another's successes and at the end of one lesson pupils spontaneously sang 'Happy Birthday' when they realised one of their classmates had a birthday. Personal development of pupils is good throughout the school. Pupils willingly accept responsibilities, acting as classroom monitors, tidying up and helping the staff to prepare. For example, older pupils help the hall at lunch times; this includes looking after younger pupils, clearing away and generally developing a friendly family atmosphere for pupils. In their pastoral groups, older pupils conscientiously look after younger pupils with great sensitivity.

The quality of teaching is very good; in almost 25 per cent of the lessons seen it was very good. No teaching was unsatisfactory. Teachers build well on past learning and pupils' efforts and contributions are greatly valued; this leads to good progress and high standards.

9. The school has successfully improved the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The amount of teaching judged to be very good or better has risen from seven per cent to almost 25 per cent. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching has fallen from nine per cent to nil per cent. The teaching in the school is consistently of a high quality in nearly all classrooms and the needs of all pupils are well met. The teaching seen was mainly in English and mathematics lessons taken by members of the senior management team or the co-ordinators of these subjects. In these classes English and mathematics are very well taught with strong emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils' numeracy and literacy skills are taught well. However, the teaching of handwriting and spelling is not effective in developing pupils' skills to a high enough standard. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are further developed in other subjects. For example, in geography, Year 1 pupils write well about their own locality; in history, Year 2 write enthusiastically about the Second World War, and in science, Year 5 pupils write interesting accounts about healthy eating. In science in Year 2, pupils present their results using graphs after investigating forces successfully, and in Year 6, pupils use graphs to represent the findings of their investigations into favourite hobbies and foods effectively.
10. A strength of the teaching is the ability of teachers to present lessons in a stimulating way, which immediately attracts and holds pupils' attention and leads to very good progress. Teachers state clearly what pupils are to learn by writing the objective of the lesson on the blackboard and checking on whether pupils have achieved this at the end of the lesson. This was the case in a very good literacy lesson in Year 4 when pupils were studying how words can be used to paint pictures. The teacher began the lesson

by reading a poem by Alice Pyper sensitively: carefully explaining how she uses the words in her poem 'This is me' to create a picture in the pupils' minds. The pupils discussed the poem and successfully identified how she used descriptive phrases to create pictures using words that reflected her own personal experiences. Pupils transferred this idea well into how words could be used in the same way and produced lively, interesting poems and pieces of prose. They made good use of imaginative vocabulary to create images with words. For example, 'there is a mischievous fox in me who wants to go out at night and play with his friends' or 'there is a dolphin in me trying to swim'. The time at the end of the lesson was used effectively as pupils shared their poems with the class explaining their choice of words.

11. The teachers use questions well in the best lessons to check on past and present learning and develop the lesson successfully from their responses. In a very good Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils explored fractions and how they could change fractions into decimals. Very good use was made of open ended questions for example, 'How else could we do this?' The pupils responded with great enthusiasm and learnt a great deal from each other on different ways of working out the answer. Most lessons are well planned, cater for the needs of all pupils, have a clear purpose, include challenging activities, and proceed at a good pace. In a good mathematics lesson, Year 2 pupils effectively built on their existing knowledge of number 'trios' involving numbers to 20. The teacher was skilful in assessing pupils' needs and provided good support directing pupils on how look for numbers which, when put together, make multiples of ten. The tasks were introduced creatively by saying 'This is your challenge!' and a time target was used effectively to motivate pupils to work at a fast pace. Discussion and questions are used to challenge pupils and check understanding. A strength is the great value teachers place on pupils' contributions; for example, in a Year 4 history lesson as pupils discussed what life was like in Tudor Times whilst enthusiastically studying a painting of 'A Fete in Bermondsey'. The teacher skilfully uses pupils' responses, whether they were correct or not, to make them develop their ideas further and to see alternative possibilities; for example, 'Could you explain that a little better?' or 'Have you thought about...?'. Good use is made of pupils' own experiences which often help pupils understand more easily and make it more meaningful.
12. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. In a Year 1 music lesson, the teacher's expertise and ability to demonstrate loud and quiet sounds and a good range of instruments excites the pupils. The teacher carefully balances the amount of information she gives to pupils as against effective questions to check on pupils' own knowledge. This results in pupils gaining a clear understanding of not only how to create sounds, but also the relevant vocabulary such as 'plucking', 'shaking and 'scraping'. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies have maintained the good teaching of English and mathematics with clearly focused lessons ending with appropriate time given at the end of the lesson to check on pupils' learning. In the teaching of mathematics good use is made of mental exercises to give pace to the lesson. The teachers' management of pupils is good, ensuring good levels of discipline and creating an industrious working atmosphere. Teachers show great sensitivity towards pupils' needs and as a result pupils feel valued and confidently contribute to the lesson. Pupils are eager to learn and when given their task, respond positively by working hard and producing good quality work that is matched to their ability. The good teaching is instrumental in helping pupils make good, and at times very good, progress. This was acknowledged by parents as a strength of the school.

13. Where teaching is less effective the teachers' lesson plan does not clearly identify what pupils are to learn or the assessment and records of pupils' achievements that teachers have do not identify sufficiently well what pupils know, understand or of the skills they have developed.
14. Homework is used appropriately to support the work in classrooms. The regular use of homework is effective in promoting the development of reading, spelling and mathematics with pupils. Good use is made of the reading diary and has great value as an effective link between home and school. For older pupils there are good opportunities to extend the work done in class at home. For example, in Year 6, after writing journalistic style headings and stories were asked 'to polish up their efforts for homework'.

The school provides a strong pastoral system that helps develop sensitive, responsible pupils. A very good range of experiences develops pupils well, both socially and morally.

15. The school provides a very effective, well-planned pastoral programme that has a very positive impact on pupils' personal development. This was identified as a strength in the school by parents. Pastoral care is at the heart of the school and enables the school to successfully fulfil its mission statement. A strong family ethos is evident as pupils are allocated to a pastoral care group when they enter the school in the reception class. Pupils remain in these groups throughout their time in the school and as a result, each group contains pupils from reception to Year 6. Pastoral care groups meet regularly for one hour each week in these groups, and, on occasions, for whole-school meetings for example, assemblies, and termly Liturgy or sports days. In the group lessons, there are lots of opportunities for pupils to accept responsibility and show sensitivity towards one another. This they do well as older pupils sit with younger pupils or escort them from their classroom to the lesson. Each group has a member of the school's council and ideas put forward by the group are taken to the full school's council meeting and shared with staff and governors. Through this facility pupils have enthusiastically instigated projects such as designs for decorating cloakrooms, playground games, and a garden. The school's council is presently involved in a primary schools' citizenship Internet project with eight other schools. Lessons are carefully planned with a focus developing responsible attitudes or being sensitive to other pupils' feelings and ideas. For example, pupils have sensibly discussed 'Keeping Safe', 'Looking after our own safety' and 'Dangers in public places'. There is also a strong link to health education and pupils discuss sensitive areas such as, 'Me and my relationships', 'The people I love' and 'Growing and changing'. As a result, relationships between pupils and the ability of pupils to accept responsibility are a strength of the school.
16. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good and is successfully promoted by the school code of behaviour and effective teamwork between pupils, all school staff and parents. Effort and achievement are consistently rewarded by an ongoing house point system. Staff make good use of praise and successfully build on positive behaviour. Older pupils' behaviour towards the younger ones actively shows thought and care. Pupils are responsible for their individual class rules and demonstrate a good understanding of right from wrong. Several instances were seen of pupils helping others in difficulty in the teaching areas. Value is placed on every pupil's work and effort. Such recognition is successfully reflected in the attractive displays of their work around the school and in the conversations between teachers and pupils during lessons. Assemblies play an important role in providing pupils with opportunities to

consider moral issues. In a Year 4 class assembly relating to 'Remembrance Day', pupils effectively portrayed the fight between good and evil through dance. They highlighted the importance of forgiveness and how important negotiation is in order to avoid conflict.

17. The school's provision for social development is very good. Pupils are encouraged to be self-reliant and to show consideration and concern for others. Pupils are helped to develop an understanding of citizenship; for example a group of pupils took part in a planning exercise to design an area of the school for a garden. The school is involved closely with the community. Sunderland Football Club and Ashbrook Rugby Club offer the pupils extra sporting opportunities. The school actively takes part in services in the local church at Christmas time. Older pupils are given responsibilities in the school. During lunchtime, pupils successfully act as monitors looking after younger pupils in a family lunch setting; they also act as register monitors and help in preparing for assemblies. They sensibly look after younger pupils at playtimes and at lunchtimes. The pupils collect for charities, enjoy educational visits and relate to members of the community as the occasion arises.

The headteacher has effectively steered the school through a period of considerable growth and development, and with the support of a conscientious team of teachers continues to strive to further improve the education the pupils receive.

18. The school is well led by a conscientious headteacher who provides a clear educational direction for the school. She sets a good example to the school's community in upholding the ethos of the school and has the respect of pupils, governors and parents alike. The headteacher has been instrumental in the successful inclusion of pupils with physical disabilities and severe learning difficulties; monitoring of teaching, and has very effectively dealt with the problems arising from the increase in pupil population and the development of the building over the past two years. Over time, the numbers of pupils has grown and the school has successfully introduced extra classes and accommodation. During this period, because of good day-to-day management and high expectations of pupils by teachers, the quality of education has been maintained which is reflected in the consistently high standards the school has achieved. There is an effective management structure in place that leads to regular involvement of all staff through clear channels of communication. In providing professional support, the headteacher has built a loyal, hard working team who share her commitment to creating a happy, caring environment for its pupils.
19. Curriculum development is appropriately planned and monitoring systems are in place. This is mainly by the headteacher and co-ordinators who regularly review areas of the curriculum through regular staff meetings and analyse teachers' planning. Co-ordinators have clear responsibilities laid out in their detailed job descriptions and relevant targets set for the development of their area are a feature of the school's development plan. Appropriate structures exist for co-ordinators to give advice on and develop their subject. There are examples of good practice as is the case when, after analysing test data, higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 were identified as not reaching the level they were capable of in mathematics. The school sought outside expertise and re-structured resources to provide more challenging tasks for these pupils. As a result, over time the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level (level 5) has significantly increased.
20. The development planning is good and involves the whole staff and governing body in the setting of relevant priorities and targets for the coming years. The format shows good practice. It successfully identifies key areas for development, is carefully costed, and has criteria to judge success by. Progress on areas of development is evaluated

carefully; for example, the headteacher receives updates from co-ordinators on the progress made in the priorities identified in the development plan. Adjustments are then made to the plan in the light of these evaluations where necessary; this creates a working document and an effective management tool. The school has a detailed spending plan that is carefully linked to the development plan and consequently, the school uses the money it receives well. Educational developments are supported well through financial planning; for instance, large amounts of money have been spent on priorities such as literacy and numeracy. Members of the governing body are appropriately included in consultations and receive regular updates on income and expenditure. The governors conscientiously evaluate the impact of spending but rely heavily on the headteacher for information. For example, as a result of monitoring, the school provided extra classroom assistants to support pupils with special needs. As a result pupils with special needs are well supported and teachers appreciate the help they receive. Monitoring the progress of these pupils has shown how successful this provision has been. The modest surplus has been carefully acquired over several years by careful budgeting and is seen as a necessary security against the unforeseen needs as the school continues to expand; this is a major priority for the school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Pupils' skills in spelling and handwriting and the presentation of their work.

21. The school has effectively implemented the National Literacy Strategy and carefully follows the programmes for the teaching of phonics. However, for many this is not totally effective in providing them with a range of phonic strategies to help them with spelling new words. As a result, these pupils' skills in spelling are not as high as their other language skills. In Year 2, pupils' knowledge and application of vowel choices in spelling words are not secure and pupils have difficulty in spelling new words, for example, 'could' spelt as 'cud' or 'said' as 'sead'. Many pupils make reasonable attempts at spelling words phonetically for example, 'terrible' as 'terabil'. Pupils do not readily identify mistakes in their spelling or transfer their knowledge of words they already know when spelling new words for example, a Year 2 pupil spelt 'cook' as 'cuc' but in discussion could spell 'look' correctly. This carries on through lower Key Stage 2 and pupils' skills in spelling are not as high as their other language skills. However, by the end of Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils' knowledge of frequently used words is secure and standards in spelling are appropriate. They show good use of a range of strategies and multi-syllabic and non-regular words are spelt accurately. Similarly in handwriting, the quality of presentation and the standard that pupils achieve is not as high as other language skills, particularly in their exercise books. Although pupils use ascenders and descenders when forming their letters these are not always correctly linked together; at other times the size of letters is not consistent. Presentation is not as good when pupils use unlined books to write for different purposes.

The quality of assessment and recording of pupils' achievements and teachers' planning of lessons in a minority of classrooms.

22. Pupils are regularly tested at the end of the year in English and mathematics and the results are used appropriately to set future targets for cohorts of pupils. This information has been used effectively and realistic long-term targets have been predicted on what national curriculum levels individual pupils will achieve. Although teachers know their pupils well, there is a lack of information about day-to-day achievement, progress and coverage. The lack of short-term assessment means that most teachers lack sufficient detailed information about what pupils know, understand or of the skills they have, to securely plan the smaller steps that help pupils reach their long term goals. However, in a minority of classes the teacher has developed a more

comprehensive system. For example, in a Year 2 class, the teacher assesses pupils' achievements using the lesson objectives. The lesson objectives were 'addition of two numbers to 20 using partitioning leading on to addition of trios'. At the end of the week the teacher carefully records the pupils who have achieved the objectives well and those pupils who did not achieve the objectives. In a Year 4 class, self-assessment by pupils is used effectively to gain a detailed picture of individual pupils' achievements. The teacher shares the lesson objectives with pupils at the start of the lesson stating 'our targets today are to be able to use doubling and halving and apply these in working with fractions.' At the end of the lesson the pupils are asked to assess their own achievements against the targets. The pupils make pertinent written comments such as, 'I understand doubling and halving. I can't believe I did 41 questions Miss - I will keep up the hard work'. This practice provides the teacher with detailed information for each pupil and motivates pupils well. In both these classes, the information was used well in planning future lessons.

23. The planning of lessons in the majority of classes is good and what pupils are to learn is sufficiently well detailed to assess pupils at the end of the lesson. However, in a minority of lessons the objective is not clearly identified, for example in a mathematics lesson the objective simply states 'addition of three coins'. The numeracy skills to be reinforced and extended are not identified. As a result, there was no clear focus in the lesson on developing different strategies for adding together the three amounts. Pupils were not aware of purpose of the lesson, and although many could accurately add the three numbers, progress in developing different strategies was limited. Similarly, due to a lack of detailed information on pupils' achievements, for a minority of higher attaining pupils the task was too easy. In the previous lesson, the same pupils had successfully added three two-digit numbers for example, $17+24+37$. In this lesson the task involved adding three amounts of money up to two pounds using amounts of one, two, five, 10 and 50 pence coins with one and two pound coins. As a result, although all pupils consolidate previous learning, successfully complete the task and make satisfactory progress their numeracy skills are not extended and, the higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently well challenged.

The effectiveness of monitoring by co-ordinators and its impact on making the teaching and learning even better.

24. Due to changes in teacher's curriculum responsibilities and the focus in the school on implementing the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, it has not been possible to allocate enough time within the school day to effectively monitor the teaching and learning by most co-ordinators. As a result, it is difficult for them to evaluate improvements based on the identified success criteria, for example, in design and technology - 'large construction kits to be used more frequently,' or in art - 'work needs to be more independently generated'. In other subjects the area identified for improvement is not specific enough, for example in geography 'work on sustainability'. Although the school has plans to release co-ordinators to monitor teaching, some teachers are new to this role and do not have the necessary management skills. Similarly, where areas for improvement have been identified the planned programme for improvement is not sufficiently well focused. For example, in Key Stage 2 handwriting is targeted for improvement and the school has bought a commercial scheme to supplement other materials. However, standards in handwriting are weak in Key Stage 1 and there is no clear guidance for teachers on what it is that needs to be improved or of the methods they are to employ. At times, the monitoring is not rigorous enough and agreed policies and procedures are not followed to the same degree by all teachers as is seen in the inconsistencies in pupil assessment and teacher's planning. Similarly, the school has a clear, effective marking policy but the guidance given is not adhered to by the majority of staff.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

25. Overall, the school is very successful but further improvements can still be made by focusing on:

Improving further pupils' skills in spelling and handwriting to match the good skills they have in other aspects of language by;

- evaluating the current methods used in the teaching of spelling and handwriting in order to identify strengths and areas for development,
- identifying strengths and weaknesses in pupils' spelling and handwriting skills,
- formulating a school action plan to overcome identified weaknesses,
- implementing the school's action plan by revising the school's approach to the teaching of spelling and handwriting. (paragraph 21)

Ensuring that the monitoring the teaching and learning by co-ordinators clearly identifies what does and does not work, and as a result, planning brings about improvement and consistency in the use of agreed policies by;

- implementing the planned programme to provide co-ordinators with appropriate time to monitor the teaching and learning at classroom level,
- providing training in aspects of curriculum management in order to develop a consistent approach by all co-ordinators. (paragraph 24)

In order to achieve consistency across the school, extend the current good practice in assessment and recording and teachers' planning to include all subjects and all teachers. (paragraphs 22 and 23)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

Improve the provision for outdoor play for children under five by providing large play equipment and an accessible area.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	23	45	32	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	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	379
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	36

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	44

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	26	28	54

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	25	25
	Girls	28	28	28
	Total	53	53	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98(94)	98(91)	100(94)
	National	83(82)	84(83)	90(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	26	26
	Girls	28	28	28
	Total	53	54	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98(94)	98(98)	100(99)
	National	84(82)	82(86)	88(87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	25	25	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	23	24
	Girls	25	24	25
	Total	49	47	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	98(91)	94(91)	98(95)
	National	75(70)	72(69)	85(78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	23	24
	Girls	25	24	25
	Total	47	47	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94(89)	94(96)	98(96)
	National	70(70)	72(69)	79(78)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	377
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.5
Average class size	27.1

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	68

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/00
	£
Total income	651879
Total expenditure	642877
Expenditure per pupil	1566
Balance brought forward from previous year	20196
Balance carried forward to next year	31332

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	386
Number of questionnaires returned	97

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	29	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	42	4	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	43	2	3	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	48	9	3	2
The teaching is good.	53	41	1	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	44	9	6	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	42	1	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	30	8	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	36	40	11	6	6
The school is well led and managed.	38	41	11	4	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	41	3	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	13	22	28	11	26