

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST CUTHBERT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

North Kenton, Newcastle

LEA area: Newcastle

Unique reference number: 108506

Headteacher: Miss M Hinshelwood

Reporting inspector: E Jackson  
3108

Dates of inspection: 27<sup>th</sup> –30<sup>th</sup> November 2000

Inspection number: 225124

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior, with nursery

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Balmain Road  
North Kenton  
Newcastle upon Tyne

Postcode: NE3 3QR

Telephone number: 0191 286 0129

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Reverend I Hoskins

Date of previous inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> –18<sup>th</sup> October 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Eric Jackson 3108	Registered Inspector	Mathematics; physical education, equality of opportunity, English as an additional language.	Standards of attainment; teaching and learning; leadership and management.
Lillian Brock 9952	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour; pupils' care and welfare; partnership with parents and the community.
Margaret Entwistle 30651	Team inspector	English; art and design; design and technology.	Curriculum.
Joe Haves 8070		Science; history; geography; special educational needs.	
Mike Roussel 22157		Foundation Stage; information and communication technology; music.	

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Inspection Quality Division  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Cuthbert's is an average sized primary school with a nursery, to the north-west of Newcastle city centre. It serves a mixture of local authority and private housing mainly within its parish boundary, but also from further afield. There are 241 pupils on roll, including 36 part-time and one full-time pupil in the nursery. Most of its pupils come from Catholic families, although admission criteria allow up to 15 per cent non-Catholic pupils. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is about average, and there is a below average number on the school's register of those with special educational needs (SEN). There are four pupils from ethnic minority groups, which is below average nationally. One pupil is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. A relatively high number of pupils leave the school between the ages of three and 11, which has had a marked effect on the relative standards when comparing those of seven year olds to those of 11 year olds.

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

This is a very good school which promotes its Catholic mission extremely well. Standards obtained by seven year olds in national tests in 2000 were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics, and at 11 were above average in English, average in mathematics and well above average in science. Pupils make good progress from entry to when they leave the school at 11, and often make very good progress in the nursery and reception classes, and at Key Stage 1. Teaching is very good overall, and it is outstanding in the Foundation Stage for nursery and reception children. The headteacher leads the school very effectively to achieve its aims, working very closely with the senior management team and the governing body. Given the levels of funding received, and the high quality of the school's achievements, it provides very good value for money.

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

- The headteacher leads the school with determination and clear purpose, supported very well by key staff, governors and parents.
- Teaching is a real strength. It helps the pupils to make good, and sometimes very good, progress in their learning, particularly in reading, science, and information and communication technology.
- Pupils' attainment in the 2000 national tests at seven was high, and it was above average at 11, representing good achievement.
- The school provides a very good curriculum, enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- The staff care for the pupils very well, who respond by working hard and behaving very well.

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

- Further development of pupils' writing skills and standards of attainment in English lessons, and in other subjects.
- Resurfacing of the remaining playground, identified at the last inspection.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. These issues are highlighted in the school's current development plan.*

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

The school was last inspected in 1996. Since then very good improvements have been made in response to the key issues raised, and as part of the school's own development plan. These improvements have been due to a concerted team approach involving all the staff, governors and parents, skilfully led by the headteacher and other key staff. The quality of teaching is much higher, due to dedicated staff taking full advantage of training opportunities to consolidate and improve their skills. This has helped to maintain the high standards at the end of Key Stage 1, and has improved standards by the end of reception and at the end of Key Stage 2. The successful adoption of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has also helped here. Teachers' curriculum and lesson planning is much more effective, and better use is made of assessment information about pupils' attainment. There is also more investigative and experimental work in science and mathematics lessons. Subject co-ordinators are more involved in checking the effectiveness of teaching and resourcing in their areas of responsibility, and the whole staff and governor team approach to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school is impressive. Resources for learning have been progressively upgraded, particularly the computers and the library, and one of the playgrounds has been resurfaced. Improvements to the accommodation include a welcoming entrance and office suite, and a kitchen extension to the conference room.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	B	C	B	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	D	D	C	C	
science	E	D	A	A	

Results in national tests for 11 year olds improved considerably last year in English, mathematics and science, and were above average overall. Results in science are well above average, and well above average compared to results in similar schools, showing great improvement in the last three years. At the end of Key Stage 1, results in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics were much better than most schools. Attainment in science is above average. The number of pupils attaining higher levels at Key Stage 1 was impressive. The reading results are in the top five per cent in comparison to those in similar schools. The trend over time is of continued high attainment at Key Stage 1, where girls outperform boys in line with the national picture. At Key Stage 2, the schools' results have improved at a higher rate than the national improvement, and exceeded the school's targets. This year's targets appear low, but reflect the high number of pupils with SEN, and changes in the Year 6 roll since Key Stage 1. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is well above average at the end of both key stages, and above average in design and technology at Key Stage 1. In the rest of the curriculum, attainment is broadly average. The results in English, mathematics and science are higher than might be expected given the average attainment at entry, and reflect good and sometimes very good progress.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen and interested in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils accept responsibility willingly.
Attendance	Good – above average.

Children in the nursery and reception classes respond exceptionally well to the learning opportunities provided. Pupils throughout the school show great respect for adults, and for the school's learning resources. The school's Catholic ethos is evident in the pupils' manner and behaviour.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Excellent.	Very 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.*

In 35 per cent of lessons seen teaching was very good or outstanding, it was good in a further 38 per cent, and satisfactory in 25 per cent. It was unsatisfactory in only one lesson seen. Overall it was very good. In the nursery and reception classes, teaching was always at least good, and it was very good or better in 70 per cent of lessons seen. Literacy and numeracy are well taught throughout the school, particularly reading and the development of mental strategies in mathematics, which helps the pupils to make good progress in these key areas. Teachers' lesson planning ensures that work is suitable for pupils of different levels of attainment, particularly those with special educational needs. Support staff are well deployed to work with groups and individual pupils, and help them to develop their basic skills well.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good, award winning curriculum – broad and balanced, and rich in experiences for pupils. New Foundation Stage curriculum is well established.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with SEN receive good help towards the targets set for them, often from support staff. Exemplary review procedures.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The few pupils learning English as an additional language receive a high quality education which fully meets their needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Spiritual and moral development very good; social and cultural development good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	High standards of care and welfare; assessment arrangements are good.

The partnership with parents and the community is very good. Parents rightly hold the school in very high regard, and the good quality of the relationship has very positive effects on pupils' learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides clear and effective leadership, well supported by staff with management responsibility and governors. The strong ethos for high standards informs all the school's work.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Fulfil all statutory duties, and well informed about the school through good committee structure.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring and evaluation of developments have improved, and are now very good. The whole staff are involved in the process, skilfully led by the headteacher.
The strategic use of resources	Very effective; school gives very good value for money.

The accommodation is very good; the level of staffing is good in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1, and satisfactory at Key Stage 2; learning resources are satisfactory. The headteacher and governors take the purchase and use of resources very seriously. Financial administration is good.





## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• that their children like school, and are expected to achieve of their best, and behave well</li><li>• the high quality of teaching, and management</li><li>• how approachable it is, and how closely it works with them, keeping them very well informed</li><li>• that their children make good progress, and are helped to become mature and responsible</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the range of activities outside lessons</li></ul>

The inspection confirms the parents' positive views of the school. The range of activities outside lessons is very good, and more varied than in many primary schools.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 improved considerably last year in English, mathematics and science, and were above average overall. Results in science are well above average, and above average compared to results in similar schools, showing great improvement in the last three years. This improvement is due to a concerted team effort from teachers and support staff to raise standards of teaching, learning and pupils' achievements.
2. At the end of Key Stage 1, results in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics were well above average. Teacher assessment in science judged attainment to be lower than average, but inspection findings are that attainment in science for the Year 2 pupils this year is above average. The school agrees that teachers' assessment last year was too cautious, confirmed by the current level of attainment of the Year 3 pupils. For example, in working with magnets, Year 3 pupils understand the principle of a fair test, and high attainers know and use accurately the words 'attract' and 'repel'.
3. When children enter the nursery, many are below average in most areas of learning. However, some of the children in the nursery are not admitted to the reception class, as there is a lower admission number. Attainment at entry to reception is higher, but still below average. By the time they enter Year 1, the majority of the children are achieving well and are in line with standards expected nationally. The children successfully attain the levels expected in personal and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. These achievements are largely due to outstanding teaching in the nursery and reception classes based on the high quality of teachers' planning that makes very good use of the recent national guidance for the Foundation Stage.
4. The number of pupils attaining higher levels at Key Stage 1 is impressive. Because the teachers have such high expectations linked to high quality teaching, the pupils achieve well. High attaining pupils are given challenging work, and they work hard in response. The reading results are in the top five per cent in comparison to those in similar schools. High attaining readers in Year 2 currently already read at well above average levels. They confidently use a variety of skills to tackle new words, and describe books they have read with very good recall and understanding for their age. The trend over time is of continued high attainment at Key Stage 1, where girls outperform boys in line with the national picture.
5. At Key Stage 2, the school's results have improved more than the national improvement, and exceeded the school's targets. This year's targets appear low, but reflect the high number of pupils with SEN, and changes in the Year 6 roll since Key Stage 1. In comparing the school's results at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 for the same cohort of pupils, it is important to understand the significant number of pupils who have left the school in the meantime. For example, the current Year 6 group lost six high attaining pupils to local middle schools at the end of Year 4. The effect of the changes to the class roll has been a significant lowering of the overall levels of attainment, although the range of attainment covers a wide range. The rate of pupil movement has slowed recently, however.
6. The results in English, mathematics and science are higher than might be expected given the below average attainment when pupils start Key Stage 1, and the changes to the year groups between Year 2 and Year 6. These results reflect good and sometimes very good progress in response to the high quality of education. Pupils with SEN make good progress throughout the school. For example, pupils with SEN in Year 2 attain well because the tasks and support provided meet their needs effectively. The few pupils who use English as an additional

language achieve at similar levels to other pupils. The quality of support these pupils receive is good, including that from the local authority's language support service.

7. The implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies has been successful, improving standards of teaching and learning. The teachers adapt the pattern of the Literacy Hour sensibly, and at Key Stage 1 they use texts covering work from subjects such as science and history very well. At Key Stage 2, however, there are few pieces of sustained writing, and pupils do not take enough care in applying their learning of spelling rules or of punctuation to all writing contexts. Rewriting and editing do not feature regularly in the work. Writing in other subjects such as history is often a response to questions rather than a personally developed piece of writing using a particular writing form. In Year 2, the teachers use the vocabulary of mathematics very effectively, and build the pupils' self-esteem by extending their mental strategies through perceptive questions. High attaining Year 6 pupils used their mental recall of number facts well in completing demanding tasks on ratio and proportion. The teacher prompted them successfully to collaborate in solving problems in groups. A low attaining set developed a range of mental strategies to compare fractions and decimals, and the teacher sensibly used aspects of the programme intended for younger pupils which is closer to their level of understanding.
8. Attainment in ICT is well above average at the end of both key stages, and pupils achieve well. There is very good subject knowledge amongst the staff, and the quality of leadership is having a very good effect on the quality of teaching. Because the teaching is good, supported by good resources, the pupils make good and sometimes very good progress. In Year 2, pupils use a variety of programs to write using different fonts, and create complex coloured patterns. In Year 6, pupils confidently add graphics to text and use CD-ROMs to develop their research skills.
9. Attainment is above average in design and technology at Key Stage 1, because teachers provide a good balance of experiences using high quality resources. For example, in Year 2, pupils have each designed and made a moving vehicle. These matched the design, were stable and showed a good sense of proportion. By the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average for the current Year 6 pupils: they try hard to find solutions to problems in their work, and make effective plans and diagrams of their designs.
10. In the rest of the curriculum, attainment is broadly the same as in most schools by the end of both key stages. Older pupils use sketchbooks with increasing confidence in art, showing increasing understanding, for instance, of the human face. However, they find it difficult to describe their own work evaluatively. In geography and history, pupils make satisfactory progress, learning about the local area through a good range of visits. In music, they sing a good range of songs well, and have learned to accompany their singing in assembly by signing the songs in rhythm with the tempo of the song. Older pupils do not have sufficient experience of composing, however. In physical education, pupils attain average standards in swimming and other aspects of the subject. There are good after-school clubs, where local professional sports people join the staff in teaching football, basketball and netball skills.

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

11. The pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are very good. Throughout the school, pupils respond positively to the school's high expectations of their commitment to learning and this makes a significant contribution to their academic and personal development. The school is a friendly and orderly community where pupils and teachers treat each other with courtesy and respect. This, combined with pupils' interest in learning, has a positive impact on the way pupils respond to teachers and to the standards they achieve. Children under the age of six in the nursery and reception classes have very good attitudes to learning as the work stimulates and interests them. For example, children in the nursery were very keen to differentiate between colours and textures well with help from the teacher when creating stars for the Christmas tree.

12. Pupils' response in lessons is very good. The vast majority of pupils are very well prepared for their work and show a willingness to learn. They are cheerfully enthusiastic and interested in their lessons. Almost all sustain their efforts and concentrate very well in most subjects: only very rarely is their response less than good. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson, pupils used their investigative skills well to sample different foods, describe their taste and classify them. In an ICT lesson, Year 5 pupils were eager to find the clues to a 'Whodunit' mystery and enter their findings onto a database. Pupils are capable of accepting greater responsibility for their own learning through independent work and research, however, than they are currently allowed in some lessons at Key Stage 2.
13. Pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the site is very good, and there were very few examples of inappropriate behaviour during the inspection. Relationships between pupils, with teachers and other adults are very good, resulting in a tension-free, purposeful learning atmosphere in most lessons. For example, during a physical education lesson, Year 3 pupils interpreted the story of 'The Wind in the Willows' through music and movement well, and their behaviour during the lesson was very good. This maturity extends beyond the classroom. Despite the lack of a variety of playtime resources, pupils behave well during playtime and lunchtime even in inclement weather. There have been no exclusions in the recent past.
14. Most pupils exemplify the school's maxim that it should 'help children to develop a good self-image and self-discipline'. There are good opportunities for personal development. Older pupils help younger ones during wet playtimes, and pupils of all ages act as classroom monitors. Older pupils look after the school office during lunchtime and answer the telephone in a pleasant and mature manner. Pupils belong to other groups such as the student council and initiatives such as this reinforce the values of the family of the school and its community. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities such as drama, music and art which contribute well to the pupils' spiritual development. Year 6 pupils gave an outstanding demonstration of first aid procedures during an after-school club led by one of the nursery staff, showing a maturity and sensitivity beyond their years. Pupils confirm that they are proud of their school and wish to participate fully in all aspects of school life.
15. Attendance is good and above the national average, ensuring that pupils benefit from the educational opportunities provided. Unauthorised absence is low. Authorised absence is usually due to parents taking children on holiday in term time and to sickness. A small number of families account for a large amount of absence and despite the school's best efforts, do not always appreciate the effect that poor attendance has on attainment and progress. At the end of the academic year 1999/2000, one third of all pupils had achieved over 98 per cent attendance and ten per cent had achieved 100 per cent. During the inspection, most pupils arrived at school and to lessons on time.

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

16. Teaching is very good, and leads to very good learning for the pupils, particularly in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1. In 35 per cent of lessons seen throughout the school, teaching was very good or outstanding, it was good in a further 38 per cent, and satisfactory in 25 per cent. It was unsatisfactory in only one lesson seen. In the nursery and reception classes, teaching is outstanding: it was always at least good, and it was very good or better in 70 per cent of lessons seen. At Key Stage 1, teaching is very good: it was good or better in 85 per cent of lessons, and it was very good or better in 44 per cent. The one lesson with unsatisfactory features was a literacy session taken by a replacement teacher. Because her relationship with the pupils was not secure, they did not concentrate, and progress in their learning was unsatisfactory. At Key Stage 2, teaching is good: it was always at least satisfactory, good or better in 56 per cent of lessons, and it was very good or better in 15 per cent.
17. The quality of pupils' learning in response to the high quality teaching is very good in the nursery and reception classes. The organisation and management of lessons and the

classroom learning environments by the staff provide a really good variety of experiences covering the recommended curriculum very well. In a reception class lesson, for example, the teacher maintained a very good pace in helping the children order numbers to 14. She used very good resources, including numbered footprints, to help the children match the numbers to a number line, and then order them. In a nursery afternoon session, the children chose from a well-planned series of activities, and children needing extra practice in close manual control were called to work with the nursery nurse in order. The teacher took a group of children to use the outdoor activities during a break in the weather, and the session was rounded off with a whole group enacting a bear hunt, using a well-loved patterned story. These sessions allow the children to make good progress in personal development, and in other specific areas of learning, through the focus of the planned activity. The deployment of support staff, students and parent helpers is very good, and they help pupils to understand the tasks set, and make good progress in their learning.

18. Literacy and numeracy are well taught throughout the school, particularly reading and the development of mental strategies in mathematics, which help the pupils to make good progress in these key areas. In Year 1, the teacher used good strategies to enable the pupils to develop their phonic skills. She gave clear instructions so that the pupils knew exactly what was expected, ensured a brisk pace in the shared reading of a new text, and had planned subsequent group tasks that met the needs of all the pupils. In Year 4, the teacher used the overhead projector well to show the pupils a sample newspaper; questioning them skilfully so that they identified accurately the purpose and style of the report. Her high expectations of their behaviour and work rate led to the pupils' full commitment to the tasks set, and they made good progress in organising their writing in paragraphs.
19. The teaching of reading is very good throughout the school, and the pupils make good progress. They develop a real love of books, and the popular library sessions seen for Year 3 and 4 pupils with a parent helper show why this is the case. Writing is well taught at Key Stage 1, and the skilled teaching of basic skills enables the pupils to use what they have learned well in a variety of styles. For example, because the teaching of phonics is so good, the pupils know and use common spelling patterns accurately. Pupils make satisfactory progress in writing at Key Stage 2, but by the end of the key stage they are not expected to be careful enough in applying what they have been taught in spelling and punctuation in their general work. Teachers make good use of other subjects in English lessons, and in some lessons in other subjects encourage the pupils to use their writing skills carefully, in history, for instance. However, teachers at Key Stage 2 do not exploit the full potential of writing opportunities in other subjects than English.
20. Numeracy is well taught, and pupils develop good skills in mental mathematics. In a Year 3 lesson the teacher rapidly checked the pupils' recall of doubling and halving numbers as a 'warm up' activity. She then demonstrated, with shapes, a variety of fractions, skilfully promoting the pupils' understanding of how to visualise a range of fractions of a whole number. In a Year 1/2 lesson, the teacher led a whole-class oral problem-solving activity using very good resources. Her outstanding relationship with the class allowed her to challenge high attaining pupils at a very high level for their age, but she was also sensitive to the needs of lower attaining pupils, insisting that they also explain their mental strategies.
21. Teachers' lesson planning ensures that work is generally suitable for pupils of different prior attainment, particularly those with SEN. The high quality of curriculum and lesson planning is consistent throughout the school. Recent national guidance has been incorporated into the school's overall curricular plans at each stage, and this reinforces the good levels of subject knowledge and understanding amongst the staff. Combined with the teachers' close knowledge of the levels of attainment of their pupils, good subject understanding allows them to prepare tasks and activities that are suitable for all the pupils. Occasionally, high attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged at Key Stage 2, particularly in devising their own approaches to their learning. For example, pupils do not have enough opportunities in physical

education lessons to use the skills they have learned to develop games or practices they have worked out for themselves.

22. Support staff are well deployed to work with groups and individual pupils, and help them to develop their basic skills well. This support is particularly successful for pupils with SEN. For example, pupils with SEN in Year 3 are withdrawn to work with a support assistant who covers the work that the whole class is studying at a level suitable to their stage of development.
23. The teaching of ICT is a real strength. The high levels of subject knowledge are used very well to ensure that the pupils reach good standards in their learning. In a Year 5 lesson taken by the subject co-ordinator, the teaching was excellent. She taught the pupils to construct and search databases for complex information, using the good resources available very well. Because the staff have maintained a very good curriculum, they teach all the subjects successfully, although too little opportunity is provided for older pupils to compose their own music. The teaching of design and technology has improved, and it is particularly good at Key Stage 1. Teachers encourage the pupils to develop the full design and make process, and the finished work is testament to their success.

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

24. The school has substantially improved its curriculum provision since the last inspection, and now holds the School's Curriculum Award for partnership with the community. It provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is rich in experiences and ensures that all pupils benefit from the very good provision, whatever their needs and backgrounds.
25. Issues raised by the previous inspection have been tackled fully. There is now sufficient investigative work in science and mathematics, and design and technology now has a good and well-resourced curriculum. Curriculum planning is now very good, particularly to ensure that pupils build well on previous learning. The school has adopted the nationally recommended schemes of work for subjects other than English and mathematics, and these are tightly linked to well-developed medium-term and weekly or daily plans. Teachers' plans now contain well focused objectives and the common formats used have improved consistency across the school. The results from a range of annual tests are analysed for strengths and weaknesses for different groups of pupils, so that, for example, the reading interests of boys are being targeted appropriately in the purchase of new library books.
26. All subjects of the curriculum are taught, fully meeting National Curriculum requirements. All pupils have full access to the curriculum in line with the school's equal opportunities policy. The school has effectively implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and recent national test results reflect their successful impact. Teachers make good use of the time given to English by selecting texts and examples that relate well to current studies in history, geography and sometimes, science. However, the range of writing in subjects such as history and geography is too narrow to support the development of writing skills sufficiently at Key Stage 2. ICT is a strength of the curriculum. It is used extensively in and through the whole curriculum. The work in design and technology is also good, and it promotes the application of basic skills effectively. Collective acts of worship are carefully planned and meet statutory requirements as well as contributing significantly to spiritual development. Homework is regularly set across the school, with a graduated increase in expectation set out in a homework policy. In the best instances, homework extends and develops pupils' learning, as well as using the very good links with parents, through the use of reading records and tasks that require some adult participation.
27. There is very good provision for personal and social education (PSE). The school has been awarded the Healthy School Award, and has a full, sensitive and challenging programme for health education. It includes sex and drug education. This is based upon the Catholic 'Here I

Am' programme and also the Health for Life curriculum guidance objectives. The school is currently experimenting with a shift from a specific weekly lesson to cover PSE to teaching it through the whole curriculum. The co-ordinator's plan for evaluating this integrated approach across the year will inform decisions about its delivery in 2001 – 02.

28. The school's Curriculum Award submission for 2000 is based on the school's very strong community links. Many of the extra-curricular activities rely on help from businesses, sporting organisations and individual members of the school and wider community. For instance, local firms contributed to the creation of a science garden. Pupils sing in the City Hall, and sing carols in local rest homes. The school actively seeks to use outside expertise, such as that of a team of engineers to be involved in the Year 5 bridge building project, or of local artists and sculptors. Members of the community regularly contribute to teaching sessions, as when grandparents talked with Year 2 children about seaside holidays in the 1940s. Participation in 'Reading Week' was a community event during the summer term in 2000.
29. Visits to places of interest extend pupils' knowledge and understanding specific to certain subjects, but also make a deep impact on pupils' social and personal development. Key Stage 1 pupils have visited Warkworth Castle, Queen Elizabeth Country Park and Cullercoats Bay to support work in history and geography, and at Key Stage 2, the River Tyne, Betty Surtee's House, Arbeia Fort and Bede's World amongst others. Residential visits to an outdoor pursuits centre strengthen the physical education curriculum at Year 5 and an overnight trip to London helps to develop older pupils' independence.
30. There are strong links with children's families and with other education providers. A parent and toddler club meets twice weekly in one of the school halls, and a playgroup uses the school building, recognised as part of the LEA's under fives provision. There are informal and formal links with local secondary schools, including the use of their swimming pools. The school receives students in training for Nursery Nurse and initial teacher training. Staff take a committed and responsible approach to their training and development.
31. The school has put energy and commitment into improving the quality and range of extra-curricular activities. These are now very good and make a strong contribution to pupils' personal and social development. For example, in a single after-school session, Key Stage 2 pupils were learning the skills of First Aid and the related personal skills of dealing sensitively with ill or injured people, others were learning basketball skills from two Newcastle Eagles players who also presented excellent role models of personal fitness, yet more were receiving football training from Newcastle United coaching staff, and another group were learning basic recorder skills. Other activities include drama, badminton, library and homework clubs. The homework club has received New Opportunities Funding and offers access to computers to those Year 5 and 6 pupils who do not have a computer at home. This is a telling example of the school's commitment to ensuring that all pupils have equal access to good learning opportunities.
32. As a Catholic school, there is a very strong, effective focus upon the spiritual development of pupils and the provision for this is very good. Assemblies and prayer times are reverential and spiritual occasions that are often led by pupils themselves. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were observed to select items from a prayer box, light a candle, listen to music and sit in peace before end-of-day prayers in a way that truly develops their spiritual awareness. Some older pupils visit the school chapel at lunchtimes for moments of quiet reflection. They visit the church and the whole school joins the parish community for Mass to celebrate feast days such as Epiphany.
33. As in the last inspection, moral values are well taught. The approach of all class teachers and support staff sets high standards for personal relationships and reinforces the moral code of the school. Pupils understand this moral code, know right from wrong and recognise wrong acts when they hear about or see them. Very clear standards of behaviour are regularly



outlined and expected in school, and reinforced positively, leading to a calm, steady and caring school ethos.

34. Provision for the pupils' social development is good. Pupils are taught to care for one another and to take responsibility in school when asked. The older children act as monitors and help younger pupils at playtimes and lunchtimes. Pairs of Year 6 pupils manage the changing of the reception class and Year 3 pupils' library books, taking this and other mentoring responsibilities seriously. There is an elected student council consisting of members of each Key Stage 2 class, which meets regularly to discuss a variety of issues. The pupil representatives have their photographs displayed prominently alongside staff photographs, reinforcing the status of the school council. Out-of-school visits help to strengthen pupil relationships, as well as extending their social interaction with a range of people in different roles. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to show initiative and work independently, or in collaborative groups, however.
35. Cultural development is good. Pupils have a wealth of opportunities to learn about their own national and regional culture, often from first-hand experience. Every opportunity is taken to extend the pupils' experiences beyond the school walls, linking regional events such as the new Tyne Bridge with studies in geography and history. Visits to local places of cultural and architectural heritage are a frequent and stimulating addition to the curriculum. Provision for multi-cultural education is satisfactory, but there is less emphasis on cultures and beliefs of cultures other than the pupils' own, or to learn about Britain as a multi-cultural society.

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

36. The monitoring of pupils' academic and personal progress and attendance is good and the procedures for promoting and monitoring behaviour are very good. The school is totally committed to education of the whole person as the centre of its Christian ethos and foundation. Pupils feel secure in the school and trust their teachers, turning to them for help when they need it. Teachers and support staff are responsive to pupils' needs and they give them good quality support. Class teachers keep a close check on pupils' attendance and punctuality. From the time they enter school, good records are kept of pupils' attainment and progress. There is close liaison between teachers at the end of each academic year to ensure that accurate records are passed on. Pupils who are considered to be under-achieving or who have problems conforming to the school's code of conduct receive extra support. The newly-formed homework club offers useful support to those pupils who prefer to continue their studies on school premises.
37. The school's award-winning PSE programme is comprehensive and equips pupils with the knowledge and skills to make decisions about their lives in and out of school. It caters well for the developing maturity of pupils as they move through school. There are no discrete lessons in PSE currently, and the school is monitoring the situation to ensure that the programme is delivered fully through other subjects. During a science lesson for Year 5 as part of a series of lessons on the human body, for example, the harmful effects of drugs was dealt with in depth at an appropriate level for their age. Child protection procedures are very good. The designated teacher ensures that training is up to date for herself and other members of staff. Sex education is delivered sensitively to Year 5 and Year 6 pupils with support from the school nurse. Parents have been consulted about the content of the lessons.
38. Health and safety procedures are good. There are sufficient trained staff to administer first aid. In addition, all staff including welfare supervisors have received emergency first aid training. Risk assessments of the building and the site are conducted by the governing body two or three times each year. Issues arising are documented and prioritised according to urgency or finance available. The site manager is vigilant and deals well with potential hazards. Along with a team of cleaners, he keeps the school very clean.

39. From the nursery on, the school uses a good range of assessment procedures. Class teachers work with subject and key stage co-ordinators so that consistent records are produced. Teachers have good knowledge of the academic progress of pupils in their care. There is a developing pupil profile that includes records of targets negotiated between teachers and pupils to help improve pupils' academic and personal achievements. The school analyses its assessment results effectively and is beginning to use the information to take action to improve achievement. Throughout the school, a good start has been made in using the results from a range of assessments to inform teachers' lesson planning.
40. The use of assessment is very good in the Foundation classes, good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. There are sound assessment procedures in place to identify, support and help those pupils who have a special educational need. The school has a clear view of how it should further improve its procedures and practice in assessing pupils' attainment and progress.
41. There are very good procedures for promoting and monitoring behaviour and these are applied consistently across the school. The system of rewards and sanctions is used effectively and pupils confirm that they value the certificates and rewards they receive. The 'Golden Rules' represent a set of values shared by the whole school community. Pupils monitor their own behaviour through a behaviour booklet that is also a link between the school and home. Pupils and parents confirm that any incidents of bullying are dealt with well when reported. The procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance are good. The rigorous following up of absences ensures that the school actively deals with emerging patterns of poor attendance. Registration periods are efficient and provide an orderly, welcoming and spiritual start to the day. With the support of parents, most pupils are punctual to school. There was almost unanimous agreement from parents that their children like school and attend willingly.

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

42. Parents believe that this is a very good school whose attitudes and values have a positive effect on their children. They also feel that they can approach the school at any time with suggestions or concerns.
43. The general information for parents in the prospectus, newsletters and letters home about events in the school is good. The school follows its philosophy of focusing on positive pupil achievement by sending out letters celebrating children's successes: parents welcome this. There are three parents' evenings each year when parents can discuss their children's attainment and progress and almost all parents attend these. Separate class coffee mornings also give parents the opportunity to view their children's work and talk to the teacher informally. There is an annual computerised report on pupils' progress with summative comments on attainment in subjects. Some subject comments lack precision in the identification of strengths and weaknesses but targets for future development are included. The perceptive comments on pupils' personal and social development show that class teachers know their pupils well. The annual report of the governors to parents this year did not follow the accurate format of previous years and omits some required elements.
44. The impact of parental involvement in the work of the school is good. Parents of children new to the school are offered very helpful induction meetings. Parents are invited to the review meetings of their children with SEN. The Parent, Teacher and Friends Association is a very supportive body of dedicated parents who organise social and fund-raising activities and provide valuable resources for the school. Parents attend class assemblies, harvest and Christmas celebrations, and Book Weeks. The school organises workshops on literacy, numeracy and positive parenting. In return, parents have volunteered to organise extra curricular activities, for example, supervising children in the library and running a drama group. Parents helped to establish the wildlife garden in the school grounds. Between ten and 15 parents help in school regularly and many more can be called upon to offer support for sporting and other activities. Grandparents visit school to talk about their own experiences of

childhood. The school offers work placements to parents whilst they are training for the classroom assistant's course. The school opens its doors to a Mother and Toddler Group, a Playgroup and an After School Club and parents spoke highly of these opportunities for their children to become familiar with the school at an early stage. These high quality links with parents and the community foster very good relationships, which set good models for the pupils.

45. Parents at the meeting prior to the inspection and through the responses to the parental questionnaire confirmed that the school has made many improvements since the previous inspection. Parents have confidence in the headteacher and staff and feel that the school upholds its mission statement very well.

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

46. The headteacher provides clear and effective leadership, well supported by key staff and governors. She has established herself very well as the leader of the school community with the staff, pupils and the parents. Parents are very supportive of her relationship with them, and with the ethos for learning and standards of attainment she promotes. The acting deputy headteacher supports the headteacher well, both through the quality of her work in the classroom, and by supporting relatively inexperienced staff in their management roles. For example, there is a new Key Stage 2 co-ordinator who now has the previous post-holder, the acting deputy headteacher, in her team. This potentially difficult management relationship has been handled very well by all involved, and the co-ordinator values the guiding hand of her more experienced colleague when she herself is chairing the key stage meetings. Other staff with key stage responsibilities also contribute well to the overall management of the school. They take their duties seriously, having good overview of the work of their area of the school. There is a good system of meetings so that all staff are kept well informed, and their views are taken into account in whole-school planning and decision making. The high quality of the relationships between the staff is a great credit to the headteacher and staff team, and provides the pupils with very good role models.
47. This strong ethos for high standards informs all the school's work. There is a strongly spiritual character to all that is planned and delivered, and this is underlined by high expectations of the quality of teaching, and a commensurate response from the pupils. In her monitoring of teaching, for example, the headteacher compliments staff on their strengths, but also negotiates with them areas for improvement. She also seeks to spread good practice, and has ensured that all co-ordinators have time away from class duties to monitor teaching and overall provision in their subjects. They do this well, and contribute effectively to the school's overall development. There is a feeling in the school that everyone is striving to do their best, recognised and appreciated by the parents.
48. The governing body fulfils all its statutory duties, and is well informed about the school in thorough briefings from the headteacher and staff, and from the close involvement many of the governors have with the school. The chair of governors is regularly in the school, and has developed a very good working relationship with the headteacher founded in mutual trust and respect. He is also well known by the pupils, and is knowledgeable about the school's many strengths, and also of what it needs to do to improve. There is a good committee structure that deals with appropriate aspects of the governor's role, and there are good individual links between governors and subject co-ordinators. A number of the governors are members of staff, which helps to keep the governing body well informed, and other governors also work in the school on a voluntary basis.
49. Monitoring and evaluation of developments has improved since the last inspection, and is now very good. The action plan arising from the key issues from the last inspection has been successfully implemented. The school improvement plan accurately reflects the school's current needs, and plans made are carried through. The criteria for success in the plan are

measurable, and the governors and staff review their targets annually in a thorough evaluation and consultation process.

50. Staffing is good in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1, where the school has used national funding to ensure that class sizes are below 30. The adult:pupil ratio in lessons is often less than 15:1, and as support staff and volunteer helpers are well deployed, this has a good effect on pupils' learning. At Key Stage 2, three of the classes are large, which affects the amount of time teachers are able to spend with individual pupils adversely. When there are support staff available at this key stage, they are efficiently deployed, and contribute well to pupils' learning. This is particularly the case for those with SEN, or at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
51. The accommodation is good: it is spacious, as the school was built to house far more pupils. Most of the classrooms are of a reasonable size for the numbers of pupils. The school makes good use of this space by creating library and computer areas, and allowing community groups to use parts of it for such activities as an afternoon parent and toddler group. The entrance, offices and two rooms above have been refurbished to a high standard. The office accommodation is now very good, and a welcoming and well-furnished chapel has been developed. This is a haven of peace, and the older pupils use it at lunchtime for moments of quiet reflection. It is also used by the parish for the sacraments, and for liturgy with classes at Key Stage 2. The other room has been transformed into a very well-equipped conference suite, used for staff training, and let for training purposes to other schools and institutions. There are extensive playgrounds, and playing fields. One of the playgrounds has been resurfaced since the last inspection, and another is rightly on the local authority's priority list.
52. Learning resources are generally satisfactory, and these are used well in the main to support pupils' learning. There are good new computer resources, and improved resources for design and technology. Good new reference texts have also been purchased for the classrooms and libraries, but there is some outdated stock in the reading scheme, and there is insufficient quality fiction for the older pupils.
53. Financial planning and management are good. A recent audit found the school's procedures to be in good shape, and had only minor recommendations for improvement, all of which the school has already implemented or has in hand. Funding is carefully targeted to the priorities in the improvement plan, and a reasonable working surplus has been established to deal with contingencies. Grant-aided funding is spent effectively in the designated areas, and such funding as that for new computers has been wisely spent, and the resource is being used well. Resources for pupils with SEN, including staffing, have a good effect on the pupils' learning and progress towards the targets set for them. The school is developing its systems to ensure that it adheres to the principles of best value in acquiring and using resources, and these operate well as part of its overall monitoring and evaluation procedures. Routine administration and organisation are very good, and the school secretary provides a very good link with parents through her welcoming efficiency.
54. Given the average amount received per pupil, the high quality of education offered, the good standards attained in comparison with schools in similar circumstances, and the very good leadership provided by staff and governors, the school gives very good value for money.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

In order to further improve the pupils' standards of attainment and the quality of education offered, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

1. Develop further strategies to improve pupils' writing skills by:
  - a. Ensuring that more opportunities are planned in lessons other than English for pupils to use and improve the writing skills they learn as part of the literacy strategy;
  - b. Extending the current good practice in some English lessons of incorporating elements and ideas from other curriculum subjects in order to improve pupils' opportunities to practise their developing skills in a variety of purposeful contexts;
  - c. Providing as many opportunities as possible for sustained writing, including drafting and redrafting of the text; (Paragraphs 7, 76)
2. Replace the remaining unsatisfactory playground surface as soon as funds allow. (Paragraphs 51, 137)

The governors may also wish to consider the following minor issue:

To provide more opportunities for pupils at Key Stage 2 to take responsibility for their own learning in the different subjects individually, in pairs and in groups, including research, investigation, and choice of methods and materials.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	65
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
8	27	38	25	2	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	37	229
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	40

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	41

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	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.6
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	22	13	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	22	22
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	31	35	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (91)	100 (85)	100 (94)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	22	18
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	31	35	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (85)	100 (91)	89 (88)
	National	84 (82)	88 (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	7	20	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	5	7
	Girls	18	17	20
	Total	23	22	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (67)	81 (52)	100 (71)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	5	6
	Girls	20	19	20
	Total	24	24	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (57)	89 (57)	96 (62)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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



### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	186
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	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.2
Average class size	27.9

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

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	66

#### **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	35

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	99/00
	£
Total income	432223
Total expenditure	424847
Expenditure per pupil	1763
Balance brought forward from previous year	29964
Balance carried forward to next year	37340

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	241
Number of questionnaires returned	80

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	37	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	49	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	49	4	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	53	4	0	0
The teaching is good.	58	40	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	43	3	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	30	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	34	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	56	42	0	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	56	36	0	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	44	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	44	13	5	9

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

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

55. In the previous report nursery provision was described as a strength of the school. The new Foundation Stage, which includes the nursery and reception class, continues to provide standards of excellence in teaching that have a significant influence on children's learning. Children's attainment is assessed on entry to the nursery and staff keep detailed records of children's progress by assessing their progress in each activity, in order to plan suitable work for them. The accommodation is very good, well organised and displayed by the staff, and provides a stimulating colourful environment. The nursery and reception classes are in close proximity which helps the teachers to support each other to maintain the effective links they have created. Good opportunities are provided for students on a variety of teaching and child care courses to develop their knowledge and understanding of how young children learn.
56. Attainment on entry to the nursery covers a wide range, but is generally below average. Not all the children in the nursery transfer to the reception class, and attainment at entry to reception is higher, but still below average. By the time they enter Year 1, the majority of the children are achieving well and are in line with standards expected nationally. The children successfully attain the levels expected in personal and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. These achievements are largely due to outstanding teaching based on the high quality of teachers' planning using the national guidance. Staff also know the children well and develop positive links with parents. For example, parents are invited into the school and a presentation is given on how the nursery works, described in a useful booklet. The children are then brought in for a familiarisation session, sometimes more if there is a need. A photograph is taken of all children so that when they start in the nursery they can see their photograph alongside the other children's. Nursery staff spend time getting to know the youngest children who are the first to join, and then make home visits in the afternoons. Arrangements are made for fifteen minutes each day when parents can meet nursery staff and discuss any matters of importance regarding their child.

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

57. Many children entering the nursery have immature skills in personal and social development. However, by the time they leave the reception class these skills have developed well enough to achieve the recommended levels in this area. This demonstrates the excellent teamwork of the teachers and nursery nurses in encouraging children to feel confident about themselves and what they can achieve. Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to encourage sharing, talking, listening to stories and for children to join in a wide range of learning activities. For example, when calling the register the teacher encourages the children to practise counting the number in the class that day. When their name is called each child has to choose their name written on a card and put it on a board. In addition, the nursery teacher encourages all the children to check that they had placed their name the correct way round.
58. The children are enthusiastic about their learning and this was particularly seen in a rehearsal for their Christmas story presentation of 'The Grumpy Sheep'. They concentrated well and were learning how to listen to each other, wait their turn and value the contributions of other children. The trusting relationships the children have developed with adults are a direct result of the very good role models adults provide. They are aware of the courtesy and respect adults show to each other and to them, and they respond positively through their own developing social skills. The teacher in the reception class successfully builds on these skills through well-planned tasks and activities.

59. Equipment and resources for activities are put out for the children to use and afterwards they are encouraged to help to tidy up and put equipment away. This has the added effect of supporting their personal development and helps them to become more independent in their learning. For example, children can choose from a number of activities and will confidently work either individually, in pairs or in groups.

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

60. Children in the nursery and reception classes enjoy listening to stories, especially in story time. Younger children are keen to talk about what they see in book illustrations and a number are beginning to recognise some words. Children in reception are beginning to read books from the reading scheme and are keen to read to adults. In a shared reading session children in the reception class were reading 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' with their teacher. They were able to distinguish how the different sizes of text related to parts of the story, such as 'great big', 'middle size' and 'teeny-weeny' text. Children in the nursery are developing confidence in expressing and communicating ideas, a skill consistently practised and developed as pupils get older.
61. Teachers use a variety of effective strategies so that children develop a good understanding of phonics. For example, in reception, children played a phonic game where they threw three large cubes with letters on. The task was to name initial sounds. When the cubes were thrown the children had to decide whether or not a word was made, hold up a card with 'word' or 'not word' on and then name the sounds. Most children use this skill to learn to identify sounds in words to support their reading and writing.
62. Skills in writing are developed well as children move through the Foundation Stage. For example, in the nursery children were writing a letter to Father Christmas. The teacher asked them what they wanted for Christmas and then wrote the item and the child's name. Children then traced over the teacher's writing in their early attempts at letter formation. Most children recognise their own name and make early marks on paper to represent it. In a shared writing lesson in the reception class the teacher used good methods to reinforce letter formation and the correct orientation of letters. For example, the letters were written in the air and children copied these shapes. To demonstrate how sentences were written the teacher used children's own statements to write sentences on the white board. Children were then offered the opportunity to write their own words on the board. Overall, levels of attainment in speaking, listening, reading and writing are on track to reach those expected for their age by the time they leave the reception class, representing good progress in their learning.

### **Mathematical development**

63. Children make good progress in their mathematical development. In the nursery some children recognise a small range of numbers and some count to ten and beyond. They also recognise shapes of the triangle, square, rectangle and circle. When questioned about the triangle shape children said it had 'three points' and 'three sides'. The triangle and square were to be used in other activities for making a Christmas tree. Reception children were able to count to ten and beyond from other numbers below ten and recognise numbers on a number line. They are able to order numbers up to 14. In addition, they are beginning to understand and use the mathematical language of 'one less than' and 'one more than'. In one group the class teacher had a range of items priced up to 11 pence and children were pricing two items together in their head. One boy was able to add two items together in his head to make 18 pence. This is high attainment for his age and reflects the high quality of teaching.
64. Children are encouraged to see mathematics all around them and many of the displays in the classrooms reflect areas of learning in mathematics to support their learning.

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

65. When children enter the nursery, staff introduce them to the wider world of the nursery and local environment. Many activities encourage the children to explore and take part in role-play. In one lesson some children were engaged on independent activities and the nursery nurse and parent helper moved around talking, encouraging and joining in the activities to stimulate language development and imaginative play. For example, three children were in the play corner preparing breakfast in their kitchen and were discussing what they would prepare. Children can identify and name parts of the body and understand that they have themselves changed over time, from a baby to being at school. Photographs of each child are displayed in the classroom and some children will refer to them as 'that was when I was small'.
66. In the reception class children have developed a good awareness of where they live. For example, the teacher had drawn a plan of where she lived. The children were able to identify the church, football pitch, post-box, houses, trees and a bus-stop and compared the teacher's home environment with their own. The teacher ensured that the children understood the correct names for each item they identified and reinforced this learning as the lesson proceeded. After the discussion they were asked to draw their own plan which they did well. Children use computers, sometimes independently and sometimes with an adult. In conjunction with their topic on homes one child was observed with an adult choosing parts of a house and then constructing their house from the building parts. In controlling the mouse the child was confident in dragging and dropping shapes in place to create his house.

## **Physical development**

67. Children in the nursery and reception make good progress in physical development. The outdoor play area is used daily and is a good resource for children to run, jump and use play equipment and also to learn to be aware of the needs of others around them. Boys and girls tend to choose to play in their own groups, for example, boys on the tricycles and girls on the slide and rolling barrel. One boy was very skilled for his age on a tricycle, where he was able to control the steering, pedals and brakes very well. However, the girls were more inventive in devising their own games to play. In the classroom children were working with the nursery nurse, cutting with scissors. However, the activity was made difficult for some of them as the scissors were of poor quality.
68. The reception class teacher enables the children to extend their physical development through well planned activities and routines that support them gaining new skills and learning how to use those skills safely. For example, in a lesson in the school hall, children changed swiftly and were soon ready to start their lesson. During the lesson, they listened to a story and had to interpret the story in movement. Although the boys were more speedy, girls tended to be more controlled and more aware of space around them
69. Children are encouraged to select resources and use tools safely when constructing and building, and have a good understanding how materials join together.

## **Creative development**

70. The children make good progress in creative development. The staff skilfully arrange many opportunities for the children to use different media and join in role-play in an imaginative way. For example, in the nursery they had just started their Christmas theme and were making Christmas trees using the triangle and square shapes, adding the star shape at the top of the tree and using circles to represent baubles. One child was very perceptive and announced that the star shape was made up of triangles. They used glue and glitter and made a collage of a star while other children made star sandwiches. The whole session ended with them singing 'Twinkle, twinkle little star'. Children thoroughly enjoy music and sing with gusto. A great moment for the children occurred when a parent visited to play his saxophone. The children

had made their own 'shakers' and maintained quite a remarkable rhythm for children so young. Children are able to recognise and match colours and reception children continued with their homes theme with clay slab work and making house fronts. Staff also arrange further work on colour recognition in threading beads and matching colour patterns. Dressing up and taking the parts of characters for the Christmas performance is enhanced by the support adults give through encouraging, demonstrating and building confidence in the children.

## ENGLISH

71. Standards in English as measured by national tests have risen since the last inspection and the school exceeded its own targets in the 2000 tests at Key Stage 2. Results were above the national average and above those of schools in similar circumstances. This is a big improvement on the previous year's results, and is part of a rising trend that keeps the school firmly in line with the rate of national improvement. Inspection evidence confirms that the school's lower target for next year's cohort of pupils is appropriate, and likely to be met but not exceeded.
72. Standards at Key Stage 1 have improved since the last inspection and are now very good in both reading and writing. Apart from 1998, test results have risen over the past four years at a rate similar to the national trend, keeping attainment at above the national level. Furthermore, results in the 2000 national tests show that standards of attainment have risen again, and are now well above the national average, and very high in comparison with those from similar schools. Inspection evidence confirms these high standards.
73. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average by the end of Key Stage 1, and currently average towards the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils listen appreciatively when other pupils show and talk about what they have done, and join in well during class discussion. They gradually learn to use an extended vocabulary and to appreciate words. Year 2 pupils were revelling in pronouncing correctly the technical vocabulary of instructional writing and in a Year 3 lesson pupils enjoyed devising calligrams and then confidently demonstrated their suggestions for improvement to each other. The plenary phase of literacy lessons is used to review and consolidate, but few teachers planned for an oral contribution from targeted groups during the inspection, missing good opportunities for further development of the pupils' speaking and listening skills.
74. Reading is very well taught, so that pupils make good progress across the school, following on from the very good start made in the Foundation Stage. At Key Stage 1, pupils have a very good grasp of letter sounds, and average and below average pupils use this to build up unknown words with confidence. By the end of Year 1, the majority of pupils are reading for interest and many have already reached the level expected by the end of Year 2. Higher attaining pupils justify their likes and dislikes and have good recall of plot and of characters. In Year 2, pupils are able to locate information in simple non-fiction texts about Victorian Britain and note this down. At Key Stage 2, lower attaining pupils and those with SEN make good progress because they receive well-focused support. By Year 6 these pupils read biographical statements about Anne Frank without help, and select information from a challenging ICT passage about Winston Churchill with teacher support. The interpretative skills of inference and deduction are less well developed. For example, several average attaining pupils in the upper key stage had difficulty in deducing, from a recount of the arrest of Bernard Crippen, who should be the 'author' of a mock police report that they were required to write. The refurbished library is sustaining an enjoyment of fiction by both boys and girls. A Year 3 class pounced with glee on a temptingly arranged set of new books in the library. On three days each week a substantial proportion pupils from Years 3, 4 and 5 come to the library to read, to browse and to talk about books with an interested parent helper. The range of quality literature for older pupils is not as up to date, however, and pupils are not very knowledgeable about the authorship of good quality children's fiction for 9 – 12 year olds.

75. Writing is above average toward the end of Key Stage 1 and mainly average towards the end of Key Stage 2. The above average and average attaining pupils write very well by Year 2. Their descriptions of a technology design for a moving vehicle demonstrate the skill of labelling a diagram, an imaginative use of vocabulary, accuracy of sentence structure and punctuation, and clarity of prediction about turning the design into reality. Because of the systematic teaching of phonics common spelling patterns are secure for most seven year olds. They recognise sentences and use capital letters and full stops correctly, and learn to use a dictionary for spelling purposes. The more able pupils use speech punctuation correctly, and are beginning to use more sophisticated connectives such as 'because', 'but', and 'therefore', although not yet consistently or with full accuracy. From the work seen at both key stages, the quality of narrative and descriptive writing is not as good as that in informational writing. For instance, Year 2 pupils plan and sequence the events in telling a story of 'My Upside Down World' and some of the completed stories contain lively ideas but they do not contain a very adventurous choice of vocabulary. All pupils make good progress in achieving neat, joined handwriting.
76. Pupils' writing towards the end of Key Stage 2 is not of a sufficiently high quality. They have been introduced to the different forms and structures of a variety of texts, and show a sense of audience when writing 'promotional fliers' about their school. However, there are few pieces of sustained writing, and pupils do not take enough care in applying their learning of spelling rules or of punctuation to all writing contexts. Rewriting and editing do not feature regularly in the work. Writing in other subjects such as history is often a response to questions rather than a personally developed piece of writing using a particular writing form.
77. The National Literacy Strategy is well developed in the school, and there is a continued reflection by teachers upon the effectiveness of its different aspects, leading to the adoption of new resources or programmes of work. A strength is the considered use of texts that link well to other subjects being studied such as history or science.
78. The quality of teaching is good across the school, with two thirds of the lessons seen being good or better, and with some excellent lessons in both phases. Weekly planning is detailed, planned to meet different pupils' needs, and well supported by a careful choice of enlarged texts and confident use of visual aids by most teachers.
79. At Key Stage 1 the teaching is very good. Teachers' subject knowledge is high in this phase, particularly in the teaching of phonics and spelling. For example, all teachers pronounce letter sounds correctly, and use the vocabulary of phonics consistently in lessons, so that pupils learn the terminology for themselves. The successful implementation of a new phonics programme this term is partly due to the teachers' prior knowledge about the teaching of reading. Teaching is highly skilful, with very good use made of a range of resources to engage the pupils. An example is the repetition from the reception year in both Year 1 classes of a rolling cube with letter faces, with pupils holding up yes/no cards to answer 'Is this a word?' so that they concentrate well and enjoy their learning. The pace of lessons is excellent, as in one outstanding lesson in which a Year 2 class together read and evaluated an instructional text with and without diagrams, completed a series of other complex tasks, and then began their different group tasks with perfect understanding of what was expected. All teachers ask questions well to draw learning points from the pupils, often with a touch of humour. ICT is used effectively to teach drafting and editing skills. The one lesson with unsatisfactory features was a literacy session taken by a replacement teacher. Because her relationship with the pupils was not secure, they did not concentrate, and progress in their learning was unsatisfactory.
80. At Key Stage 2, lessons are well paced and carefully resourced, with some imaginative tasks that require the pupils to think hard in interrogating texts. Teachers' questioning of the pupils is good, as it engages their interest and often challenges them to extend their ideas. For instance, the teacher probed and encouraged Year 4 pupils to refer back to a newspaper report to find out 'Who, Where, When, What, How' in relation to a reported event. Lower

attaining pupils are well included in the class phase of lessons. In a Year 5 discussion about alternative texts, they were asked to pick out the punctuation and content features that enlivened one text rather than another. The teacher then built on this valuable contribution to the lesson by asking the higher attaining pupils to explain the impact on the reader. The use of classroom libraries and school library books to resource sustained silent reading at the right level of interest in Years 5 and 6 is well supported by the library initiatives for Years 3 and 4. Teacher's knowledge of high quality children's literature to take pupils beyond what they already know and enjoy is less secure. The teaching of spelling is an improving area, but this is not yet impacting on standards by the end of the key stage. The teaching of writing has been identified as needing improvement by the school. It is not purposeful or directed enough to ensure high standards by the upper years of the key stage. Pupils are told what to include in their writing, and what secretarial or grammatical skills may be appropriate, without being shown sufficiently how to achieve this. Teachers rarely use shared and guided writing slots to model techniques, such as was shown with great skill by the English co-ordinator in the reception class. The full potential of writing tasks set during independent work is not exploited, so that skills and techniques are not consistently reinforced and applied to secure consistently high standards in all aspects of writing. Teachers sometimes miss clear opportunities to promote these aspects, as when older pupils were required to write biographical statements without reference to the earlier part of the lesson.

81. There are sound procedures for monitoring pupil progress throughout the school, using a good range of standardised reading tests and other national tests to determine what has been achieved. They are analysed by the co-ordinator and the local authority, but are not yet used sufficiently to set targets for classes, groups or individuals. Teachers assess pupils' work daily, but in Key Stage 2 in particular, the lack of specific 'at a glance' records of pupils' skill development affects the focus of the work set, and the level of challenge in some of the tasks is as not sharply targeted as it could be. The teacher of the Year 3 pupils sets an excellent example of the marking policy in practice in showing lower attaining pupils exactly where they have made progress or suggesting to the higher attaining what they can do to improve. This policy is not applied consistently throughout the school, however.
82. The co-ordinator is extremely enthusiastic, hard working and knowledgeable about national and local initiatives, and has introduced several of these into school during her first year of responsibility. Classroom teaching and planning has been monitored and issues relating to Key Stage 1 and 2 equally dealt with through staff meetings and training sessions. She has been well supported in generating pupils' interest in and love of books by the good work of the library co-ordinator.

## **MATHEMATICS**

83. Pupils' standards of attainment in national tests are average at the end of Key Stage 2, and they are well above average at the end of Key Stage 1. The difference in the attainment between the key stages is in part because there has been significant change in the nature of the cohorts between Year 2 and Year 6. There is also some effect from changes to teaching since the adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy. These changes have had more impact on the pupils in Year 2 who have experienced the new approach from its inception than they have on the pupils in Year 6 who have not had the prior experience required for its full effects to show in their achievements. The quality of teaching seen at Key Stage 1 was also very good, and it was good at Key Stage 2. The quality and rate of pupils' learning closely matched the teaching they received. Girls outperform boys at Key Stage 1, but their attainment is similar at the end of Key Stage 2. The school comfortably exceeded its targets last year, but although this year's target is lower, it appears to be reasonable, given the number of pupils with SEN in the current Year 6.
84. Test results at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 were in line with the national average, and with those in similar schools. They were much improved on 1999, and accelerate the improving trend to better than the rise in the national average. Although a higher proportion of pupils than



average achieved the expected level, fewer attained at higher levels. During a lesson on perimeters, a number of lower attaining 11 year olds found difficulty in measuring accurately to less than one centimetre, and some could not explain the difference between the description of a rectangle and that of a square. However, in another lesson high attaining 11 year olds readily worked out the proportion of playing cards in a pack that were red, face cards, or in a particular suit. They could also work out the ratio in its lowest form, and calculate mentally how many cards they and their friends would receive if dealt in the ratio 4:3:2:1. This illustrates the fact that whilst standards of attainment are average overall, there is an unusually wide range of attainment in the class.

85. Test results at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000 were well above national levels, and also well above those in schools in similar circumstances. Almost half the pupils attained higher than expected levels. The current Year 2 pupils also attain high levels, and achieve well above age-related expectations, maintaining the school's general level in the tests. In their books, the pupils present their work neatly and accurately. They learn a good variety of strategies in computation, and progress rapidly from the beginning of term. As well as developing very good numeracy skills, they measure to one metre, learn to handle money, and learn the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes. During a lesson, high attaining pupils offered a range of ways to make different amounts using three coins, and learned to record the amounts to two decimal places. The class also had to record in sequence ten coins, find the total, and explain their thinking. This they did with confident assurance.
86. Numeracy is well taught, and pupils develop good skills in mental mathematics. In a Year 3 lesson the teacher rapidly checked the pupils' recall of doubling and halving numbers as a 'warm up' activity. She then demonstrated, with shapes, a variety of fractions, skilfully promoting the pupils' understanding of how to visualise a range of fractions of a whole number. This work builds effectively on the high levels of attainment in this group of pupils. In a Year 1/2 lesson, the teacher led a whole class, oral problem-solving activity using very good resources. Her outstanding relationship with the class allowed her to challenge high attaining pupils at a very high level for their age, but she was also sensitive to the needs of lower attaining pupils, insisting that they also explain their mental strategies in mathematical terms. The pattern of the three-part lesson is firmly established, but teachers are beginning to adapt their selection of work suitably for the group of pupils they work with. The teacher working with a lower attaining mainly Year 5 set has chosen to revisit Year 4 work in fractions as it is closer to the pupils' prior learning. Those pupils with SEN are well supported, and many of them make good progress towards the targets set for them.
87. The pupils respond superbly to the high quality teaching they experience at Key Stage 1. The teachers have excellent subject knowledge, use the language of mathematics fluently, and have justifiably high expectations of the pupils' behaviour, interest, and progress in learning. In Year 1, the teacher taught the pupils how to record their calculations using a 'function machine', and how to search for patterns in a 100 square. These largely five year old pupils set to with a will, building on in tens from their own age, for instance. They enthusiastically explained what they had done, prompted well by the teacher to cite other instances of the pattern they had found. Two adult helpers were also very well deployed to support groups in this very good lesson. Teaching at Key Stage 2 ranged from satisfactory to very good, and was good overall. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour, and the pace of their learning, exactly matched the quality of teaching received. In a good Year 4 lesson, the teacher used her own secure knowledge and understanding of the subject to challenge the pupils to think hard about the patterns and sequences of numbers emerging in a number chain activity. She then showed them how to develop their patterns into pictogram charts, and the pupils made rapid progress in learning how to 'read' the information they contained. In a Year 5 class the teacher conducted a fast-paced mental arithmetic test, and skilfully discussed the pupils' scores, asking them to comment on their own level of performance in order to set targets for their learning. This is good practice as it involves the pupils fully in assessing their own skills and progress. Assessment of pupils' prior attainment is used well to set new targets, and to determine working groups. For example, a high attaining pupil from a younger class works

with the highest attaining Year 6 group in order to provide suitable challenge for continued progress.

88. The subject has a high profile in the school, and the co-ordinator has appropriate plans for its further development. She monitors other teachers' planning, and observes teaching in order to gain an overview of the subject throughout the school, and to help her colleagues to improve. The use of computers for data handling, work on spreadsheets, and pattern and shape is increasing, and has a good effect on pupils' mathematical and ICT learning. Good improvement has been made in the subject since the last inspection.

## **SCIENCE**

89. In 2000, teachers' assessed standards at the end of Key Stage 1 as below average compared with all schools nationally. They now recognise that this is as an over-cautious estimate. The work seen in the current Year 3 class meets age-related expectations. In the national tests for 11 year olds in 2000, the results are well above the national average. This is a significant improvement on the results achieved in 1999. It reflects continued good teaching and an increasing focus on investigative and experimental science. The school has maintained satisfactory progress against similar schools over time and good progress when compared with all schools nationally.
90. Standards in the current Year 2 class are above age-related expectations. Most pupils accurately classify materials and assess their suitability for everyday use. For example, they know that wool provides warm clothing. Pupils distinguish between different mini-beasts and describe their habitats clearly. In related work on health education, pupils recognise the importance of medicines and also the dangers of taking unknown substances. They quickly learn rules for safe conduct when faced with unknown pills or liquids. Good standards of attainment are achieved in experimental work, where pupils test differing foodstuffs for taste and texture. The good standards being achieved in Key Stage 1 result from careful planning and good teaching.
91. Standards in the current Year 6 class are above age-related expectations. Most pupils clearly understand the requirements for plant growth. They accurately identify the component parts of a flower and know their various functions. They investigate and compare the life cycle of different animals, for example, seals and desert rats. Pupils recognise how these creatures are adapted to differing climates and habitats. This work enables a number of pupils to demonstrate high levels of knowledge and understanding through detailed and accurate work. They understand the principles of a fair test, and conduct experiments carefully, having first predicted likely outcomes. Through careful observation and measurement they record results and recognise outcomes. For example, pupils investigate the rate at which a 'sweetener' dissolves at different temperatures. They display their results carefully in different forms, including graphical work using ICT. The good standards being achieved in Key Stage 2 are a result of good teaching and an increasing focus upon experimental work.
92. Over time, pupils make good progress as they move through the school. In Key Stage 1 they learn of the importance of careful investigation and recording. There is evidence of clear progress being made in the range of work understood and the skills of accurate recording. In Key Stage 2, pupils consolidate their knowledge and understanding in all areas of the subject well. For example, in Year 3 pupils conduct simple experiments on forces and construct a 'force-meter'. In Year 5 they revisit this area of the curriculum to investigate the force of gases within a Coke bottle. This leads to a study of how molecules react to heat. The very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils in all year groups are important elements in this good progress. They respond positively to the good teaching, sustain effort and co-operate sensibly in experimental work.
93. The quality of teaching is very good in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. A number of strengths contribute effectively to the good progress made by the pupils. Lessons are carefully

planned and this reflects teachers' secure knowledge and understanding. Teachers ask good questions which make the pupils think. Pupils are encouraged to pursue science through enquiry. This increasing emphasis on experimental work is a significant improvement since the previous inspection and is particularly evident in Key Stage 2. Relationships are good and staff possess skilful techniques for managing pupils. The work of support staff, especially with pupils with SEN, contributes effectively to their good progress. On occasion, experimental work could be more rigorous to help extend the learning of higher attaining pupils. At times work is also over-directed by the supporting adult and this limits pupils' opportunities to develop independent learning skills.

94. All statutory requirements are met and the school provides a rich science curriculum, accessible to all pupils. Useful links are being developed across the curriculum and increasing use is being made of ICT, although this is an area for further development. Assessment procedures are very thorough and inform planning and teaching well. The co-ordinator provides good leadership. She has identified clear priorities for future development and monitors standards thoroughly. The subject makes a good contribution to literacy and numeracy, through the development of scientific language and accurate statistical recording of experimental results. Good progress has been achieved in standards and teaching since the last inspection.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

95. During the inspection it was possible to observe only one lesson. However this observation, combined with an examination of pupils' previous work displayed about the school, and discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils, provided sufficient information to indicate that standards are in line with those expected at the end of both key stages.
96. At Key Stage 1, pupils develop an understanding of pattern and design, learn printing and marbling techniques, and make sketches and drawings to support work in other curriculum areas such as design and technology. These are carefully executed and often lively and detailed. The work displayed shows a satisfactory awareness of colour, texture and shape. Pupils make small artefacts and images, but large-scale three-dimensional work is limited, and although pupils sometimes evaluate their work to improve it, this practice is not regular.
97. At Key Stage 2, pupils develop their control of techniques, and by Year 6 successfully simulate the brush strokes of the French Impressionist painters. In Years 4 and 5, they make careful first hand observations, and use a range of pencil techniques to produce good quality pencil drawings. Year 5 pupils also progress from sketches to paintings in the style of Picasso, some of which are full of life and energy. The proportion of work in three dimensions is low, although links with a local art gallery and sculptor have inspired modelling work. Pupils have sketchbooks, but until this year their use has been sporadic, depending upon individual teacher interests. The current sketchbooks for Years 5 and 6 show more evidence of developing techniques. For example, they show good understanding from observation of the proportions of a human face. However, although the pupils did 'improve' initial sketches by adding more detail or enlarging them, for instance of the new Tyne Bridge, they found it difficult to analyse the impact of what they had achieved. Year 5 and 6 pupils also had difficulty in explaining why a particular drawing or sketch was effective in comparisons to others. Sketchbooks are not used sufficiently as reflective, evaluative tools, to track pupil responses to the work in progress. Pupils' work is very freshly and honestly displayed, but the over-use of brightly coloured poster paper as background and commercially produced bright borders detracts from the visual effectiveness of the display of pupils' work. This approach does not celebrate examples of pupils' work to best effect in order to stimulate and inspire them, and to show them the effect of carefully chosen backgrounds to complement their work.
98. Pupils' progress and achievement is recorded each summer term, when their work is matched against National Curriculum levels. There are no stored portfolios of work, however,

nor do teachers collaborate to compare pieces of completed work, so that as yet there is no record of the development of pupils' skills and techniques to better inform weekly or longer term planning.

99. The co-ordinator is new in this particular role, but is enthusiastic and up to date with new National Curriculum guidance. The school has earmarked art and design and technology as priority areas for further development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

100. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be satisfactory at Key Stage 1, but barely satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is now good in comparison with that expected for pupils of this age, and standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are average. The school has bought good resources to support pupils' learning, and resources have improved to satisfactory levels. The adoption of new National Curriculum guidance builds well on the skill development already detailed in the school's previous scheme of work. As a result, pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 have had a good balance of subject experiences. It has also ensured that the recommended cycle of designing, making and evaluating is implemented consistently throughout the school.
101. At Key Stage 1, pupils continue to produce work of good quality that includes using appropriate tools, materials and components. Year 1 pupils measured and cut balsa wood to construct a swing and patiently cut card triangle strengtheners for the corner joints. Other pupils made playground constructions with moving parts from a variety of construction kits, and identified how and, to a limited extent, why the parts moved. At Year 2, pupils decided which materials and components to use to construct wheeled vehicles, and recognised which materials worked better than others. They compared the effectiveness of elastic bands compared to other methods for fixing wheels to an axle and recognised the reasons for this. In a previous lesson, they had planned their moving vehicle, making very detailed, labelled drawings of their design, which they kept by them and referred to regularly when making the vehicle. The constructions were stable, matched the design and showed a good sense of proportion. Pupils' evaluative skills are well developed. Year 2 pupils were able to evaluate the design of several commercially produced puppets, and incorporated some of this learning into their own designs for a stick puppet.
102. At Key Stage 2, pupils refine their skills, and make very detailed, annotated plans and diagrams of their designs. They are able to evaluate their designs to improve them, which is another improvement on the previous inspection findings. Evidence of work on a Tyne Bridge model showed tenacity and a readiness to look for solutions to problems, but this is not consistent throughout the school. Year 6 pupils have a range of skills consistent with expectations for their age.
103. Teaching was good in all the lessons observed. In all lessons, tools, materials and resources were used well, with support staff effectively deployed to ensure safety and give help with technique. Teachers have taken part recently in further subject training and they have a good understanding of the basic 'design and make' process, and teach this well to the pupils. Some teachers demonstrate the use of tools and structural techniques well. In all lessons teachers question pupils purposefully and encourage them to discuss their ideas and to evaluate their on-going models.
104. Assessment is undertaken satisfactorily at the end of each year against National Curriculum level descriptors. There is no monitoring of progress in skill acquisition over time, however, which is a weakness.
105. The co-ordinator is new to the subject this term, and is building well on the good work of the previous co-ordinator. The school intends to examine standards in design and technology and

art, and the present levels of interest, enthusiasm and good practice augur well for the subject's continued improvement.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

106. The school has maintained appropriate standards since the last inspection. Standards of attainment in the Year 2 and Year 6 classes meet age-related expectations. Progress through each key stage is satisfactory. This is as a result of effective planning and good teaching.
107. Pupils in Year 2 study the locality and write in appropriate detail of visits to the coast and city centre. They develop basic mapping skills, using illustrations to locate different features, such as a post office and a jetty. Further work on holidays provides opportunities to identify distant locations and find them on a world map. This work provides useful insights into the local environment and contrasting localities.
108. Pupils in Year 6 complete a detailed study of the River Tyne and its immediate environment. This enables them to identify important features that help sustain the local economy, for example, the bridges. They visit the city centre and quayside to gather this information, producing accurate data. Pupils have a secure knowledge of two-figure co-ordinates and can locate features on a simple map. They use this to locate and identify different rivers, working with an atlas. However, they have insufficient experience in using Ordnance Survey maps for more extended tasks. In further environmental studies, pupils have carried out independent research on recent local floods and have gathered a good range of source material. This has enabled them to identify the principle causes and effect of the flooding.
109. Pupils achieve satisfactory rates of progress as they move through the school. In Key Stage 1, they develop recording skills and become familiar with the purpose of a map. In Key Stage 2, pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of the locality. For example, in Year 4 they study a local village, creating an aerial view and identifying the source of place names. Later in the key stage they build on these skills in studying and recording a good range of information on Newcastle. Most pupils work hard in class and collaborate well when sharing resources. Homework tasks demonstrate their ability for independent work.
110. The standards achieved are a result of the good teaching found in both key stages. Most lessons are well planned, with class teachers using their secure knowledge to consolidate and develop learning. Good questioning skills underpin this. Occasionally tasks set do not fully challenge higher attaining pupils and written tasks are somewhat narrow. However, where teaching is very good, pupils are motivated to do well, presented with imaginative tasks and made to think. Overall, there is careful consolidation of prior learning and good opportunities provided to increase subject knowledge. A good range of educational visits helps promote pupils' interest and enthusiasm for the subject.
111. The curriculum is effectively planned and makes good use of new national guidelines. All pupils benefit from opportunities that enrich their learning, for example, a visit to Cullercoats Bay in Key Stage 1. Assessment procedures are appropriate and provide useful end of year information. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and responds quickly to perceived priorities. The subject makes a sound contribution to the development of numeracy and literacy, for example in using accurate scale measurement and through the investigation of place names. Satisfactory progress has been achieved since the last inspection.

## **HISTORY**

112. The school has maintained standards well since the last inspection. Standards of attainment in the Year 2 and Year 6 classes meet age-related expectations. Progress through each key stage is satisfactory. This is as a result of good management and successful teaching.

113. Pupils in Year 2 study holiday activities and recognise changing priorities and interests over time. For example, they compare their own experiences with those of their parents and grandparents. Their work is clearly set out to promote writing. Display is used effectively, so that pupils contrast coloured photographs from today with monochrome scenes of donkey rides on the sands. Through this, and other sources, such as artefacts, pupils develop an understanding of the importance of evidence to researching past events.
114. Pupils in Year 6 acquire a good understanding of conditions in wartime Britain. They study the lives of children as evacuees and those remaining in London. Pupils have a detailed understanding of the types and usage of air raid shelters. They interpret photographs well and make valid comments on the effects of the Blitz on city life. They recognise that order is important to survival and devise appropriate rules to regulate this. In discussion pupils show an awareness of the importance of evidence to the study of history. They recognise that differing viewpoints can be held about events.
115. Progress is satisfactory throughout the school, with good progress in some lessons. In Key Stage 1, pupils develop their skills in recording events, which helps to improve their written work. In Key Stage 2, pupils increase the range of their research skills, so that in Year 5 they use a good variety of sources to investigate the lives of Victorian children. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the good teaching; they have positive attitudes to learning and behave well. They respond extremely well to visiting speakers.
116. Teachers' lesson planning is thorough, and their subject knowledge and understanding is secure. Teachers use questions skilfully to encourage pupils to think and respond. All staff make good use of resources and promote pupils' learning effectively. At times the range of writing is too narrow, however, and opportunities are missed for setting imaginative written and oral tasks.
117. An appropriate curriculum is offered, which is enriched through educational visits; for example, pupils in Key Stage 2 visit a local Roman fort. These visits also promote pupils' social development and cultural understanding well. Assessment procedures are sound and are used effectively to identify individual progress each year. The quality of leadership is good. The co-ordinator energetically pursues appropriate priorities. Pupils' work in the subject contributes adequately to the development of literacy and numeracy; for example, they write in the voice of people from the past, and develop skills in chronological writing. Satisfactory progress has been achieved in the development of the subject since the last inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

118. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are well above national expectations. The subject co-ordinator has recently returned after a secondment as an advisory teacher in the subject for the local authority. During the secondment the subject was ably led by another teacher and now both teachers are working together as joint co-ordinators. This high quality teaching, expertise and leadership is having a direct impact on pupils' learning. This represents a significant rise in standards from the previous inspection.
119. Standards of attainment towards the end of Key Stage 2 are well above expectations. This is directly due to outstanding teaching and the development of teachers' and support staff's knowledge and skills, and the school's commitment to effective staff training in the subject. In addition, the scheme of work is detailed and covers the learning from the Foundation Stage, through Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and supports the teachers well in their lesson planning. The school has invested time and funding to raise the standards and this is having a positive effect on the learning of pupils. Year 2 pupils change the size of fonts, change colours, draw lines and use paint programs to create colour patterns. For example, in one class display, 'we took a pencil for a walk', pupils had drawn free lines and then used flood fill to create an effective coloured pattern. In the other class there was a display of computer-generated pictograms of the pupils' journey to school.

120. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are well above those found in most schools. Pupils use database, spreadsheet and word processing programs efficiently. They add graphics to text, rotate and resize graphics, and develop skills in control technology through the use of Logo and a floor robot. However, although the school has extensive resources for the subject in other areas, there is insufficient equipment for the full development of control technology. The recent purchase of a digital camera has promoted a display of features of the school in a project undertaken by Year 6. Pupils' make good use of CD-ROMs to develop their research skills.
121. In both key stages, computers are always switched on and being used with programs matched to the ongoing work in the classroom. The development of independence in learning is enhanced by the way pupils are confident enough to work on computers on their own. Pupils enjoy using computers and are keen to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, either by demonstrating their skills or by talking about work they have completed and how they accomplished it.
122. Teaching is very good and often outstanding. The teachers between them have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They use this very effectively to plan their lessons very well so that they have good pace and high expectations, and use excellent resources and very good teaching methods and strategies to stimulate high standards in learning. For example, in a Year 5 class, taken by the subject co-ordinator, pupils were learning how to search a database using more than one criterion. She had planned the work extremely well so that the pupils had challenging tasks to practise and extend their skills in purposeful activities. The workbooks, entitled 'Whodunit', consisted of an information retrieval activity using crime stories as a basis to find out the culprit. Pupils had to fill in a crime report and identify the clues in order to set up the query statements for accessing the database.
123. ICT is used to support pupils' learning in all subjects and appropriate software has been purchased to enable this. Resources are very good; in addition to computers there are ample listening centres, with headphones and televisions to support teaching and learning across the school.
124. Overall, this subject is a strength of the school.

## **MUSIC**

125. Pupils attain standards in line with those expected for their age at the end of both key stages, maintained since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy their music-making activities, especially singing. There is a visiting violin teacher and the pupils learning to play the instrument are making very good progress. In an assembly during the inspection, a boy played folk violin music from memory while children entered and left the school hall. The standard of playing with regards to his musicianship, tone, intonation and bowing was excellent. Other music groups, such as a recorder group and choir enhance the music provision for the older pupils. However, although standards of attainment are average overall, the standards towards the end of Key Stage 2 in composing music for themselves are below the levels expected for their age. The subject co-ordinator is aware of this weakness and has firm plans to raise standards in this area of learning.
126. Singing in the infant and junior hymn practices is very good. The full effect of whole-school singing was heard in an assembly when, as in the hymn practice, pupils sang with feeling, excellent pitch, clear diction and a warm tone to their voices. They are aware of the elements of dynamics and rhythm and sing in a well-controlled manner. Remarkably, the whole school use sign language in perfect tempo as an introduction to these hymns, and continue to sign with great feeling as they sing with sensitivity and enthusiasm.

127. In Key Stage 1 pupils understand that music can tell a story and there are a number of ways that this can be accomplished. For example, in a Year 1 class, they were listening to and discussing 'The Mice Fantasia'. They were able to identify differences in tempo and one boy identified a roll on the piano keys as the mice dancing. Pupils appreciated the changes in tempo and mood as reflecting sadness and happiness, joy or fear. They were also developing their understanding of rhythm by patting knees while counting to four beats.
128. Pupils in Key Stage 2 extend the learning of the previous key stage through considering sounds and sound effects. In a Year 3 class pupils listened to a story read by their teacher about a woodcutter in Japan who was chopping wood and washing clothes. They experimented with instruments and the sounds they make to create sound effects to go with the story.
129. Teaching overall is satisfactory. Some staff lack confidence in the teaching of music. However, with the support of national guidance in music and a published music scheme their confidence is growing. They make good use of commercial music programmes and pupils in one class were supported well in their music making by the taped music and commentary. Older pupils were writing lyrics to well-known songs. However, a particular weakness in the music teaching and learning is the extended time that is spent on one activity. Some activities spread over a number of weeks. This is at the expense of shorter activities that encompass a range of music to challenge and raise pupils' standards in performing and composing, and in listening and appraising. However, the chair of governors who is also parish priest has taught the whole school to sign the hymns he teaches them in assembly. He leads the singing skilfully, and the pupils gain an important skill in communication that increases their personal development significantly.
130. Pupils perform in the school for Harvest and Christmas concerts, and attend an annual music event with other schools in the City Hall and at the local secondary schools in the summer term. In addition, the school choir sings to the elderly in the community.
131. Overall resources are sufficient to teach music and recently four electronic keyboards have been added to the instrument collection. Older pupils also use a useful computer program on music in a modern idiom.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

132. Standards of attainment are average by the end of both key stages. Almost all pupils attain the expected standards in swimming and water safety before they leave. Teachers ensure that the whole subject curriculum is covered at different times during the year, and there is a good range of after-school games clubs for pupils at Key Stage 2 which add significantly to their personal and sporting development. Children and staff all change into suitable dress for the activities, and the unisex 'T' shirt and shorts for the pupils are ideal. Each lesson begins with 'warm-up' activities and ends with 'cool down'. However, pupils are not encouraged to develop their own sequences of movements for these activities as they move through the school. Teachers have a good regard for safe practice, but occasionally prevent the pupils from being vigorously active and adventurous within guided limits, which effectively holds back potentially high attaining pupils.
133. Pupils in Year 2 respond very well to the teacher's confident control. During a games lesson, she demonstrated particular skills of throwing and catching which were a good model for the pupils. They developed their accuracy in throwing and confidence in catching well in a series of paired and small group practices. Boys and girl attained the level expected for their age, but the few consistently good throwers and catchers were boys. The teacher did not give the pupils sufficient opportunities to evaluate their own and other pupils' work, however, nor did she allow the pupils to practise the new skill in their own paired or team game. This restricted their personal development.



134. In Year 6, pupils listen well to the teacher as she explains, and demonstrates with pupil help, various striking activities using tennis rackets, many of which are the pupils' own. About half of them manage to effect a reasonable fore and backhand stroke, with boys and girls attaining similar levels. As the weather was bad, the lesson took place in the hall, which restricted pupils' opportunities to move considerably. However, they coped well with the relatively cramped conditions, and in the final challenge of bouncing the ball on the racket head, high attaining pupils showed remarkable control, some of them achieving a two-minute sequence unbroken.
135. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with examples of good teaching seen in dance and games. In those lessons where the teacher was confident enough for the pupils to be given room to develop their own ideas based on the key skills taught, the pupils learned more effectively. This was the case in a Year 3 dance lesson, where the teacher skilfully switched between the recorded instructions and her own interpretation to inspire the pupils to achieve well. Here, the pupils explored a good variety of movement styles and moods, incorporating stillness, gesture, expression and use of different levels.
136. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge, and uses this well in leading an after-school netball club with a colleague. She agrees that the subject has not been a priority for development recently, other than for TopSport training, which has increased staff confidence in the teaching of games. She arranges links with local sports clubs such as Newcastle United and Newcastle Eagles, who send coaches to train the older pupils. She also oversees outdoor pursuits in the summer, and intends to reinstate competitive team games against other local schools, which will please some parents. Her commitment is evidenced by her spending her last holiday to qualify as a swimming teacher, that she might teach the Year 5 and 6 pupils in the local high school pool.
137. The school has good accommodation for the subject, with two halls and good outdoor space, including grassed playing fields. One of the playgrounds has been resurfaced since the last inspection, and another is on the local authority's priority list.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

138. Religious education is inspected separately under Section 23.