

ERRATUM

Page 25 of the main report paragraph 54 should read:

54 The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good, with some very good teaching seen in reception where the teacher used a variety of puppets in the introduction to keep the children interested and prolong their concentration. As a result, very good progress was made. Good use is made of the computer to reinforce learning in reception and children respond well. In both classes teachers plan lessons well to systematically **build** on what has previously been learnt. They teach basic skills very well. Teachers promote reading by encouraging children to borrow books to read at home with parents. Both classes have quiet reading areas but currently they lack sufficient focus and importance to encourage all children to enjoy books.

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Benwell, Newcastle upon Tyne

LEA area: Newcastle upon Tyne

Unique reference number: 108508

Head teacher: Miss T Moffett

Reporting inspector: Mr D Hardman
17794

Dates of inspection: 26th – 29th November 2001

Inspection number: 230265

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Armstrong Road Benwell Newcastle upon Tyne
Postcode:	NE15 6JB
Telephone number:	0191 2739063
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Father R Burns
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17794	Mr D Hardman	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it?
			Science	The schools results and achievements.
			Information and communication technology	How well are the pupils taught?
			Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?
			English as an additional language	What should the school do to improve further?
			Equal opportunities	
12511	Mrs L Buller	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
				How well does the school cater for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
12631	Mrs M McLean	Team inspector	English	
			Design and technology	
			Art and design	
28037	Mrs P Smith	Team inspector	Geography	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			History	
			Music	
			Physical education	
			Foundation Stage	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's RC Primary School is a small school situated in the inner city of Newcastle upon Tyne. There is a broad social mix of pupils in the school and the full range of ability is represented. The school's initial assessments of pupils' attainment when they enter the Foundation Stage, this is the nursery and reception class, show that many pupils are well below the levels expected for their age, particularly in reading, comprehension and writing. There are 86 boys and 96 girls currently on roll. There are a few pupils who have English as an additional language and a few from minority ethnic groups; both proportions are below the national average. There are 97 pupils eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. Fifty-six pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, this is above the national average and 2 have statements of special educational need, which is below the national average. Most pupils with special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties. The school is part of a local urban regeneration scheme and the future of housing in the area is uncertain at the present time. Recently there has been a very high turnover of teaching staff in the school. This has slowed the rate of some changes, for example, the setting of specific targets to help older pupils improve their reading further.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Joseph's RC Primary School is a good school. It is going through significant changes because of the urban regeneration taking place in the area. The head teacher, deputy head teacher, key staff and governors are managing these changes very well, especially the high turnover of teaching staff. The school has maintained a family atmosphere and relationships are very good. The quality of teaching is good, for example, the teaching of speaking and listening has been given a high profile and this has successfully raised pupils' attainment to levels above those expected for their age by Year 6. Pupils are responsible and their behaviour is good and, as a result, standards are improving. The school is providing a good education for its pupils. Expenditure is similar to the national average and the quality of education provided means that the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the school by the head teacher, deputy head teacher and key staff are very good and well supported by the governors.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and, by the age of 11, pupils achieve well in most subjects, when compared with their previous attainment.
- Good teamwork by staff encourages very good relationships, pupils behave well and most have good attitudes to their work and school life.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The procedures and provision for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are good. As a result, these pupils make good progress.

What could be improved

- Pupils' attainment in independent reading in Years 3 – 6 is below the level expected for their age.
- Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is not high enough, because of a lack of essential resources and because pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to learn and practise new skills using the classroom based computers.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good progress in dealing with most of the issues identified in the previous inspection report in 1998. There is now an established framework of planning that identifies the specific learning opportunities in each lesson and these, coupled with the plans for the teaching of the National Curriculum, ensure that subject requirements are met. There are now good guidelines in place for all subjects of the National Curriculum. The opportunities for pupils to speak to groups and the whole class have improved significantly, mainly because of the professional development undertaken by staff following the last inspection. As a result, staff are now fully aware of the value of this aspect of English and provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills and make good progress. The head teacher and senior management team have led staff very well in the observation of teaching and learning. The results of these observations are effectively used to improve teaching throughout the school. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection. The school has worked very hard to develop assessment procedures to check on pupils' attainment and progress on a regular basis. This is working well in most subjects but the information gained from specific assessments is not used as effectively as it could be to raise pupils' attainment in reading, especially in Years 3 to 6. For example, in reading, teachers do not assess pupils' progress often enough or set realistic targets for their further improvement. The improvement of pupils' reading skills is clearly identified in the school development plans and this shows the school has a good capacity to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E*	E	C	A
Mathematics	E*	E	E	C
Science	E*	E	E	C

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

The table shows that in the 2001 National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds the school's results were average in English and below average in mathematics and science. When compared to similar schools, pupils' performance was well above average in English and average in mathematics and science. However, in the National Curriculum tests in 2001, there was a small number of pupils in the year group and pupil absence from certain tests affected the results significantly which makes comparisons with either national or similar schools statistically unreliable. Inspection evidence shows that results in National Curriculum tests fluctuate depending on the composition and size of the year group taking the tests, overall they have improved over time and reflect the good teaching and learning for pupils in the school. In the present Year 6, pupils' standards in speaking and listening are above the level expected for 11 year olds and in line with the level for English, mathematics, science and all other subjects except independent reading and information and communication technology. In these two areas, pupils' attainment is below the level expected. The trend of pupils' attainment over time shows an improvement. The raising of standards is bringing the school closer to the national average.

Most children in the nursery and reception classes, now called the Foundation Stage, make good progress and reach levels in line with those expected for their age in personal, social, creative and physical development. They are below the level expected in their communication, language, literacy, mathematical and knowledge and understanding of the world development. In the present Year 2,

pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is above the level expected for their age, it is in line with the expected level for all other subjects except information and communication technology, where it is below the level expected for their age. The school's implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the observation of teaching and learning are having a positive impact on pupils' attainment. The school is well set to continue to improve standards, meet its challenging targets and implement any future changes in the curriculum.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to the school and their work. Most are keen to come to school and this improves their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good. They have a good understanding of what is right and wrong. There have been two exclusions from the school in the last year.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development and relationships are very good and are a strength of the school. They respond well to the rules clearly displayed in all classrooms.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Attendance is below the national average for primary schools.

Pupils' good attitudes result from the school's creation of a positive family atmosphere and pupils' response to the very good role models of the staff. Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming. They are considerate of others when they move around the building and use the dining hall. Pupils respond well to the trust and respect they are shown.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Forty-three lessons or part lessons were seen. The quality of teaching was good and sometimes very good. Good teaching was seen throughout the school, especially in the basic skills of numeracy; teaching in the skills of literacy was good for pupils in the infants and satisfactory for the juniors. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. The head teacher, deputy head teacher and key staff have observed teaching and learning and the sharing of good practice is improving the quality of teaching. Teachers manage pupils very well. As a result, pupils' behaviour and their relationships with teachers are very good.

Teachers' planning is clearly linked to the requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and when they organise tasks to challenge different ability groups in classes, pupils make good progress. However, teachers' knowledge, skills and understanding in information and communication technology, are not yet as well developed as they could be. In addition, there are missed opportunities to use the classroom computers to support pupils' developing skills and use them in other subjects. The school is using teacher assessments, together with the results from standardised and National Curriculum tests, to record pupils' progress. There are clear assessment strategies in English, mathematics and science, which are used effectively to record pupils' progress. Pupils have individual targets for writing and mathematics. Although the teaching of reading is satisfactory in the

Literacy sessions, teachers' use of assessment to match independent reading activities more closely to pupils' attainment and the recording of their progress is unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Classroom assistants give effective support to individuals and groups of pupils when they are working with them. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are well supported by good teaching that provides challenging activities. As a result, these pupils make good progress throughout the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school provides a relevant curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. However, the school does not meet statutory requirements in information and communication technology because of a shortage of certain essential resources.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There are good procedures and provision for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers know the pupils very well and provide challenging activities that make a positive contribution to their attainment and learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. All staff work with pupils to make sure they join in all the activities available. As a result, pupils make good progress in their knowledge, understanding and use of English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted well through assemblies. The quality of relationships makes a very good contribution to promoting the school aims.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare are good. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, except in reading for older pupils.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements in all aspects except information and communication technology. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities and visits and visitors give pupils a wider experience and help them learn. Parents think highly of the school, the school has formed a satisfactory partnership with most parents, which makes a good contribution to pupils' learning both at home and in school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher, deputy head teacher and key staff provide very good leadership and management. They have maintained the family atmosphere during the recent changes in the area and managed the very high turnover of teaching staff very well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body is committed to helping the school move forward. Governors make an effective contribution to the running of the school and are committed to maintaining and raising standards further. They have helped to lead the school through the recent changes and maintained a positive atmosphere for all pupils. However, they have not ensured that all the resources needed to teach the full curriculum for information and communication technology are available to the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school knows its strengths and areas for development. The observation of teaching and learning is having an impact on the quality of teaching throughout the school. All staff work very hard to improve their own work and the educational opportunities provided for pupils.
The strategic use of resources	The school has sufficient staff. The accommodation is very well maintained. Resources to support pupils' learning are satisfactory,

	except for information and communication technology, and they are used effectively. The central library is adequate. The school's finances and administration procedures are good.
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The head teacher and key staff provide a clear direction for future improvement. Governors are regular visitors to the school, monitor financial planning and have formed committees that are involved in all aspects of the school. They make a good contribution to the preparation of the school development plan and are aware of the financial implications of a fluctuating roll. Governors, the head teacher and the Local Education Authority finance manager keep a close eye on spending to ensure that they follow the principles of "best value" well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and are making good progress. • Teaching is good. • Behaviour in the school is good. • They would feel comfortable approaching the school with problems. • The school expects children to work hard. • The school helps children to become more mature and responsible. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework given. • Some parents would like to see a more interesting range of activities outside lessons.

Most parents consider that they have a very good partnership with the school and express satisfaction with virtually all areas of its life and work. Inspection findings confirm the positive views expressed by parents about the school. The school has an established homework policy that teachers use consistently and, as a result, the amount of homework given is judged by the inspection to be about right for pupils' ages. The school has improved the range of activities available for pupils outside lessons since the last inspection and the provision is now satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 In Year 6, pupils' attainment in English is broadly in line with the level expected for their age. Attainment is above the level expected for speaking and listening, but it is below the level expected in pupils' independent reading. In mathematics, science and all other subjects, except information and communication technology, it is at the level expected for their age. It is below the level expected in information and communication technology because the school does not have the necessary resources to teach the full curriculum for older pupils and pupils do not use classroom based computers often enough to improve their skills. In addition, the staff's knowledge, skills and understanding of the requirements for information and communication technology need to be improved. The school is going through significant changes because of the urban regeneration taking place in the area. These changes have been managed well, especially the high turnover of teaching staff. As a result, the school is well set to continue to improve standards, meet the realistic targets and implement any further changes to the curriculum. During the inspection, no significant variation was noted in the attainment of boys and girls in any subject. The trend of pupils' attainment over time shows an improvement.

2 In this school the Foundation Stage is made up of a nursery and one reception class. The school's assessments of children's attainment show that many enter the Foundation Stage with levels of attainment that are well below those of most other children of the same age. They make good progress through the Foundation Stage and most of the children, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, are on course to achieve the standards expected by the end of the reception year in personal, social, creative and physical development. However, a significant number of children in the present year group are below the expected level in communication, language, literacy, mathematical and knowledge and understanding of the world development.

3 For pupils in the present Year 2, attainment in reading and writing is in line with the levels expected for their age and in speaking and listening it is above the level expected. This shows an improvement since the previous inspection. In the most recent National Curriculum tests in 2001, pupils' attainment in reading was in the lowest 5 per cent in the country and well below average in writing. Pupils' performance in the reading tests was below average in comparison with similar schools and average in writing. However, there were a large number of pupils with special educational needs in Year 2 last year and the low numbers taking the tests mean that results are affected significantly by the performance of a small number of pupils. Over time, pupils' attainment is improving because of improved teaching and the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.

4 In the 2001 National Curriculum tests in English at the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment was average and well above the average for similar schools. However, there was a small number of pupils in the year group and pupil absence from certain tests affected the results significantly therefore comparisons with either national or similar schools are statistically unreliable. Pupils' attainment is improving, given their previous attainment, and inspection findings show that in the present Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average in speaking and listening, average in writing but below average in independent reading. The analysis of assessment information means the school has evidence of the good progress made by these pupils over the last four years. Teachers use pupils' literacy skills in other subjects satisfactorily; for example, in the recording of experiments in science and in written descriptions of events in the past in history.

5 In the National Curriculum tests in 2001 at the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in mathematics was below average, it was also below average for 11 year olds. In the present Year 2, pupils' attainment in mathematics is in line with the level expected for their age. This shows an improvement in standards since the last inspection. In the present Year 6, pupils achieve standards that are in line with the level expected for their age. The improving standards reflect the positive impact of the National Numeracy Strategy and good teaching. There has been good analysis of pupils' performance in previous tests and this has resulted in the setting of clear, realistic class targets to focus on improving the weaker areas of mathematical knowledge. This process now needs to be refined and targets referred to when teachers are marking pupils' work and so improve pupils' attainment further. Pupils use their numeracy skills well in other subjects such as science and geography by, for example, creating graphs showing features of their own bodies and using maps to trace the course of rivers.

6 In the National Curriculum teacher assessments in 2001 at the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in science was well below average. It was in line with the average when compared to similar schools. This is a decline in standards since the previous inspection, when standards were below national expectations. The main reason for this decline is the large number of pupils in this year group with special educational needs. Pupils in the present Year 2 are making good progress and are set to improve these standards. In the National Curriculum tests in science at the end of Year 6 in 2001, pupils' attainment was well below average. In the present Year 6, pupils' attainment is in line with the level expected for their age. The school is improving standards and setting realistic targets to improve further. Most pupils have a clear understanding of how to conduct experiments and understand the concept of a "fair test". For example, they plan experiments such as how to separate different solutions and they predict what their results might be when their experiments are completed. They record results carefully and come to accurate conclusions that are based on their findings. They know simple food chains and how plants and animals depend on each other for survival. Most pupils possess good recording skills, they use graphs and tables accurately to illustrate their knowledge and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are supported well and make good progress.

7 In Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is below the level expected for their age. In Year 6, pupils make satisfactory progress in a number of aspects but do not reach expected standards overall. This is because they do not cover certain aspects of the National Curriculum adequately, mainly because of a lack of specific resources. Although there have been some improvements since the last inspection these have not been sufficient to raise standards to the expected level by the age of 11. As a result, improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. The school has set up a computer suite that contains sufficient modern equipment to allow full classes to be taught together. Pupils are regularly timetabled to have satisfactory access to the suite to enable the curriculum to be taught. However, throughout the school, computers in the classrooms are rarely used to develop learning in other subjects such as mathematics and science. This is because, despite recent training, many teachers still lack confidence in the subject and do not plan the use of information and communication technology well enough.

8 In all other subjects, pupils' attainment is in line with the levels expected for their age. Other subjects of the National Curriculum make an effective contribution to pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, for example, through discussions in history and geography, recording their visits to places of interest, producing graphs in science and explaining their designs when working in design and technology. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress, especially in literacy skills. These pupils work at levels that are well matched to their abilities and their previous experiences. Teachers set work, paying particular attention to the targets identified in the individual education plans. Extra support is provided for these pupils and teachers assess their work regularly and review their individual educational plans accordingly. The curricular opportunities

for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are good; all pupils are included in as many activities as possible. Pupils with special educational needs meet the targets set out for them in their individual education plans. There is a weekly timetable for extra support and during this time pupils make good progress in their learning, particularly in their literacy skills. In addition, the very good provision for promoting pupils' social and moral development has a significant impact upon their good standards of behaviour and personal development.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9 Most pupils have good attitudes to school. Their enthusiasm for school is apparent in the interest they show in lessons. In lessons, when teachers' expectations are high and pupils are clear about what they have to do, they are eager to take part and work hard. In a very good English lesson in the Year 5/6 class, the enthusiasm for learning shown by pupils due to the good teaching they received, resulted in all pupils taking pride in the presentation of their written work and maintaining concentration to complete the task they had been given.

10 Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy coming to school. They have very good relationships with their teacher and other adults. As a result, they are confident to move around the nursery from one activity to another and are ready to learn. They behave well and begin to develop independence due to the encouragement and praise from staff. Their enthusiasm for school is one of the reasons why their learning is as good as it is. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language have positive attitudes to learning. This is because of the good support they receive and work that is pitched at the right level for their abilities. As a result, they play a full and active part in all lessons and make good progress.

11 Pupils' behaviour is good. They have a good understanding of what is right and wrong because teachers and other adults are clear about what behaviour is acceptable. Pupils respond well to the range of systems in place to reward their good behaviour and attitudes to work. As a result, most behave well in lessons and listen carefully to their teachers and others. There were two exclusions during the last school year.

12 Pupils' personal development is very good; this is an improvement since the previous inspection report. Pupils respond well to the teaching and opportunities they receive from the time they enter nursery to take responsibility for themselves, others and their school. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and this forms the basis of pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Relationships between pupils are generally positive within lessons. They work together amicably and share equipment sensibly. Pupils are aware of the result of their actions upon others and are confident to discuss their feelings regarding a variety of issues. This was evident in a Year 6 physical education lesson where pupils were able to express and receive positive criticism and use this effectively to improve their performance.

13 Levels of attendance have improved since the time of the previous inspection report, however they remain unsatisfactory and below the national average. Unauthorised absence has also improved but remains above national levels. The improvements are because of the very good systems now in place to monitor and promote good attendance. However, there are still a number of pupils who do not attend regularly and this is having a negative impact on their learning and the standards they attain.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14 During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in all but one lesson in both key stages. It was good in 44 per cent of lessons and very good or better in a further 30 per cent. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when 10 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory.

Discussion with teachers and analysis of pupils' work show that the quality of teaching is improving, especially in English and mathematics. A significant amount of this improvement has resulted from the observations undertaken by the head teacher, deputy head teacher and key staff. They observe colleagues teaching and check to ensure that all pupils are learning effectively. They provide feedback in order to improve the quality of teaching. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented and pupils' standards are improving in virtually all subjects by Year 6. Teachers regularly use a range of tests, including statutory and optional National Curriculum tests. The information available from these tests is used well to identify pupils' weaknesses and to guide teachers' planning. For example, the results of assessments are used to plan a closer match of work to pupils' previous learning and to provide appropriate challenge. There are clear assessment strategies in English, mathematics and science which are used to record pupils' progress. Pupils have clear individual targets for writing and mathematics. Although the teaching of reading is satisfactory in the literacy sessions, teachers' use of assessment to match independent reading activities more closely to pupils' attainment and the recording of their progress is unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6.

15 The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Teachers plan their lessons well and take account of the national guidelines that lead to children making good progress. There is a satisfactory balance between direct teaching and opportunities for structured play activities. However, opportunities for children to investigate and find things out for themselves are underdeveloped. All staff, teachers and nursery nurses know the children very well and are sensitive to their needs. Staff have high expectations and manage behaviour firmly, calmly and kindly. All adults are good role models for children whom they treat with care, courtesy and respect. They make sure that all children have access to all activities and children know that they are being treated equally and fairly.

16 The teaching of basic skills in English lessons is satisfactory, in mathematics it is good. Teachers' planning is clearly linked to the requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and tasks are sometimes organised to challenge different ability groups in classes. The pace of most lessons is good and teachers use the techniques of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to best effect. Pupils have very good relationships with teachers and adults in the classroom, which has helped to improve the quality of pupils' learning. Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and effort are high and pupils are expected to do their best. This was seen in a Year 5/6 mathematics lesson, when pupils improved their knowledge and skills of mental recall when working out answers to problems called out in turn. The use of a swinging ball to set time targets for answers meant that pupils were very attentive to the teacher's introduction and tried very hard to beat the target for the activity. They listened attentively to others' answers. The brisk pace of the lesson and the mature attitude of pupils led to very good learning and pupils' improving skills in the use of different numbers in sequences. Teachers use the Literacy Strategy effectively and plan lessons that are challenging and interesting. For example, in a Year 2 English lesson pupils joined in enthusiastically with the shared reading about the "Woolly Sheep" and improved their knowledge of how the sounds of letter groups, such as "oa" in coat are used in language development.

17 Most teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects of the National Curriculum. The school has recognised that teachers' skills need to be improved, especially for older pupils, in information and communication technology and training courses are already planned. Teachers use the correct language to develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the particular subject. This was particularly evident in English and mathematics where specific technical language was used well. For example, in a Year 4/5 mathematics lesson, pupils understood the concept of "negative numbers" and the teacher illustrated well the way that thermometers are used to show both positive and negative numbers in a real life example. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the teaching of English and mathematics and they use good observational assessment of pupils to build upon the areas that pupils need to develop. For example, in an English lesson in Year

2, pupils responded well to the teacher's requests to extend their sentences by using conjunctions and giving simple explanations for the facts they recorded.

18 Teachers know and manage their pupils very well and provide good support for different activities. The very good relationships between staff and pupils create a secure climate in which to learn. Teachers use their daily observations of pupils' work to set challenging tasks but this is not done consistently throughout the school. For example, particularly in independent reading in Years 3 to 6, assessment opportunities are not used well enough. As a result, pupils often make slow progress through their reading books and many are not given sufficiently challenging books to read. Most teachers include positive comments when marking but do not consistently provide precise comments on what pupils need to do in order to improve. This makes it more difficult for some teachers to assess how well pupils are learning from their mistakes and for pupils to know how to improve. The school has an established homework policy that teachers use consistently and, as a result, the amount of homework given is about right for pupils' ages.

19 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good. All staff have a very positive attitude towards these pupils and know their strengths and areas for development well. The school ethos, teachers' high expectations of behaviour and very good relationships between adults and pupils, mean that pupils are well supported in their learning. Class teachers, the special educational needs co-ordinator and support staff all work very effectively together ensuring pupils take full part in the curriculum and make good progress. As a result, the provision for special educational needs is well organised throughout the school. All teachers have good skills and are very well aware of the pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers plan according to the pupils' needs and work towards the targets identified in their individual education plans. All adults working with pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are enthusiastic in their approach and keen to recognise and praise success. This effectively encourages pupils and helps them develop confidence. Clear records are kept on each pupil's attainment and this information is used effectively to guide future planning and teaching. As a result of this good teaching, pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language build well on their previous knowledge, skills and understanding.

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

20 The school has significantly improved the range and quality of the curriculum since the previous inspection. With the exception of information and communication technology at Key Stage 2, where there is a shortage of essential resources, the school meets the statutory requirements to teach the National Curriculum including the provision of religious education. The school offers the younger children in the Foundation Stage an appropriate and stimulating programme of learning experiences based on the national guidelines, which suitably prepares children for work in the National Curriculum in Year 1.

21 A strong emphasis is placed on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The implementation of the Numeracy Strategy has been particularly effective and has made a positive impact on standards. The implementation of the Literacy Strategy has also been successful and standards are improving. Currently, a minority of older pupils are not being sufficiently challenged, especially in their independent reading mainly because they are not given books that fully extend their skills. Literacy and numeracy skills are effectively reinforced across other curriculum areas.

22 Since the last inspection, the school has worked hard to develop appropriate plans to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are taught. These plans are further supported by national guidance. As a result, standards have improved. The planning and delivery of the Key Stage 2 curriculum has been developed considerably since the last inspection to ensure that pupils taught in mixed aged classes

have equal access to the curriculum. The quality of the curriculum is regularly monitored and evaluated by the head teacher, subject co-ordinators and teachers to ensure that coverage effectively meets the learning needs of all pupils.

23 Contrary to the views expressed by a large number of parents, inspectors judge that the school provides sufficient extra-curricular activities that are offered to most pupils in Key Stage 2. The number and range have improved since the last inspection and they are offered to specific groups of older pupils, not just to Year 6. Most after school activities run for six-week periods. At the time of the inspection, football, computer and tin whistle clubs were running. Booster classes in English, mathematics and science are offered to Year 6 pupils to reinforce and develop skills in preparation for the national tests. These classes make a positive impact on standards. Pupils participate in competitive football games and take part in the annual swimming gala. The curriculum is enriched by visits out of school, which give pupils first hand experiences of history, geography and health education. They are relevant, very well planned and well focused. Theatre groups and a storyteller visit school to enrich the literacy curriculum.

24 Although the school does not designate time specifically for personal and social development, it is successfully interwoven through planned and unplanned opportunities. The school places a strong emphasis on health education including the misuse of drugs. Health education features specifically in the curriculum and is reinforced through science and physical education lessons. Sex education is not formally taught, but pupils learn about human growth and development as part of science and health studies. Personal and social development is a strong feature of the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage and they make very good progress. This has a positive impact on their all round achievement. Teachers know their pupils well and give them support and encouragement throughout the school day. For example, individual achievements are valued and celebrated by the school community in assembly.

25 The school's links with the community are satisfactory. For instance, there are close links with the Roman Catholic Church, which benefits pupils' spiritual development. The local library and Benwell Nature Park are also used effectively to enhance pupils' learning in English and science. Links with the local secondary schools are satisfactory and smooth the way for the transfer from Year 6 to Year 7.

26 Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection and reflects very well the school's emphasis on promoting this aspect of the curriculum. For example, all teachers' planning identifies opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social or cultural development.

27 Pupils' spiritual development is promoted very well in assemblies. There is a focus for worship in the hall and in classrooms, which reflects the Catholic ethos of the school. Prayers are regularly said before lunch and at the end of the day. Pupils are encouraged to think about other people in their prayers, such as a pupil who is in hospital. They regularly write their own prayers which show thoughtful consideration for the plight of other people, such as those living in Afghanistan. Pupils talk, or write, about their personal feelings and experiences. For example, in the Year 4/5 class, pupils have written about personal memories and their opinions of what are the important values of friendship. In art and design, pupils have looked very carefully at flowers and have thoughtfully tried to represent the tone of colour in their paintings. In Year 1, pupils working on computers exclaimed, "Wow!" when they saw their names suddenly jump in large letters on the screen, and in colour. In a Celebration Assembly where parents were present, the school recognised the achievements of pupils in many areas of school life. Pupils are praised for being helpful and trying hard, as well as for making progress in subjects of the curriculum.

28 Moral values are taught well both by the example of all adults working in the school and by pupils being involved in deciding what rules are appropriate for their class. Pupils know clearly how their actions can have an effect on other people. Assemblies are used effectively to reinforce the values the school considers important, such as respect for self and for other people. The school's emphasis on promoting speaking and listening skills makes a positive impact on pupils' moral and social development. They are encouraged to share their opinions and ideas with classmates, whilst respecting and valuing the contributions of each other. Pupils work collaboratively and, when expected, they work independently without adult supervision. From Year 2 to Year 6 there are representatives on the School Council. These pupils are proud of their responsibility. Pupils regularly raise money for charities, such as Cafod and Help the Aged. Throughout the school, pupils take pride in the presentation of their work. The school emphasises the importance of good citizenship by awarding a trophy, half-termly, to one pupil chosen by all the staff.

29 Throughout the curriculum pupils learn about their own cultural heritage and about the culture and beliefs of other people. The school's religious education programme teaches pupils about the major world faiths. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are fully integrated into the school. Assemblies are planned to highlight an understanding of different cultures around the world and to teach respect for the belief systems of major faiths, as well as Christianity. As a result, pupils' awareness of the diversity of cultures and lifestyles is well developed. They have a mature attitude towards respecting people who appear to have different lifestyles, beliefs or values.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30 The procedures for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare are good. Health and safety procedures, including risk assessments, are well established and form the basis of setting priorities for the repairs and maintenance of the school building and grounds. Procedures for child protection are in place and the member of staff with designated responsibility for this area has received appropriate training. The weakness of this provision is that the procedures are not effectively shared with mid-day supervisory staff.

31 The school monitors and promotes attendance very well. Pupils respond with enthusiasm to the reward given each week to the class with the highest attendance. As a result, attendance has improved since the time of the last inspection, although it remains below the national average.

32 Good behaviour is promoted well through the Roman Catholic ethos of the school and through the very good systems of rewards. Teachers throughout the school manage behaviour very well. They have a positive approach and set good examples to pupils through their own behaviour and relationships. Their standards are clear and consistent so that pupils know what to expect. During the weekly Celebration Assembly the head teacher effectively shares with all pupils the reasons why rewards are given and pupils demonstrate high levels of pride when they receive their certificates. As a result, all pupils try hard to reach the standards expected.

33 Teachers monitor and assess pupils' personal development in an informal way through their day-to-day interactions with pupils. They use this information effectively when reporting to parents. One of the strengths of these procedures is the very good relationship that teachers have with pupils, which they use well to ensure that pupils receive effective support and guidance for both their educational and personal development. Assessment procedures for children of the Foundation Stage are good. Initial assessments when children enter nursery and reception act as a good reference point from which progress is tracked. Teachers use assessments well to plan the next steps of learning. Through careful observation, children's achievements are noted and individual records are carefully maintained and matched against the "stepping stones" of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

34 The school's arrangements for the monitoring and support of academic performance are good, except for independent reading activities for older pupils. There has been good progress against the key issue in the previous report. The school regularly uses a range of tests, including statutory and optional National Curriculum tests. The information available from these tests is used well to identify weaknesses and to inform curriculum planning through the school's improvement plan. For example, the results of assessments are used to plan a closer match of work to pupils' previous learning and to provide appropriate challenge.

35 There are clear assessment strategies in English, mathematics and science which are used to record pupils' progress. Pupils have individual targets for writing and mathematics. There are no formal assessments in other subjects, although teachers know how well their pupils are doing in lessons. This is because teachers use good questioning skills and pupils' well developed speaking and listening skills to make regular on-going assessments of pupils' progress. Teachers make half-termly evaluations of how well their pupils have achieved in all the subjects of the curriculum. These are used well to help write annual reports to parents.

36 Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and use comments to help pupils feel that their work is valued. However, marking seldom tells pupils what they should do to improve their work. Marking does not support pupils' progress towards their targets well enough. There is seldom any comment for pupils as to how well they are doing and targets are seldom identified as being met.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37 Most parents who completed the questionnaire and attended the meeting continue to have very positive views of the school. They feel that the school is easy to approach and that it is well led and managed. Most agree that their children like school, that they are expected to work hard and that the school helps them to become mature and responsible. Parents are happy with the progress that their children make and feel that this is due to the good teaching that they receive. Inspection findings support parents' positive views. Some parents expressed concern about the amount of homework; they would also like to see a more interesting range of activities outside of lessons. Inspection findings are that the amount of homework given is about right for pupils' ages. The school has improved the range of activities offered outside of lessons and these are now satisfactory.

38 The quality of information provided by the school is satisfactory. Newsletters and the school prospectus effectively provide parents with information about the life of the school, forthcoming events and changes to school routines. As a result, the school meets statutory requirements as does the annual governors' report to parents. The weakness in the information sent to parents is that not enough is provided regarding what it is that children are learning and this limits the support parents can provide at home. Reports to parents on their children's progress are satisfactory. They provide good information in the subjects of English and mathematics. They tell parents what it is their children can do in each area of the curriculum and report informatively on the progress they have made. Targets for future development are at times stated but this is not consistent for all pupils.

39 Parents' contribution to the work of the school and to their children's education is satisfactory. The school continues to be committed to working in partnership with parents and recognises the benefits from this partnership in the raising of standards. Parents are welcome in school and a few respond to the school's encouragement to support work in classrooms, however at the present time this is mainly in the nursery. There is an active Friends of the School Association, which raises funds to support the work of the school as well as providing opportunities to enhance pupils' personal development. Teachers encourage parents to support their children's work at home through the school's homework policy and this has been particularly effective in raising standards in numeracy.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

40 The head teacher, deputy head teacher and key staff provide very good leadership and give a clear educational direction for the school which has a positive impact on pupils' improving standards. For example, the school has improved pupils' speaking and listening skills following the last inspection. This leadership and management has improved from good to very good since the last inspection. The quality of teamwork by all staff is good and fosters a positive, family atmosphere where all pupils are valued and their efforts well supported. The school has recognised the need to provide more challenge for older pupils in their reading activities and good plans are already in place for improvements. The governing body takes its responsibilities seriously; governors make a good contribution to the effective running of the school and are committed to maintaining and raising standards further. The observation of teaching and learning by the head teacher, deputy head teacher and key staff is regularly discussed with governors who are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school has worked effectively to deal with the key issues from the previous report and is well placed to maintain the strengths and build effectively upon them.

41 Throughout the school, the management and implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. There are policies and schemes of work for all subjects. Teachers use these well to guide their planning and ensure that pupils receive a good breadth of curriculum experiences, which build on their previous learning. There is a consistent team approach to curriculum planning, educational inclusion and the formal assessment of pupils' progress

and achievements is effective. All staff understand the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. The provision for these pupils is good.

42 The effectiveness of the governing body in fulfilling its responsibilities is good, except for the need to ensure that the school has sufficient resources to deliver the full requirement of information and communication technology. They have maintained their involvement since the last inspection. They play a full part in the discussions to develop the curriculum both through their committee structure and in full governing body meetings. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Several governors are regular visitors and often help in classrooms where they see pupils working. They receive regular reports from the head teacher and they carefully scrutinise these and ask questions about the contents. With the head teacher, they carefully analyse the annual performance of pupils in the National Curriculum tests. This enables them to evaluate the effect of the school's spending decisions on standards. Most governors are in a good position to make strategic decisions because they know and discuss relevant issues with good understanding. There are difficulties with forward planning at the moment due to uncertainties over the regeneration of the area and its likely impact on the school in the near future. Given these circumstances, governors show a good awareness of how to plan ahead for an uncertain future and, in conjunction with the head teacher and staff, prepare a very effective school development plan. For example, the school is aware that further resources are required for information and communication technology to allow pupils to fully develop their skills in all aspects of the subject. The head teacher and the finance committee ensure that all decisions relating to the budget are closely linked to the development plan, are manageable and the principles of "best value for money" are applied rigorously.

43 The school uses funds designated for particular purposes very well. For example, funds allocated for pupils with special educational needs are used well with the result that the provision is good and pupils make good progress. An element of funding is used to provide support staff in classrooms and this extra support is making a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Very effective routines are in place for the day-to-day running of the school and these ensure that the school runs smoothly. The most recent audit report showed that the systems in place are based on good principles and the minor recommendations have all been implemented. All staff have a shared commitment to raising standards. They have succeeded in creating a learning environment where relationships are very good and pupils feel secure and valued. In the day-to-day life of the school the principles of equal access and opportunity are well observed.

44 There is a satisfactory match between the numbers, experience and qualifications of teachers and education support staff and the needs of the planned curriculum. The head teacher ensures that all staff have the chance to improve their teaching through training and a well organised system of performance management. The school's accommodation is very well maintained and is suitable for the effective teaching of the curriculum. Improvements have been made since the previous inspection in that there is now a good suite of computers, which is used throughout the day. Resources are satisfactory overall, there is a good range of resources to support the teaching of English, mathematics and science, but a shortage of computer software for information and communication technology limits pupils' attainment in this area of their work.

45 There is very good leadership by the head teacher, deputy head teacher and key staff well supported by governors, good financial management and very good relationships in school. Educational priorities are well supported through the school's financial planning. There have been good improvements since the last inspection. The cost of educating each pupil is about the national average. Pupils' attainment is improving when compared with their previous attainment and their learning is good. As a result, the school gives good value for money.

In order to further improve the quality of education, standards and progress in the school, the head teacher, staff and governors should:

A. Improve pupils' attainment in independent reading in Years 3 - 6 by:

- using the information gathered from assessments to match reading activities more closely to pupils' attainment;
- undertaking more regular assessments of pupils' progress and setting more specific targets for improvement;
- providing a wider range of reading opportunities across the whole curriculum.

(Paragraphs 1, 4, 14, 18, 21, 35, 36, 38, 62, 63, 65.)

B. Improve pupils' attainment in information and communication technology by:

- providing appropriate training for teachers to improve their knowledge, skills and understanding in information and communication technology;
- providing the necessary resources to allow the school to teach the full requirements of the National Curriculum for information and communication technology to older pupils;
- using computers more consistently to give all pupils more regular opportunities to practise and improve their information and communication technology skills by using them in other subjects.

(Paragraphs 1, 7, 20, 42, 67, 76, 81, 86, 91, 96, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 109.)

NB The school has identified both these areas in their plans for future development

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

43

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	12	19	10	1	0	0
Percentage	2	28	44	24	2	0	0

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

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)	22	182
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	97

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	56

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	16	10	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	14	13
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	18	23	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69% (75%)	88% (83%)	85% (96%)
	National	84% (83%)	86% (84%)	91% (90%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	14	14
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	23	21	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88% (79%)	81% (83%)	92% (88%)
	National	85% (84%)	89% (88%)	89% (88%)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. Where the cohort of either boys or girls is 10 or less figures are omitted.

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	11	15	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	7	9
	Girls	11	9	12
	Total	19	16	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73% (50%)	62% (56%)	81% (61%)
	National	75% (75%)	71% (72%)	87% (85%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	9
	Girls	11	12	13
	Total	19	20	22
Percentage of pupils	School	73% (44%)	77% (44%)	85% (56%)

at NC level 4 or above	National	72% (70%)	74% (72%)	82% (79%)
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Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	153
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.9
Average class size	26.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	90

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

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

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000 - 2001
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	£
Total income	391,221
Total expenditure	386,169
Expenditure per pupil	2,121
Balance brought forward from previous year	21,014
Balance carried forward to next year	26,066

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

182

Number of questionnaires returned

91

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	30	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	45	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	59	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	37	11	6	1
The teaching is good.	57	40	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	44	11	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	31	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	36	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	43	45	10	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	44	48	2	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	47	0	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	23	20	17	11

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

47 The Foundation Stage is made up of the nursery and one reception class. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is appropriate to meet their learning needs. It is stimulating and covers all areas of learning. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan their lessons well and take account of the national guidelines for the Foundation Stage. There is a satisfactory balance between direct teaching and opportunities for structured play activities. Opportunities for children to investigate and find things out for themselves are underdeveloped. There are seven children who are identified as having special educational needs in the Foundation Stage.

48 When children start nursery their achievements vary widely, but the majority are well below the levels typical for their age in most areas of learning apart from creative development where they are below and physical development where achievements are more typical of the age group. During their time in the Foundation Stage children make good progress in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world and the majority are likely to achieve standards below the level typical for their age, by the time they start the National curriculum in Year 1. Children make good progress in creative development and steady progress in physical development to achieve standards broadly typical of the age group. Children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development and are likely to reach the standards broadly typical of the age group by the time they start the National Curriculum in Year 1.

Personal, social and emotional development

49 This area of learning is a strong feature of the provision. A significant number of children enter nursery with immature and frequently unacceptable patterns of behaviour. A minority find it difficult to be parted from parents. They quickly gain a sense of belonging and feel secure in this warm, stimulating and friendly atmosphere. Children have their own special place in the cloakroom, their own place in the quiet area, a personal label on their milk bottle and personal drawer. Work on display bears their name that gives them a sense of pride and increases self-esteem. Routines are gradually established which most children understand and enjoy. Children in the nursery move around the class and around school in an orderly way. They are confident to move from one activity to another. Staff promote social development well and organise activities which encourage children to take turns, play together and make friends. Most of the children are happy to take turns and share equipment, however, a significant minority still display immature behaviour and snatch equipment away from others. Children tidy away at the end of the activity very well, because it is expected of them. Most, but not all, respect the equipment and handle it with care. Staff encourage children to do things for themselves. They put on their coats at home time and put on aprons for water and creative activities. Children become increasingly successful in dressing and undressing for physical education because they receive very good support and encouragement from the staff. They attend to their own personal hygiene independently.

50 Children in reception respond well to the structure and organisation of the class. Routines are well established and children know what is expected of them. Little time is wasted when they move from one activity to another, they move calmly sensibly and quietly. Good opportunities are planned for children to take turns and collaborate with each other. For instance, a small group work together well when they plan and design a layout for a farm. They consult with each other and share ideas. Children in reception grow in independence. They reliably undertake group activities that they are expected to pursue without adult help. They attend to their own personal hygiene and move around the school happily and confidently and in an orderly manner. The majority of children behave

well and often behaviour is very good. Children in the nursery have a developing respect for their own culture and beliefs through religious education. Once they have settled in the nursery, they attend school assembly once a week. This extends their awareness of belonging to a community. Well-chosen books, posters and jigsaws increase children's awareness of other cultures. This aspect is further enriched in the reception class because they attend assemblies regularly, play outside and eat their lunch with the rest of the school. Opportunities are sometimes missed for the children of both classes to share social and cultural activities together.

51 The quality of teaching in this area of learning is very good. All staff, teachers and nursery nurses know the children very well and are sensitive to their needs. Staff have high expectations and manage behaviour firmly, calmly and kindly. All adults are good role models for children whom they treat with care courtesy and respect. They make sure that all children have access to all activities and children know that they are being treated equally and fairly.

Communication, language and literacy

52 Children in the nursery listen well to stories, rhymes and songs. They follow simple instructions. They join in with familiar stories and begin to answer simple questions about the story. They need encouragement to participate as speakers because they lack confidence and skill. The majority of children use limited vocabulary and simple phrases. A very small minority use simple sentences at a level that is more typical of the age group. Good organisation and planning give children the opportunity to further explore stories in small groups. They become more confident and comfortable responding to the teacher's skilful questioning pitched at the appropriate level. Children are happy and comfortable to share a familiar story with an adult. A significant minority enthusiastically recite familiar parts of the text and discuss the story in simple terms. The majority of the children are less skilled and comfortable in handling books. Although they are happy to share the book experience they have limited concentration. Good opportunities in the nursery allow children to write each day. They "make marks" for a wide-variety of reasons, such as stories, birthday invitations and to make an appointment at the "Baby Clinic".

53 Children in reception listen carefully to stories, rhymes and the teacher's instructions. With increased maturity they are more confident to speak in front of the group. Vocabulary is successfully extended because the teacher plans especially for this. A respect for books is fostered and most children enjoy stories. Their interest in books is hampered by their limited concentration. A significant minority currently display reading skills that are typical of the age group because they have good concentration and enjoy sharing books at home with parents. They talk about the story and discuss the characters in a simple way. The majority are easily distracted and lose concentration whilst the most immature children currently lack interest and enthusiasm for books. They all handle books with care. Children begin to recognise the sounds made by letters. They recognise key words such as "she" and "he" because the teacher reinforces them regularly. Children in reception learn how to form letters correctly. A significant minority write their own name independently and accurately. Children attempt to copy from the teacher's writing with varying degrees of success. The majority of children in reception have progressed well since they entered nursery and as a result of good teaching, standards have been raised.

54 The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good, with some very good teaching seen in reception where the teacher used a variety of puppets in the introduction to keep the children interested and prolong their concentration. As a result, very good progress was made. Good use is made of the computer to reinforce learning in reception and children respond well. In both classes teachers plan lessons well to systematically building on what has previously been learnt. They teach basic skills very well. Teachers promote reading by encouraging children to borrow books to read at home with parents. Both classes have quiet reading areas but currently they lack sufficient focus and importance to encourage all children to enjoy books.

Mathematical development

55 Children in the nursery enjoy singing number songs and rhymes to help them count to 5. They play group games to sort numbers, match colours and print with circles and squares to make patterns. Children cut dough with shape cutters and match and join simple shapes in puzzles. By the time they are in reception, children have a good understanding of number to 5 and the majority are challenged with numbers to 10. There is a wide range of ability and although a small minority are confident and secure with using numbers to 10, the majority have difficulty with correctly sequencing numbers beyond 5. They do not count objects accurately when working independently. Children with limited concentration are well supported to complete the task.

56 The quality of teaching is good and this has a positive impact on raising standards. Planning is good and shows a very good understanding of the teaching of basic skills in this area of learning. Teachers reinforce children's learning to ensure that they have a good understanding of what has been taught before moving on. They take every opportunity to include numeracy in other curriculum areas, for instance in creative activities when children print with shapes and in history when they sequence birthday cards in the right order.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

57 Staff in the nursery plan meaningful activities to help children widen their understanding of the world, for example, experiments with sand and water, using a mixture of natural foliage and manufactured materials to produce an effective autumn display. Good opportunities are provided to explore dough with fingers and tools and discover how new shapes are formed. They bake cakes and observe the changes made by cooking. In reception, children observe animals and count legs and sort them into groups. They know that a fish and snake do not need legs to move. In both classes children become increasingly aware of their own past. Nursery children look at their baby photographs and know that they have grown and changed. Reception children count birthdays and sequence birthday cards to increase their knowledge of the passage of time. The computer is used in both classes where children learn to use the mouse to control the screen. Children use tools correctly because of good adult demonstration. By the time children are in the reception class they show scissor and pencil skills that are typical of the age group.

58 The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good. Teachers plan activities well which children enjoy at a level that is appropriate to their understanding. They are well organised and make good use of resources. Occasionally the scientific aspect has too little focus. In both classes the investigative element is underdeveloped because there are insufficient challenges that arouse curiosity and stimulate children to ask questions and find things out for themselves.

Physical Development

59 Good planning in the nursery allows children to explore wheeled toys and climbing apparatus every day. They run, jump and balance confidently. Children steer wheeled toys along a route enthusiastically and pull themselves through a tunnel with good control of their movement. Adults are watchful, intervening when appropriate but they allow the children to explore the equipment and set their own challenges. The children made good progress in a more formal lesson in the hall because the level of challenge was high. A small minority of children show a high level of skill and confidence when they climb, jump, balance and roll. Through a well-structured programme and using a variety of tools, children develop appropriate skills such as gluing, sticking, writing, cutting and painting. The quality of teaching is good. Through good systematic planning across a wide range of experiences children make steady progress in their physical development. Sometimes opportunities are missed for children in the reception class to enjoy more robust play on the large outdoor apparatus.

Creative development

60 Teachers plan a wide range of interesting activities where children can explore colour, texture, shape and sound. A strong emphasis is placed on colour and texture in the nursery and a good range of materials is provided for children to explore. Many of the well-planned activities support other areas of learning. Children depict “Red Riding Hood”, print with geometrical shapes and leaves and decorate models with a wide variety of papers. Role-play is well promoted in both classes and currently feature the “Baby Clinic”. In the nursery, an adult gives good support to language skills and helps to support imaginative play. By the time children are in the reception class they collaborate well with each other successfully, playing roles of doctor, nurse and patient without adult support. Good opportunities are provided in both classes for children to explore sounds. Nursery children sing and enjoy action songs. They follow a tune fairly successfully. Children in the reception class thoroughly enjoy exploring the sounds made by percussion instruments. They name the instruments correctly and know how to hold them properly. Children concentrate very well and as a result they play instruments with good rhythm and control. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned, with very good planning for the development of skills in the role-play area. Teachers have good subject knowledge and organise activities well so that all children make positive gains in their understanding and achieve well.

61 Since the last inspection, improvement has been made to the way children progress through the areas of learning. Progress is now good. The new curriculum allows staff from both classes to work more closely together. The nursery nurse makes a very positive contribution to the school day. All staff work well together as a team, however there are occasions in the reception class when more efficient use could be made of the classroom assistant.

ENGLISH

62 Since the last inspection, standards have improved in speaking and listening. These are above what is expected of pupils in Years 2 and 6. Standards in writing match what is expected of pupils in both these year groups. Reading matches what is expected of pupils in Year 2, but is below what is expected of pupils in Year 6.

63 Standards are rising in speaking and listening because the school has successfully targeted this aspect of English for improvement across the whole curriculum. Good teaching of the Literacy Strategy has impacted well on improving standards in writing. The school uses the results of a range of assessments well to provide targets in writing, which are matched well to pupils’ previous learning. However, assessment is not used well in reading, particularly in Years 3 to 6. As a result, the majority of pupils plod through the school’s reading scheme. This limits the rate of progress they make and many pupils are not given sufficiently challenging books to read.

64 The school’s emphasis on developing and improving standards of speaking and listening has been very effective. Pupils listen attentively in lessons to their teachers and classmates. They work collaboratively in lessons in pairs or small groups and talk about what they are doing. Pupils confidently talk about their work and they express their ideas clearly. There are planned opportunities for pupils to be involved in drama activities. In the mixed Year 4/5 class, pupils were writing scenes for a play script, which the teacher had planned they would act out later in the week. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language receive good support from their class teachers and in withdrawal support groups. This is effective and ensures they make good progress. Out of school “booster classes” were well attended by last year’s pupils in Year 6.

65 Standards in reading are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. This is because teachers keep more detailed records of what pupils can, or cannot, do. Pupils learn the sounds that different combinations

of letters make. This helps them to read new words and develops their confidence in reading. As a result, they make at least satisfactory progress. In Year 1, one pupil confidently explained why she liked the book she was reading, “because the picture of Dad as a chicken is funny”. In Year 2, pupils attempt reading library books they have chosen to take home and share with their parents, reading such phrases as “couldn’t see the rabbit” without hesitation. However, in Years 3 to 6, too often pupils misread words in their independent reading books without using the sense of what they are reading to correct their errors. For example, in Year 3, one pupil consistently misread “singing” for “swimming”. By Year 6, pupils know how to use indexes and contents pages to find information. They recognise the purpose of the “blurb” on the back page of books and all name a favourite author – J.K. Rowling. However, there are still too many pupils who misread without self-correcting their errors. There is a need for teachers to use the information gathered from assessments to match reading activities more closely to pupils’ attainment. These errors impact on pupils’ understanding of what they read and so they find it hard to answer questions. As a result, their progress is often unsatisfactory in this aspect of their work.

66 Standards in writing are satisfactory. Pupils write for different purposes and audiences. They use their writing well to support work in other subjects, particularly in religious education, history and science. In Year 2, pupils know the purpose of a heading when writing instructions. For example, one pupil explained this as “you have to check you have everything you need before you start”. Higher attaining pupils write in clear sentences, using capital letters and full stops correctly. Spelling of words is often accurate and even incorrect spellings are readable. A few pupils are starting to join some letters, although some pupils use capital letters within some words, such as ‘anD’, and words often merge together. In Years 3 and 4, pupils begin to use a wider range of punctuation including question marks and speech marks. However, pupils are not yet consistently using a joined script. Pupils are making good progress in Years 5 and 6. Their writing is well organised. They use brackets correctly when writing in the style of a play script. A few pupils begin to use commas and apostrophes correctly, but too often commas are overused or they use “and” when full stops should be in place. Pupils sometimes write at length with short paragraphs, indicating the beginning, middle and end of stories. Words and phrases are often chosen well for impact and to make writing lively, for example, “the water glistened like wine”. Spelling is usually accurate, although lower attaining pupils too frequently spell words as they sound. Handwriting is good. It is fluent and legible. Pupils take great pride in the presentation of their work.

67 English is taught well and some very good teaching was seen in both key stages. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers set precise targets for their lessons and are clear about what they are trying to achieve. Pupils know what they have to do, why they are doing it and what they are expected to achieve by the end of lessons. This impacts well on their learning, which is good. Teachers use a variety of strategies to support pupils’ learning well. For example, in a lesson in Year 2, the teacher played music softly in the background when pupils were working. This helped those pupils who were expected to work independently to settle down and work quietly. Teachers also make good links with other subjects of the curriculum, pupils write about the work they are doing in religious education, history, science and geography. In Year 2, pupils explain how an electrical circuit works and, in the mixed Year 5/6 class, pupils explain the subject specific vocabulary linked to their work about the “water cycle”. There was only one unsatisfactory lesson seen, where the pace was too slow and the objective of the lesson was not met. Pupils spent too long talking about what they might do and then spent time copying a list of ideas from the board. This impacted on the learning in this lesson, which was unsatisfactory. Teachers do not plan or use computers well enough to support pupils’ learning in lessons.

68 Teaching of pupils’ independent reading is unsatisfactory overall and is reflected in the standards achieved by some pupils in Years 3 to 6. Teachers conscientiously record the reading books read by pupils, but they do not record well enough their assessment of the progress pupils are making. As a result, some pupils are not given sufficient challenge in their reading and their progress is

unsatisfactory. Reading records in Year 1 are good. The teacher regularly records her assessments of individual pupils' progress in the "group" reading activities, which take place in the Literacy Hour. As a result, all pupils make good progress.

69 Pupils behave very well in lessons and they have very good attitudes to learning. The impact of the school's emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills is reflected in the way pupils work collaboratively. They work well together in pairs, or small groups, and they value each other's contributions. Throughout the school, pupils take pride in the presentation of their written work.

70 The subject co-ordinator is very effective. The results of a range of assessments are carefully analysed. For example, the school has already planned to improve reading for understanding and to develop pupils' skills in writing at length. Teachers' planning is carefully checked and all teachers are regularly observed teaching the Literacy Hour. They have received supportive comments to develop and improve their practice. The impact of this is seen in the improved quality of teaching. Resources have been bought carefully to match the needs of the curriculum. However, classroom and corridor library areas are often cramped. Books are not displayed well to encourage pupils to read for pleasure.

MATHEMATICS

71 In Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment in mathematics is average. This shows an improvement in standards since the last inspection. The improving standards reflect the positive impact of the National Numeracy Strategy and good teaching. There has been good analysis of pupils' performance in previous tests and this has resulted in the setting of clear, realistic class targets to focus on improving the weaker areas of mathematical knowledge. This process now needs to be refined and targets referred to when teachers are marking pupils' work and so improve pupils' attainment further. The National Curriculum test results are not always reliable indicators of standards as measured against the national average or similar schools because of the relatively small number of pupils taking the tests each year and the different numbers of pupils in each year group who have special educational needs or English as an additional language. Governors set targets for improving test results for pupils in Year 6 and the 2001 targets were met. Pupils' achievements in the infants, from their below average attainment when they start the National Curriculum, is due mainly to good teaching and learning in the infant classes. Good teaching and learning, especially for the oldest pupils in the juniors results in good achievement. The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and strengthened pupils' abilities in working with numbers and measurement. During the inspection, there was no significant variation noted in the attainment of boys and girls.

72 In Year 2, pupils are confident to work with numbers. They understand, for example, that numbers up to 99 are divided into tens and units. Pupils accurately add and subtract one and two digit numbers up to 20 and sometimes higher, as seen when they successfully solve money problems using both addition and subtraction accurately. Pupils recognise that 3×2 gives the same answer as 2×3 . They then use this knowledge to explain how to multiply different numbers, and they know that this is the same as adding a series of the same number together. They understand how to multiply by two, three and ten, sequence numbers in different patterns and recognise the difference between odd and even numbers. Pupils appreciate the relative values of fractions, such as halves, and use this to good effect when telling the time. By using correct mathematical language when tackling problems, pupils compare numbers that are 'greater' or 'less' than others. They measure everyday objects correctly using standard measurements of centimetres. They recognise common two and three-dimensional shapes, such as squares, pyramids and cylinders. For example, in one activity pupils used shaped blocks to build a "tulip" and then worked out how many shapes were needed to create 2 or 3 tulips.

73 In Year 6, most pupils have a broad mathematical knowledge and a sound grasp of their multiplication tables. They multiply and divide properly and use long multiplication. They understand

that percentages are parts of a hundred. Pupils calculate accurately with fractions and add and subtract them correctly. When setting out their workings correctly on paper, for example, pupils record how to find $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{8}$ of a particular number. Pupils build effectively on their work in previous classes, as seen in Year 3/4 when they divide 21 by 3 using their knowledge of multiplication tables. Pupils know how to present mathematical findings in bar and line charts. Pupils in Year 6, for example, create block graphs to show their favourite crisps. The teacher ensures they use good mathematical strategies to answer problems and their confidence improves when pupils use patterns of thinking that can be applied to different situations. This was seen in a lesson for pupils in Year 5/6 when they worked with sequences of numbers that included decimals, fractions and negative numbers. Due to pupils' very good attitudes, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, they make good progress overall.

74 Very good relationships between teachers and pupils result in a positive working environment and guarantee good levels of concentration and behaviour. Teachers maintain a brisk pace to lessons, particularly during the mental mathematics sessions. For example, in a Year 1 lesson the teacher used discussions very well to help pupils understand the sequence used when washing their hands or crossing the road. This learning was then used well to reinforce pupils' understanding of the steps to take when adding larger numbers together by breaking them down into tens and units. Teachers use support staff well to help groups of pupils and individuals, according to their needs. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the teaching of basic skills; lessons are brisk and parts are challenging, with time managed well.

75 The successfully implemented National Numeracy Strategy has a positive impact on both teaching and pupils' learning and is beginning to raise standards throughout the school. There have been improvements in assessment procedures since the time of the last inspection. The school aims to collect a good deal of information on each pupil and use a variety of tests and specific assessments at suitable intervals. Mainly due to recent staff changes, however, this information is not yet used to set specific targets for small groups or individuals to ensure that they build more effectively on their previous learning. Teachers' planning shows the specific objective for each lesson and they share this with their pupils well. In a lesson for pupils in Years 4/5, for example, the teacher told pupils that the aim for the lesson was to find the missing number in different number lines in order that they understood what they were intended to learn. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but they do not consistently provide comments that pinpoint areas for improvement. Teachers establish effective classroom routines that encourage pupils to listen constructively and to participate eagerly. They are enthusiastic about mathematics and value pupils' contributions. Consequently, pupils are keen to contribute to discussions and concentrate well on different kinds of work. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils respond accordingly.

76 The mathematical curriculum is satisfactory with some good links to other subjects. In science, for example, pupils use their mathematical skills to record the results of their experiments with shadows, showing how the length changes during the day. The mathematics policy, along with the plans for the teaching of the subject through the year, show the positive response that the school has made to issues raised in the last inspection. There is a very good system in place for the head teacher and subject co-ordinator to observe teaching and learning and provide feedback to other teachers. The mathematics co-ordinator is very knowledgeable, enthusiastic and keen to implement the school's strategy for the development of the subject, this strategy is good and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. There are too few occasions when computers are used to support pupils' work both in mathematics and in information and communication technology. Teachers identify the assessment of pupils' achievements in their planning, they use assessment as a means of setting class targets but not consistently to set challenging targets for pupils of all ages and prior attainment. Nevertheless, the school is now well placed to make further improvements in the standards achieved in mathematics mainly due to the co-ordinator's determined approach.

SCIENCE

77 In Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment is in line with the levels expected for their age. The school has improved standards since the previous inspection. Pupils' attainment is improving because of the focus the school has placed on improving the investigative and experimental aspects of science, particularly for the oldest pupils in the school. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and they make good progress in both key stages. As a result, there is a good capacity for further improvement. During the inspection, there was no significant variation in the attainment of boys and girls.

78 In the infants, pupils experiment with different materials and have a sound knowledge of the requirements for growth in plants. Pupils understand that plants need sun and water to grow and their work shows that they have a good understanding of the requirements for life. In Year 2, this work is developed well and is extended to the human life style and pupils recognise that a balanced diet is important for healthy growth. Pupils' work shows appropriate ways to record the results of their experiments. For example, they draw accurate diagrams to show simple circuits and know that if the circuit is broken the bulb will go out. They conduct simple experiments using forces and know that the application of a force can change the direction of a moving object. They use their knowledge to record different types of fruit and vegetables and in a good link to mathematics they record their favourites in a graph. In their recording of simple experiments, they sometimes make predictions and indicate why the test is fair.

79 Teachers plan together in the juniors to ensure that pupils cover all the science curriculum. The focus of the topic during the inspection was using separation techniques to experiment with different mixtures. In a Year 4/5 lesson, pupils were set the task of separating materials using a sieve for the one with larger particles and filter paper to remove sand from water. This type of work was developed well in Year 5/6 when pupils discussed how evaporation and decanting could be used to separate substances. Pupils accurately record their results from experiments. Pupils in Year 3/4 develop their scientific knowledge and improve their skills when studying the human life cycle. They linked this work well to real life situations when describing the age they would prefer to be. Pupils in Year 5/6 understand the concept of a fair test and explain that only one element in an experiment is changed to make the test fair. The results of experiments using light sources and the creation of shadows used pupils' mathematical skills effectively when making tally charts when testing to find out which materials were opaque, translucent or transparent.

80 The good science teaching in both key stages and the range of stimulating scientific activities contribute well to the improving quality of pupils' learning. In the lessons seen and in discussions with pupils it is clear that their attitudes and behaviour are prime reasons why their learning is improving. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject contribute to the well-planned provision, such as the improving use of investigations to encourage pupils to use scientific skills in a practical way. In Years 3 to 6, good use is made of the basic skills of writing and measuring in experiments on reflections and sound. A good element of teachers' planning is the emphasis placed on pupils being able to read the correct scientific vocabulary, such as "artery" and "vein" when describing the circulatory system. In Year 2 work, there are good examples of how to record the results of experiments with electric circuits using switches, bulbs and motors. In Year 4, pupils' understanding of the human body is improved when they study the parts of the eye. Most teachers include positive comments when marking but do not consistently provide precise guidance on what pupils need to do in order to improve. This makes it more difficult for some teachers to assess how well pupils learn from their mistakes.

81 The school has responded to the latest changes in the National Curriculum and introduced new guidance for teachers. The science co-ordinator provides good leadership and undertakes a regular audit of the subject, as well as observing teaching and learning, there are regular checks on teachers' planning and pupils' work to ensure that all aspects of the subject are covered. Resources

for the subject are satisfactory and used well to improve pupils' learning, for example, when testing circuits, magnetic fields or how forces affect objects. However, classroom based computers are not used well enough to support pupils' learning and to extend their research skills by using information and communication technology facilities such as encyclopaedias and the Internet. The curriculum for science covers all the required aspects. The breadth of the curriculum ensures that pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good gains in learning as they move through the school. The good attention to the use of appropriate scientific language and the use of charts and graphs ensures that the work makes a positive contribution to the development of basic literacy and numeracy skills.

ART AND DESIGN

82 No art and design lessons were seen in Years 3 to 6 during the inspection. Evidence from teachers' planning, and displays of pupils' work show, that standards are in line with the levels expected for pupils in Years 2 and 6. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

83 Throughout the school, pupils are given a good range of opportunities to develop manipulative skills and to choose from a variety of materials and tools. Displays around the school show steady progress in observational drawing and in painting. Pupils' paintings for a Britain in Bloom competition show more detail and better skills in colour mixing as pupils move through the school. In Year 1, pupils use a range of materials and fabrics and change their texture and appearance by cutting, shredding, scrunching, fraying and twisting. This work is linked well to their science topic. Pupils in Year 2 mix paints and use pastels and crayons well to represent autumn shades. In the mixed Year 3/4 class pupils explore, using the computer, changing the font and colour of their work. In the mixed Year 4/5 class pupils show good skills in developing a sense of perspective when "Painting the Street". In the Year 5/6 class pupils show their developing skills well when using tone in pencil observational drawings of plants, fruit and vegetables.

84 Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the lessons seen teaching and learning were good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. This is evident by the good demonstration techniques, such as how to fray fabrics, and the use of subject specific vocabulary. For example, in Year 2 pupils used the terms "landscape" and "portrait" correctly when explaining their choice about which way they were going to draw on their sheet of paper. Teachers use good strategies to engage and interest pupils. For example, in Year 2, pupils were excited when they saw the digital photographs of themselves in role-play activities the previous week. As a result, they worked hard on drawing what happened before the photograph had been taken.

85 Planning for art and design includes clear opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This impacts very well on pupils' personal development. In the lessons seen, pupils worked together very well in pairs and in groups. They talked about what they were doing and they valued each other's contribution. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are promoted very well. In Year 2, pupils sensibly evaluate the work they have been doing.

86 The curriculum is well planned to enable pupils to make satisfactory progress in knowledge, skills and understanding. Art and design is used well to support work in other areas of the curriculum. For example, in Year 1, art and design lessons this term are linked very well into the science work pupils are doing about "materials". However, there is little use made of information and communication technology to support the subject further.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

87 Only one lesson was seen during the week of the inspection. However, looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning enables some judgements to be made. Standards are in line with what is

expected of pupils in Years 2 and 6 and they make satisfactory progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be below what is expected of pupils in Year 6.

88 In Year 1, pupils make good progress in cutting and making skills. They construct paper mechanisms of puppets using split pins to attach arms and legs. Pupils evaluated this work and decided that, “We found it very difficult to stick the pin through the card”. They cut paper and straws to make moving mechanisms of actions in the nursery rhyme, Humpty Dumpty. In Year 2, pupils use tools safely to make fruit salad. They sort the fruit and vegetables by their characteristics, for example, “what can be peeled”. Photographs show how pupils chose from a range of materials to construct models of swings.

89 In Years 3 to 6, pupils make satisfactory progress in cutting and making. In the mixed Year 4/5 class, pupils use string, card and split pins to make movable arms and wrist joints. Pupils make good progress in the mixed Year 5/6 class. These pupils build progressively on previous learning. They know the importance of properties of materials, for example, when materials are used to make shelters for a range of purposes. They evaluate their work well. For example, describing a Bedouin tent as “a good shelter as you can just take it down and carry it anywhere”. In an excellent lesson in Year 5/6, pupils were enthralled in their group task to design a shelter, imagining they were shipwrecked on a desert island. They worked collaboratively together to explore, develop and communicate with each other about aspects of their design proposal.

90 Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with examples of good subject knowledge in Year 1 and Year 5/6. In an excellent lesson in Year 5/6, the teacher not only used his knowledge very well to involve the pupils in excellent discussions about their design, but he also ensured the lesson moved at a brisk pace. Very good management of the pupils impacted very well on the progress they made in the lesson. Planning for the lesson was very good with a good balance between teacher direction and opportunities for pupils to explore their ideas.

91 There is a clear planning framework which develops pupils’ designing, modifying and evaluating skills, this is an improvement since the last inspection. However, there is insufficient use made of information and communication technology to support computer-assisted designs.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

92 Few opportunities were available to observe history and geography lessons during the inspection. Only one geography lesson was observed in Year 6. One information and communication technology lesson was observed in Year 2 where computer skills were taught through geographical enquiry. These observations, together with looking at teachers’ planning, pupils’ work, displays, photographs and talking with the co-ordinators of these subjects, indicate that pupils’ attainment in Years 2 and 6 are in line with the expectations for pupils of this age.

93 Standards have risen in history at Key Stage 2 and geography at both key stages since the last inspection. This is mainly due to the improved curriculum with clearly planned, focused activities across all aspects of the subjects, carefully building on what has previously been learnt. The enquiry aspect of the subjects, where pupils ask and answer questions, is well emphasised. In both subjects, younger pupils successfully build on the learning they made in the Foundation Stage. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress in both key stages.

94 In history in Years 1 and 2, pupils increase their knowledge and understanding of the past through studying famous people. Good links are made with geography and literacy when pupils learn about the family tree of the island characters. History in Years 3 to 6 is brought alive when they study the Tudor Period with a visit from “A Tudor Lady”. They plan, design and make a Tudor village,

effectively linking history with design and technology. A good emphasis is placed on local history, for instance when the Victorians are studied and George Stephenson and his achievements are recognised. History and geography enquiry skills successfully support learning in both subjects when pupils look at old and new maps to find out how Newcastle Quayside has developed since the Victorian Age.

95 Year 1 pupils find out more about Benwell. Their understanding of the area is enhanced when they paint pictures of their immediate locality, discuss photographs and visit Hodgkin Park. In Year 2, pupils look further afield and compare an island home with their own. They increase their knowledge and understanding of places, for instance they know that an island is surrounded by sea and that on Struay there are no buses and they would need a bicycle to travel around. The teacher encouraged good use of pupils' imagination as they pictured the journey to the island across a choppy sea. They study the location and main features of the island and record their observations in a variety of ways, through pictures, writing and appropriately detailed maps. By using maps well, pupils know the location of this Scottish island. They thoughtfully consider what they would miss if they lived on an island and list these using word processing skills on the computer. Their skills are further developed using an art program to enhance their geographical learning.

96 In geography in Years 3 to 6, pupils successfully extend their knowledge and understanding of people, places and cultures when they study India. They extend their mapping skills effectively and find out about the similarities and differences between life in Benwell and India based on their knowledge and understanding of both regions. Good links are made with numeracy as they record their findings on graphs. However, opportunities are missed to extend information and communication skills when recording data. Pupils in Year 6 have a very good knowledge and understanding of the water cycle and the features of the River Tyne because the quality of teaching is very good. The teacher asks very probing questions to extend geographical thinking and has high expectations of pupils. For example, "Why is the river getting wider?", "How long does it take for landscapes to change?". As a result, pupils use a wide range of geographical terms to support their answers such as "erosion", "deposition", "load" and "suspension". Very good use of the digital camera and teacher expertise ensures a very well prepared lesson where pupils compare two landscape photographs of different parts of the River Tyne. Using their knowledge and skills they make very good comparisons. They discuss why the river is deeper in one photograph than another and compare the influence of people on the landscape. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language also make very good progress in the lesson because the classroom assistant supports them very well. Activities are well matched to the learning needs of all pupils.

97 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use the correct subject vocabulary. Teachers' planning follows the school guidelines well. They mark pupils' books supportively and assess pupils' achievements regularly. At the end of each half term, teachers check that they have effectively covered the curriculum and that pupils have been successful. Teachers are skilled at planning work which links to other curriculum areas, particularly literacy where key vocabulary is used effectively. For instance, pupils in Year 6 write about an imaginary journey from the source of the Tyne to the mouth. They recognise the confluence and tributary of the Tyne and note the landscape and the settlements they pass. Other subjects, such as art and design, are used as an effective way of recording Victorian life. Pupils take pride in their work because their teachers value it. Work is well displayed and referred to in lessons as a valuable teaching resource. In the lessons seen at the end of each key stage, pupils make very good progress because the teaching is very good. Teachers challenge all pupils at an appropriate level and as a result all pupils make good and very good progress. Pupils are interested in their work and concentrate throughout the lesson because the activities are so stimulating.

98 The history and geography co-ordinators manage their subjects well. They monitor teachers' planning and sample pupils' work. Resources are satisfactory in both subjects. History books are

borrowed from the Discovery Museum when required. Good use is made of the digital camera and videotapes and opportunities are beginning to be offered to use computers for research skills, for example, Year 3/4 use the Internet to find out more about Queen Victoria. However, this type of research is at a very early stage of development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

99 In Year 2, pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is below the level expected for their age and they make unsatisfactory progress. In Year 6, pupils make satisfactory progress in a number of aspects but do not reach the expected standards overall. This is mainly because the school does not have sufficient resources to teach the full requirements of the National Curriculum and classroom computers are not used often enough to support pupils' learning. Although there have been some improvements since the last inspection these have not yet been sufficient to raise standards to the expected level by the age of 11. Overall improvement since the last inspection is therefore unsatisfactory.

100 Since the last inspection the school has set up a computer suite, which contains sufficient modern equipment to allow full classes to be taught together. Pupils are regularly timetabled to have satisfactory access to the suite to enable the curriculum to be taught. The effective use of the suite allows teachers to monitor the work of all pupils and to make valuable teaching points without delay. Teachers use the suite satisfactorily to teach pupils the knowledge and skills necessary to support learning. However, computers in the classrooms are rarely used to develop learning in other subjects such as mathematics and science. This is because many teachers lack confidence in the subject and do not plan the use of information and communication technology to support other subjects. The school is only part way through the training programme and further courses are already planned to support the subject. Work is supported by national guidelines and this gives the necessary structure to ensure pupils are taught appropriate skills and knowledge at all ages. There is a system to assess and record the progress and attainment of pupils but it has not yet operated for long enough to be effective.

101 Pupils are taught satisfactorily and systematically and make satisfactory progress in the areas they study, in both key stages. In Year 1, pupils use word processing to write their name and then use the facilities of the program to change its size and colour. In Year 2, pupils develop this skill changing the size of print or pictures to add interest and emphasis. For example, in a Year 2 lesson pupils knew how to "log on" to the system and used the mouse and return key to create a list that linked closely to their studies in geography. They develop their work well by adding a picture of a sheep and, with adult help, make the shape bigger. In Year 3/4, pupils draw imaginative pictures to illustrate their poems. A few manage to add colours and lines independently but many need adult guidance to use the program. In a good lesson for pupils in Year 5/6, the teacher extended pupils' knowledge and skills when using computers to record the results of the experiment in science. They use word processing to label their work and provide explanations for the work they completed. In discussions, Year 6 pupils reach satisfactory standards in the elements that are taught, for example, in word processing, conducting research using the Internet and creating shapes on the screen using co-ordinates. Although older pupils understand the use of sensors in the real world, for example, their use to control traffic lights, the school does not have the equipment for pupils to conduct their own experiments with sensors, for example, to sense how much light is falling on objects or to measure temperatures over a period of time when using computers. The school is aware of these shortcomings and has a good action plan for the use of the new computers recently installed.

102 Pupils of all ages enjoy learning about and using information and communication technology. They work well together, showing due care and respect for the expensive and fragile equipment as well as for the suggestions and opinions of their classmates. However, a significant number are still uncertain how to proceed at times and, during the inspection, computers were not always sufficiently

well used to further develop pupils' information and communication technology skills, for example, to support work in mathematics and English.

103 The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and has completed a good audit of teachers' skills so that future courses can be tailored to the needs of the school. A regular computer club is run by the co-ordinator, pupils enjoy their lessons in the suite and they develop their skills very well during these sessions. Resources have been acquired from a number of sources and the new computer suite is being used effectively to improve pupils' attainment. The school still lacks the necessary resources to support learning about modelling, control and sensing so that older pupils do not develop the necessary depth of knowledge in these areas. The school is addressing this issue as a priority and has a good action plan to improve all aspects of information and communication technology.

MUSIC

104 Standards in music have been maintained for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and have risen for pupils in Years 3 to 6 since the last inspection. They are now typical of those expected for seven and 11-year-olds. Although only three lessons were seen, additional evidence was gathered from listening to pupils singing in assemblies, looking at planning and visiting the tin whistle club. The school has addressed the criticisms made in the previous inspection report by sharing subject expertise. The new guidelines give good guidance across all aspects of the subject and as a result pupils make good progress.

105 Pupils in Year 2 reach standards above those typical of their age in the creation of musical sounds using long and short notes. They practise playing the long notes and short notes until they maintain the rhythm accurately and effectively in two parts. Pupils reach this good standard because the teacher gives sufficient time for them to improve. Pupils sing at a standard typical of the age group, tunefully with appropriate awareness of rhythm.

106 Pupils in Years 3 and 4 improvise rhythm and they know that poetic phrases have interesting rhythms. They successfully and appropriately add percussion to these phrases and work well in groups to perform their rhythmic patterns. Year 6 pupils create their own musical ideas by creating a layer of sounds, which they capture on tape. They study "The Planet Suite" by Holst and evaluate the layers of sound it presents. Good links are made with physical education when this music is used for their expressive group dance. There are plans that pupils' own compositions will be interpreted through dance.

107 Pupils in Year 2 are very enthusiastic. They co-operate well with each other and enjoy making music. Pupils concentrate very well through the challenging task of maintaining two rhythms. They are confident to perform well because the teacher makes them feel important, for example by saying "Are you ready, orchestra?". Pupils in a Year 3/4 lesson concentrate well at the beginning of the session and enjoy practising a familiar activity. They lose concentration when new and more complex challenges are set. All pupils behave well. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language participate enthusiastically in all musical activities and make the same progress as their classmates. Pupils are introduced to the music of great composers in lessons and assemblies. They participate enthusiastically as singers and sing with enjoyment, in tune with good awareness of rhythm and melody.

108 Year 4 and 5 pupils at the tin whistle club are very enthusiastic. They perform the tunes they have practised at home with a good level of success. In just a short period of time, they have developed good fingering and blowing techniques. They read music using simplified notation and the more enthusiastic attempt to transcribe popular tunes they know, which they read and play.

109 The quality of teaching is good. Although in the lessons seen teaching varied between satisfactory and very good. The quality of planning is good. Teachers check on the success of this every half term and make appropriate adjustments if necessary. In the best lesson, very good planning delivered by a very skilled teacher led to pupils achieving standards above the level expected. Excellent relationships and outstanding management of pupils led to very high levels of behaviour. The more satisfactory teaching followed guidance from the scheme of work well and good learning was seen in the practised activities. The subject is currently well led by a temporary member of staff. The use of information and communication technology to support the subject is under used at the moment.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

110 It was only possible to observe two lessons during the inspection, one at each key stage. These observations, together with looking at teachers' planning, the co-ordinator's file, pupils' records of achievement and talking to the co-ordinator, indicate that pupils' attainment in Years 2 and 6 are in line with the levels expected for their age. Standards in Key Stage 2 have improved since the last inspection

111 In Years 1 and 2, pupils successfully build on the skills developed in the Foundation Stage. Year 1 pupils demonstrate skills in throwing and catching at a level typical of their age. They catch the ball successfully using both hands and with reasonable success with one hand. During a lesson there was good learning because pupils were given enough time to practise and the skilled teacher gave appropriate coaching to further develop skills. Good use is made of demonstration to illustrate the height of a throw and the best catching action. By the end of the lesson throwing is more controlled and catching more accurate. Pupils develop a good awareness of personal space and the space needed for others to perform activities safely. They know exercise is essential for healthy living. Pupils are involved in their own learning because the class teacher shares targets at the beginning of the lesson and these are reviewed during and at the end of the lesson.

112 Year 6 pupils understand that dance is a sequence of movements and compare them to those learnt in gymnastics. With good awareness of body movement, body shape and pattern, they plan a group dance most effectively. All play a valuable part within the group as they refine their dance to fit in precisely to the music. Good use is made of demonstration. All relationships are very good and this allows pupils to comfortably evaluate each other's work. This has a direct impact on learning as "critical friends" suggest ways of improving performances. Pupils are very interested in this dance activity and work seriously in making improvements. They work together in pairs and in groups well, co-operating and collaborating very effectively. They are comfortable to appraise each other and respect the efforts of others. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are keen and enthusiastic, the majority behave well although a small minority are fussy and have limited concentration. They mostly co-operate well in pairs.

113 Swimming is a strong feature of the subject and standards have been raised significantly since the last inspection. By the time they leave the school in Year 6 the majority of pupils swim at least 25 metres with a significant number skilled and confident to swim greater distances. They gain good grades in national swimming awards and are successful in the local annual swimming gala. There was no evidence of information and communication technology being used to enhance the subject.

114 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Teachers assess pupils' skills as they circulate and give individual support to enable pupils to improve, older pupils are encouraged to make suggestions as to how they and their classmates can improve their movements and sequences. Teachers know their pupils well, as a result, challenges are set at an appropriate level for all pupils. Praise is used well to encourage pupils and build their confidence and self esteem. Opportunities are sometimes missed in lessons to ensure that the pace of

the lesson does not drop. Time was lost, for instance, in both lessons when deciding on partners, giving out apparatus and operating the compact disc player. In the Year 1 lesson the cool down activity was missing due to lack of time. Pupils dress appropriately for physical education.

115 During the year, older pupils are invited to join various after school clubs. These run for half term periods. Football and multi-skills clubs are open to both boys and girls. The school enters teams in 7-a-side football tournaments. These are improvements since the last inspection. The co-ordinator is new to the school and has inherited a well-managed subject. The co-ordinator's file is detailed and well organised. Resources are satisfactory. The hall is spacious and the school has access to a field opposite the site. The school makes good use of the local swimming pool and the teaching resources offered by the Local Education Authority.