

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Gateshead

LEA area: Gateshead

Unique reference number: 108398

Headteacher: Mrs Carole Snee

Reporting inspector: Mrs Penny Parrish  
22380

Dates of inspection: 4 - 7 March 2002

Inspection number: 230915

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

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Rothbury Avenue  
Pelaw  
Gateshead

Postcode: NE10 0QY

Telephone number: 0191 469 3251

Fax number: 0191 495 0163

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Pat Gatherar

Date of previous inspection: October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22380	Mrs P Parrish Registered inspector	English Design and technology Music Special educational needs English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9327	Mr S Vincent Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
25376	Mrs L Alvy Team inspector	Art Geography History Provision for children in the foundation stage	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
18344	Mr D Earley Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Physical education Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school serves a mainly Catholic community, where pupils of other faiths are welcome. There are 205 pupils on roll full-time, and 38 attend part-time in the nursery. Numbers have risen since the last inspection and the school has very few vacancies. The local community experiences a higher level of hardship than is average, although the number of pupils taking free school meals is average at 20.5 per cent. There is a below average number of pupils with special educational needs (17 per cent) and one pupil has a statement of special need. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage. Two pupils are in the early stages of learning English and 10 pupils have a Travellers' background. On entry to the nursery the attainments of most children are average.

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

The school is an exemplary learning community. Its distinctive ethos is based on its strong commitment to the Catholic faith. The staff and pupils work as a close team to achieve high standards. The quality of teaching is very good. The headteacher provides excellent, dynamic leadership and management is very efficient. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Relationships between all in the school are excellent and, as a result, the pupils feel confident and secure. Provision for their personal development is excellent.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average because the teachers have worked hard to make the teaching very good.
- Work is interesting and carefully planned. It captures the pupils' curiosity and helps them to concentrate well and do their best.
- Where necessary, pupils are provided with very good support to help them to achieve well.
- The school has excellent leadership; its aims and mission statement are reflected exceptionally well in its work.

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

- The school has focused extremely successfully on achieving high standards in literacy, numeracy and science and now needs to extend this success to other subjects.
- The high standards in written work are often spoiled by poor presentation. The school has introduced a new handwriting scheme to improve matters but there is more work to be done.

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

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

The school has made very good improvement since its last inspection in October 1997. Standards in English, mathematics and science have moved from average to well above average. The quality of teaching has made significant improvement. The school has tackled issues from the last inspection very well and clear schemes of work and rigorous assessment systems are now in place.

## 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	B	B	B	A
mathematics	B	A	E	D
science	A	B	C	A

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

Standards are higher than the grades above indicate and are well above average in all three subjects. In Year 6 in 2001, a higher proportion of pupils than average had special educational needs and this adversely affected overall results, particularly for mathematics. Nevertheless, targets set were met in English and science, bringing results to well above average for similar schools. The challenging targets set for this year are likely to be met, restoring the upward trend of results over the past four years. Pupils consistently achieve very well in these three subjects throughout the school.

Standards are well above average by the end of Year 2. Results for seven-year-olds have been rising over the past four years and reached an exceptionally high level in 2001, well above average nationally and in the top five per cent for similar schools in all tests (reading, writing and mathematics) and in assessments in science. Excellent improvement as been made since the last inspection.

In all other subjects, standards are not so high although average throughout the school. Not enough lessons were seen to judge attainment in physical education, or in music at the end of Year 6. Standards are rising in information and communication technology (ICT) since the new computer suite opened.

Children start in the nursery with attainments that are similar to most three-year-olds nationally. Due to very good teaching, they exceed expected levels for the age group in personal and social development, language and literacy and mathematics by the end of the reception class.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and find learning to be fun.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils throughout the school behave very well in class, outside and when moving through the building.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and establish a very successful climate for learning. The pupils demonstrate a high level of initiative and personal and social skills.
Attendance	Above the national average. Lessons begin punctually and pupils arrive on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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



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

The quality of teaching is very good in a high proportion of lessons throughout the school. It is consistently very good, and sometimes excellent, in English, mathematics and science. As a result, high standards are achieved in these subjects. Literacy and numeracy are taught very efficiently and many opportunities are found for pupils to practise their skills. Teaching is good in ICT and pupils are achieving increasingly well. In history and design and technology, teaching is satisfactory. In all other subjects, too few lessons were seen to be able to make a firm judgement on teaching, but most lessons were good. In music, the visiting specialist teacher makes a very good contribution to the pupils' learning. Strengths in teaching include very good planning, based on close and regular checks on the pupils' progress in English and mathematics, with targets set for future learning. The school meets the needs of all pupils extremely well. The teachers have very high expectations of pupils and work very hard to help them all achieve very well. Support staff enable both teachers and pupils to do their best.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school provides a rich, broad and balanced curriculum. The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are highly effective. The school is very successful in ensuring that all pupils, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, background or creed have equal access to the curriculum and every opportunity to succeed.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school's high expectations for all its pupils provide a positive basis for teaching the pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are generally very clear and helpful, although mathematical and behavioural targets are not always included.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. These pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school and staff are aware of their needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent and a distinctive feature of the school. The school provides excellent support to help the pupils to become mature and responsible. They are prepared well to take their place in society, and to understand and respect the cultural differences that are apparent between people of differing cultural heritages.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The excellent quality of relationships in the school provides the basis for the care of pupils and very successful arrangements are in place. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are highly effective. Very good assessment systems help staff to plan the right work for the pupils and to set targets for improvement.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school forms a very good partnership with parents. The strong links between school and home encourage parents to become involved; they make a good contribution to the life of the school and to the standards that their children achieve.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher provides very clear educational direction for the school, focusing great energy on continuously improving the opportunities for the pupils to learn. Management systems are efficient and the deputy and subject co-ordinators fulfil their duties very well.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. The governors are well informed about the school's strengths and the areas set for development. They are strongly committed to the pupils and fulfil their statutory duties efficiently. They play their part well in the decision-making procedures in the school and are seeking to get more involved in day-to-day affairs.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Priorities set for development are well chosen. Available information on the pupils' achievements is analysed well and effective action taken. The school compares its performance with other schools, nationally and locally, and works extremely hard to achieve well.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Financial planning is efficient and the school uses all monies made available to it very profitably. The accommodation is generally used well, as are teaching and learning resources.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children enjoy school.</li> <li>• Leadership and management are strong.</li> <li>• The staff are friendly and approachable.</li> <li>• The teaching is very good and their children make good progress.</li> <li>• The behaviour is good and the school encourages their children to be mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school works well with parents.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> <li>• The information about their children's progress.</li> </ul>

The inspection team supports all of the positive views expressed by parents and understands why they are so pleased with the school's provision for their children. Inspectors consider the amount and use of homework to be satisfactory and evidence was seen of good homework projects completed by some pupils. Not all parents are sure of what the homework arrangements are and the school should consider how to make this more clearly understood. Parents have sufficient opportunities to talk to staff about their children's progress. In addition, the pupils' annual reports give a broad and satisfactory picture of what children have achieved and can do.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards in the school are high overall and the pupils achieve very well. Strengths are English, mathematics and science, where standards are well above the national average for both seven and 11-year-olds.

2. This represents very good achievement, as on entry to the nursery, the attainment of three-year-olds is average overall. The youngest children respond well to the very good teaching in the nursery and the reception class and achieve well. The early learning goals set nationally for the end of the reception year are at least met, and exceeded in personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. So from this earliest stage, literacy and numeracy skills reach higher than average standards.

3. For seven-year-olds, the inspection confirms the national assessment results in 2001, which placed the school in the top 25 per cent nationally in all subjects: reading, writing, mathematics and science; and in the top five per cent of schools with pupils from a similar background. Results have followed a clear upward trend over the past three years, exceeding the pace of improvement nationally.

4. For 11-year-olds, the inspection confirms the lower results in 2001 as a dip in an otherwise upward trend, due mainly to the special educational needs of a high proportion of the cohort. Over the past three years, results in all three subjects have generally been above the national average and sometimes well above. Inspection evidence indicates that the upward trend is now resumed and results are likely to be significantly higher than last year in all three subjects. Four years ago, results began to improve more rapidly than the national trend but since then high standards have generally been maintained with a more gradual overall improvement evident.

5. Since the average results reported in the last inspection, very good improvements have been made in English, mathematics and science. This successful outcome is largely due to improvements in the already good teaching, taking it to a very high quality. Training to implement the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has helped teachers to supplement their skills in teaching English and mathematics. The school's science programme has been linked to the nationally produced programme. Investigations are now more thorough, with improvements for the older pupils in organising fair testing. The team of staff is very focused and determined, and want to help every individual pupil to achieve his or her best. They make sure that the curriculum is covered thoroughly and at a challenging level and pace. Assessments have become more rigorous in all three subjects and form a basis for future work and for reviewing the success of past work. Adjustments are made to both teaching and learning where weaknesses in attainment are identified. Strengths are identified and maintained. Overall targets are set annually in each subject for each year group and results are checked using statutory and optional national tests. Targets are challenging but realistic and the school has become proficient in their use. Targets in literacy and numeracy have been introduced at an individual as well as a group or class level. The local education authority encourages the school to continuously push the achievement of the pupils forward. Training is made available to help staff to respond to further developments in the national literacy and numeracy strategies.

6. In information and communication technology (ICT), standards meet those expected nationally for both seven and 11-year-olds. Indications are that standards are improving now that pupils are able to benefit from the newly installed computer suite. Staff training has kept pace with the new opportunities made available and in consequence, pupils are achieving more. Skills in ICT are increasingly utilised within all subjects of the curriculum and this provides frequent opportunities

for pupils to practise and extend their skills. The appointment of a technician shared with another school ensures that expert help is on hand if technical problems occur.

7. Standards are broadly at expected levels in art, design and technology, geography and history throughout the school. In music, standards are average by Year 2. Insufficient work was observed to judge overall standards in music for the oldest pupils but in singing, standards are above average. Insufficient work was seen for seven and 11-year-olds to judge attainment in physical education. Since the last inspection, as has been required nationally, a very high priority has been given to raising standards in English, mathematics and science and other subjects have received less attention. Consequently, standards have risen significantly in literacy, numeracy and science but little improvement has been made in other subjects. There is less evidence of work of high quality in practical subjects such as design and technology.

8. The school is strongly committed to enabling all of its pupils to achieve well and to make good progress. Each teacher has a nursery nurse or classroom support assistant working alongside and this means that support is readily available to enhance the understanding of pupils with specific needs. Those on the school's register of special educational needs make very good progress due to a successful analysis of their needs and high expectations for their achievement. For the pupils with English as an additional language, suitable help is provided as required, enabling very good progress. Teachers from the local education authority's Traveller Service check the progress of pupils from the Travellers' community and suitable action plans are devised to address their specific needs, again enabling very good progress. The school has identified a small number of pupils who are thought to be especially gifted or talented and tries to extend their specific skills further than the rest of the class. This work is in the early stages and indications are that these pupils are suitably provided for and achieve very well, as most other pupils do.

9. The school has identified through data analysis that boys tend to achieve less than girls in reading and writing and that girls tend to achieve less in mathematics. Staff have responded to research which indicates that boys often prefer to work with non-fiction books and to produce factual reports and instructions rather than imaginative stories. This change in the curriculum is taking effect and in the older classes, there is no longer a significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys. Teachers are aware of the need to make sure that girls take a full part in mathematics lessons.

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

10. The high standards in the pupils' attitudes and behaviour reported in the last inspection have been maintained. The pupils' personal development and relationships throughout the school are now excellent. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection when personal development was judged to be satisfactory. Parents agree that the school helps the pupils to become mature and responsible. This was borne out in the many discussions that took place with pupils during the inspection week.

11. Pupils agree unanimously that the school is a good place to be; it is good fun in lessons and they are confident that teachers will help them. The pupils are very positive about their school community; they work sensibly and industriously because they have excellent relationships with the staff and with each other. In a Year 6 history lesson, because the teacher had a very good rapport with the pupils, they listened carefully to each other's accounts of how to collect historical evidence. Similarly, in an information and technology lesson in Year 4, the pupils' very good relationships meant they took turns on the computer sensibly, without dominating each other, and remained fully engrossed in the task.

12. The attitudes, behaviour and personal development in Years 1 to 6 are a direct result of the very good start that the children have in the nursery and the reception class. The youngest children develop very positive attitudes to learning because staff are skilled in providing good support. For instance, an exciting music lesson led by enthusiastic staff led to some of the very youngest

children taking turns and co-operating sensibly. In the reception class, the children were full of excitement and enthusiasm in their quest to learn about numbers because, again, staff provided interesting activities which captured their imagination and sustained their interest.

13. The behaviour of the pupils around the school and in lessons is very good. Parents are pleased with the high standards of behaviour in the school. Pupils behave in a mature manner and can be trusted to work on their own or in small groups without immediate adult supervision. Pupils know what is expected of them and take great pride in demonstrating this. They are proud when they gain certificates awarded to them for a variety of talents or when gaining points for their house team. During school assembly, art club and school council sessions, pupils demonstrate exemplary attitudes and behaviour. There is a pleasant atmosphere at meal times in the hall and pupils are respectful, friendly and polite. There is no evidence of bullying or exclusions for any reason. As they get older, the pupils develop strong opinions about their response to school life. In an enthusiastic and thought provoking conversation with Year 6 pupils, it was explained succinctly by one pupil that 'the class rules say always to try your best and never give in or you'll never go one step further in your life'.

14. Relationships between the staff and pupils and between pupils themselves are excellent. In the nursery and the reception class, the children are secure and confident because the adults make learning enjoyable and rewarding. Even the very youngest children begin to play alongside each other because they learn about social relationships from the adults' positive examples of mutual support and care. In classes for Years 1 to 6, the supportive atmosphere created by the staff is reflected in the interest and involvement that the pupils show in their work. This produces productive and challenging environments so that, when required, pupils collaborate well and develop confidence in their own ability to succeed.

15. The pupils respond in an exemplary manner to the responsibilities given to them. In the nursery and the reception class, the children give serious consideration to planning for their independent activities. Older pupils greatly enjoy taking part in the School Council, being corridor and classroom monitors and acting as 'buddies' to the younger children. They are keen to explain their role as house captains and take this very seriously, as do members of the school council who showed that they were able to run their own election campaign. Displays of work demonstrate how challenging subjects such as drug awareness and smoking are tackled and pupils' responses demonstrate that their sense of social and moral awareness is strong. Older pupils are knowledgeable about their targets for learning. They discuss these unselfconsciously with their friends and adults. The strong spirit of community encouraged by the school means that the pupils take responsibility for their own actions while supporting each other very well.

16. Attendance is satisfactory, being just above the national average, with unauthorised absence below the national average. Punctuality is good and lessons start on time.

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

17. The quality of teaching is very good overall and sometimes excellent. More than half of the lessons observed were very good or excellent, a third were good and a small number were satisfactory. This high quality of teaching has a strong impact on pupils' achievement and explains the very high standards evident within the school's national test results.

18. Since the last inspection, the school has improved its teaching significantly, with twice as many lessons now of high quality. The introduction of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has sharpened the focus of the teaching. The monitoring of the teaching and learning in these subjects and the regular analyses of pupils' achievements have led to further improvements.

19. The quality of teaching in the nursery is good overall, as it was at the time of the last

inspection. It is particularly good for personal, social and emotional development. The children are taught to plan their own tasks and this is effective in helping the children to make good progress with personal, social and emotional development. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is also strong. In the reception class, teaching is consistently very good, and sometimes excellent, as the staff extend the good start that the children have made in the nursery. A key feature is the very good questioning by the staff of the children as they are engaged in a range of very interesting activities. These questions are sometimes written on notices on the wall to help the children to remember to search for answers. The very good teaching means that skills of literacy and numeracy develop to a higher level than expected for the age group. Since the last inspection, rigorous planning and checking of the small steps of learning towards the early learning goals have been introduced in line with the new national guidance for children of this age. The information this provides on the children's progress is used to assist the staff in planning further lessons that are well matched to the children's needs. This is a significant factor in the good progress being made by the children.

20. The quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 is very good overall; it is rarely less than good and occasionally it is excellent. The teaching is of particularly high quality in English, mathematics and science, where the school has focused strongly on improving teaching and learning since the last inspection. The success of the teachers' efforts is evident in the very high achievement in these subjects. The teaching is good in information and communication technology (ICT), and has improved since the satisfactory level of last inspection. This is mainly due to the extended opportunities provided by the new computer suite, backed up by a suitable training programme for staff. In consequence, pupils' achievement is good and standards are rising. In history, teaching is satisfactory overall and standards are not as high as reported in the last inspection. In other subjects, timetable arrangements meant that there was insufficient evidence to make overall judgements on teaching. The visiting music specialist makes a very good contribution to learning in music.

21. The very many strengths in the teaching and learning far outweigh the few weaknesses. The teaching is rigorously planned, and particularly detailed for literacy and numeracy lessons. This means that time is very efficiently used and teaching is well focused on the specific needs of the pupils, backed up by suitable checking procedures. The aims for learning are made very clear and shared with pupils at the start of the lesson, enabling them to focus their learning. These aims are returned to at the end of the lesson, when learning is generally summarised well and pupils are able to review their own achievements. Lessons are less successful when planning does not include key questions to be asked at different stages in the lesson or specific subject vocabulary that is to be included. This means that, in these lessons, pupils are not always focused directly on important learning areas and miss opportunities to extend their understanding. For example, in a history lesson, pupils missed opportunities for further learning when looking at photographic evidence because too few questions were asked of them. The pupils also needed more help than was provided with the vocabulary needed to describe what they could see.

22. The teachers show enthusiasm for their work and generally have a very good understanding of the subject they are teaching. Their enthusiasm raises the interest of the pupils and captivates their attention, leading to concentrated effort. Their good subject knowledge gives the teachers confidence and helps them to praise specific skills where pupils are successful or to spot any difficulties or misunderstandings which are hindering progress. Many examples of this were seen in lessons in English, mathematics and science, where staff are particularly adept at teaching the basic skills of the subjects. Staff training has been particularly valuable as the new computer suite has come into use and has enabled teachers to help pupils to take full advantage of the opportunities for more rapid progress. That the staff are keen to continuously improve their skills is evident from their involvement in a project based at Newcastle University, focused on the types of lesson activities that are likely to improve the pupils' learning.

23. The teachers' expectations of the pupils are generally very high and they urge the pupils forward to expend more intellectual, creative or physical effort. Checking systems are very well incorporated to enable teachers to set the next challenging steps for the pupils' learning. For

literacy and numeracy, individual targets are set for pupils and regularly updated to keep to their learning on an upward spiral. These targets are most useful when they are clear and specific. Sometimes they are more general or couched in adult terms and are of less help to pupils.

24. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and this helps the pupils to develop confidence in their own skills and interest and concentration in the lesson. They are helped forward with good humour and all contributions to lessons are welcomed and used positively. This was evident within an excellent lesson in Year 5, where pupils spent a long time poring over a paragraph in order to re-draft it. The pupils became very involved and made a wide variety of suggestions for improvements. The teacher managed to keep close to the objective of the lesson while turning all suggestions to very good use, thus broadening out the opportunities for learning considerably and leading to excellent progress in a very important area of learning.

25. The appointment of a member of the support staff to every classroom has had a significant impact on learning for all pupils. They are suitably trained and help the teachers to provide much more successfully for the class. The achievements of pupils working individually or in small groups are considerably enhanced by the presence of another adult in the class. Lessons run much more smoothly because the support staff are fully aware of class routines and the expectations of the teacher. Teachers can focus much more of their energy on teaching with another member of staff to help, for example, with reading practice and book changing routines. Within whole class sections of lessons, the skills of classroom assistants are not always fully utilised, for example, to record the contribution of different pupils in order that their achievements might be tracked more closely. Although the provision of equal opportunities for learning for all pupils is generally a strong feature of the school, opportunities are sometimes missed, for example, for classroom assistants to record which pupils are chosen each week to play instruments in music lessons.

26. Throughout the school, the adults generally show a very strong commitment to helping every pupil achieve as much as they are able. There are no limits put on expectations for pupils' progress because they face difficulties of one sort or another. The same high expectations apply to all pupils and opportunities are generally made equally good. This approach in itself encourages all pupils to do their best and it is of particular benefit to those who find learning more difficult within certain aspects of the curriculum. Pupils appear never to give up trying and this is because staff are so positive in their approach to teaching. Staff work hard to meet the learning targets set for the pupils with special educational needs. Where these targets are included within lesson plans, such as literacy, the pupils' progress tends to improve. Classroom support assistants are well briefed and successfully promote learning for small groups or individuals in lessons. The pupils with behaviour difficulties are managed well and are given unobtrusive support in lessons. Teachers are aware of the needs of the pupils learning English as an additional language and they are given suitable help. Teachers from the local education authority provide specific help for pupils with special educational needs, those in the early stages of English as an additional language and those with a Travellers' heritage background. Increasingly this takes place in the classroom to avoid the need for pupils to miss other lessons while they are receiving extra help. The Traveller children in particular are helped to achieve well through this approach.

27. Work is marked regularly but the quality of marking varies between classes. At its best, it lets pupils know how well they have met the learning objectives of the lesson and gives helpful reminders for future work. Marking is not productive when it is over positive and fails to note significant weaknesses, such as poor handwriting or presentation. In most classes, the presentation of many pupils' written work is a weak aspect of otherwise very good achievement which is not fully tackled within marking systems. Year 6 is an exception, where presentation has improved exceptionally well from patchy standards at the start of the school year. In this class, expectations for handwriting are consistently high and the teacher provides a very clear model for the class.

28. Homework provides generally satisfactory support for work in class and throughout the school, pupils regularly practise reading and spellings at home. Spelling programmes are generally well thought out and closely matched to pupils' needs. There were some very good examples of

project work for science and geography in Years 5 and 6 but, in most cases, this is optional and not completed by all pupils. In the summer term, however, all pupils in Year 6 complete an annual homework project based on finding out about Europe.

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

29. The school provides a broad range of very well planned, rich and stimulating learning activities within and beyond school which meet statutory requirements for the curriculum. The curriculum meets the needs and aptitudes of all pupils, including those with a Travellers' heritage, those with special educational needs and the small number learning English as an additional language.

30. The curriculum for the children in the nursery and the reception class is good. It is suitably based on the early learning goals set nationally for the age group and staff organise stimulating activities in each of the areas of learning. Since the last inspection, good improvements have been made to the provision for outdoor experiences for the children in the reception class. Plans to enhance this provision further for the children in the nursery are starting later this year. The staff in both classes plan in close co-operation to ensure that each area of learning builds on the children's prior experiences.

31. For the older pupils in Years 1 to 6, a clear priority is given to the core subjects of the curriculum: English, mathematics and science. The majority of lesson time is allocated to these subjects, especially in Year 2 and Year 6, and this is reflected in the very high standards achieved by the school in these subjects. The school has excellent strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented very thoroughly and are helping the school to achieve very high standards. In order to broaden the curriculum, the school has taken a decision to arrange for as many opportunities as possible to overlap or 'layer' subjects within the curriculum. This means, for example, that pupils practise writing skills in English through work in other subjects. So pupils in English lessons in Year 5 make information leaflets linked to their geography topic of water, and in Year 2, pupils write clear instructions on how to make puppets in design and technology. In Year 4, pupils combine skills in geography, English and ICT to produce a guidebook on the local area. This way of organising learning is very efficient and maximises the use of time, and helps the school to make very good provision for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills across the other subjects of the curriculum. There is a similarly wide use of ICT. However, this way of organising things has not been in place long enough to impact fully on attainment in all subjects and this is an area for further development.

32. The school has worked very hard to address the issue for development from the last inspection, which required clear programmes for study within each subject. The staff have, therefore, ensured that subject policy documents and schemes of work provide clear guidance on suitable teaching approaches and plans for learning within each year group, to make sure that pupils build securely on work that has gone before. Very good improvement has been made and, in addition to the national literacy and numeracy strategies, the school makes very good use of the guidance offered nationally for other subjects.

33. The school is very successful in ensuring that all children, whatever their gender, background, ethnicity or creed have full access to the curriculum and equal opportunity to succeed. For example, although the ethos of the school is very firmly founded on the precepts of the Catholic faith, the school ensures that pupils who are not Catholics are fully integrated into the life and work of the school and share the same opportunities for learning. Provision for the pupils with special educational needs is very good. Difficulties are generally identified early, although there are currently no children in the nursery or reception class with special educational needs. Individual education plans are drawn up where necessary and these are generally very clear and helpful. However, targets address only literacy skills and none are included, where necessary, for



mathematics or personal development. Because all pupils have individual targets in numeracy and literacy, and specialist advice is sought and put into action where behaviour problems exist, this is not a significant problem but hinders a full review of progress. The school makes very good provision for pupils from the Traveller community and for the small number of pupils in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. These pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school and receive suitable guidance from staff and the local education authority's bilingual support service.

34. The school has implemented a very successful programme for teaching personal, social and health education and for its new curriculum for teaching the skills of citizenship. Pupils have the opportunity to become elected to the school council. They learn how to discuss issues arising in school and, for example, visited the local council chamber to see a council meeting in session. This enhanced their understanding of the democratic process. During their residential visit, pupils in Year 5 and 6 take part in formal debates about the flooding of the Kielder reservoir. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to take the initiative and show responsibility. For example, they have opportunities as team captains for helping with the smooth running of classrooms. Other pupils have responsibilities such as library monitors. Older pupils help to supervise younger pupils in the corridors as they come into school or as they leave the hall after dinner. Older pupils also have responsibilities for looking after younger pupils as part of the 'buddy' system whereby pupils in Year 6 look after a pupil in the Reception class.

35. Pupils also have opportunities to help those less fortunate than themselves by participation in such events as a sponsored run for cancer charities, Operation Christmas Child and Cafod family fast day. The school takes part in the Healthy School Award project through which it helps pupils to become more aware of healthy lifestyles and choices. They take part in school-wide projects on the uses and abuses of drugs and this is also taught through personal and social education and science. Pupils learn about growth and development in health education and science as they move through the school and sex education is taught more formally in Years 5 and 6.

36. The school provides a very good quality and range of extra curricular activities. These include at various stages in the year football, library club, cookery, art club, guitar club, cross-country, ICT club, netball and athletics. There are opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting activities with other schools in such sports as football, swimming, cross-country and athletics. A very good range of visits outside the school enriches the curriculum and these include visits to local places of educational interest, such as Thornley Wood, Hancock Museum, the Planetarium and Segedunum Roman Fort. The school makes very good use of opportunities offered to older pupils to take part in residential visits to Duke's House Wood and Kielder Forest. Residential visits provide pupils with further opportunities to develop their work in such subjects as history, geography and ICT in addition to extending their personal and social development. In order to enrich the curriculum further, the school welcomes visitors such as musicians, artists, poets, authors and theatre groups.

37. The school has very good links with the local community in order to enrich pupils' learning. There are very close ties with the local parish. As part of their project on 'special people', pupils interviewed the parish priest, flower arranger and organist from the church. Representatives from such agencies as the local police, the fire service, and the road safety unit visit school to talk to pupils. Pupils use the locality in order to extend their work. For example, in geography they conduct traffic and shop surveys and visit a nearby old church as part of work in history. When going on outside visits, pupils travel on the local railway system. Representatives from Newcastle United Football Club work with pupils in school and arrangements are made to enable pupils to visit the football stadium.

38. The school has very good links with partner institutions. As part of a professional learning partnership the school shares good practice with other local primary schools. The school is involved with Newcastle University in a project on improving teaching and learning skills. Pupils joined with a Newcastle school to sing on the quayside during celebrations for the opening of the

Millennium Bridge. Students from a local technical college work in the computer suite and help to provide technical support. There are very strong links with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer. For example, the pupils' skills in design and technology and ICT were enhanced when their designs for key-ring fobs and pencil containers were produced, using the school's milling machines. In addition, teachers of subjects such as mathematics and science visit the school in order to work with pupils. The very thorough arrangements for the transfer of pupils to the next stage of education ensure that for most pupils the transition is smooth.

39. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent overall. The high standards reported in the last inspection have been maintained. While the provision for spiritual and cultural development is strong, it is not yet planned for consistently within different subjects or across year groups.

40. The provision for spiritual development is very good and successful opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on their thoughts and feelings through both planned and spontaneous situations. For example, the very youngest children are helped to express happiness and sadness as they act out favourite stories, such as Jack and the Beanstalk. The use of music, story and hymns in school assemblies provides excellent opportunities for quiet thought. Pupils deepen their understanding of their own spirituality and that of others through poetry, stories and prayer. Teachers help them to appreciate the wonder of the natural world on their visits to local areas of beauty and through art and music. They write thoughtfully about their 'Box of Dreams' or important events in their lives. Pupils are encouraged to explore their own feelings whilst respecting and valuing those of others. The school is proud to be part of helping each child to discover, recognise and develop their own values and talents.

41. Provision for the pupils' moral and social development is excellent. The current programmes for personal, social and health education coupled with the policy for citizenship supports this very successfully. Consequently, pupils have a strong sense of what is right and wrong. Older pupils converse sensibly about fairness and understand the consequences if the rules are broken. Pupils consider moral dilemmas through drugs education, for example, or through debating the issues around foxhunting. Teachers expect a high standard of behaviour. Older pupils look after younger pupils, mealtimes and playtimes are social occasions and the school is an orderly and happy community as a result. The adults collectively provide very good role models for the pupils and help them to consider the consequences of their thoughts and actions on others. Being an elected member of the School Council, planning fund raising events or taking part in local events are some of the excellent opportunities provided for pupils to take responsibility and show initiative.

42. There is very good provision for the pupils' cultural development. Through a rich programme of visits, visitors and events the pupils are taught to value their own culture and that of others. Through books, geography, music and art the pupils learn about the richness of other cultures beyond their own. In a recent project on the Second World War, pupils interviewed members of their family and the local community. A visit to a Hindu temple, a talk by a Rabbi and a study of the Travellers' community helps pupils to celebrate diversity. Pupils extend their cultural understanding through a range of subjects as they progress through the school.

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

43. The excellent relationships at all levels are indicative of the great success the school has had in creating a community which values every pupil as an individual. The teachers and support staff know all the pupils well. The pupils themselves say that the school is a good place to be and that they are helped to do their best. The school is a happy and secure place to learn, and the parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting supported this view. The school has successfully built on the good arrangements for the care of the pupils reported in the last inspection and standards are now very high, with some excellent features.

44. The health and safety policy is comprehensive and governors and staff carry out required procedures diligently. Responsibilities within the school are properly defined and all the routines of classroom safety, fire drills, first aid, medicines and general welfare are dealt with consistently. The procedures for ensuring child protection are very well organised and staff are suitably trained. Since the last inspection, staff have made great efforts to develop the personal, social and health education curriculum and this now contributes significantly to the well being of pupils. It deals with sex education, drugs awareness, good health and the environment, as well as the practical issues of road safety and awareness of the potentially dangerous situations in their lives. As part of its vision of its role in the community, the school has also been instrumental in creating 'Kidzone' to give support and help to pupils at the start and end of the school day and during the holidays. The school's efforts are exemplary and fully reflect its intention to create a community founded on love and respect.

45. The systems for the monitoring and promotion of good behaviour are extremely effective. The rules are straightforward and understood by pupils and they respond accordingly. Teachers manage their classes very well and pupils enjoy the rewards they earn for behaviour and effort. They enjoy winning merits and house points. Occasionally, where it is necessary for individual pupils to improve their behaviour, this is done with the full involvement of parents in setting targets and rewards. There is considerable support provided to pupils who need it and help is unconditional. Assemblies exemplify very well the standards of behaviour, care and consideration that are given to others. They are a fundamental part of the school's ethos. The very high standards of behaviour achieved in the school are a significant factor in what pupils achieve.

46. The procedures for recording attendance ensure that the school is very well aware of any problems that occur. It works closely with the educational welfare service to give help and support where needed. The school tries to ensure that all parents understand that regular attendance is an important factor in achieving good standards.

47. Teachers understand the pupils' strengths and weaknesses very well, including aspects of their social development. Pupils' progress in the lessons for personal, social and health education help teachers to understand how they are developing. Since the previous inspection the school has worked very hard to improve its procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic performance. These are now very good, particularly in English, mathematics and science. In these subjects, teachers check the pupils' progress very carefully through a variety of school and national tests. Results are thoroughly analysed, which enables teachers to identify trends in attainment and to highlight gaps in the curriculum. Teachers use the information gained to plan further work. This helps them to ensure that learning is suited to the pupils' differing needs and builds successfully on previous work. In addition, targets for improvement, for classes, groups and individual pupils, provide specific guidance for both teachers and pupils. Teachers check these regularly and update them to maintain a good pace of progress. Systems to assess what pupils have learned in subjects other than English, mathematics and science are less rigorous but sufficiently thorough. Most are recent introductions to the system and have not had sufficient time to have a full effect on teaching and learning.

48. Given the very thorough understanding of both academic and social development, the school is able to provide very good support. Pupils are placed in suitable class groups to help them learn. Additional support for literacy and numeracy is given. Specialist teachers from outside agencies are engaged. Teaching assistants are deployed to help learning. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language or a Travellers' heritage, learn very well and make very good progress as a result.

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

49. The last inspection described the strong partnership that existed between parents and school and this continues to be the case. Parents are very pleased with what the school does for their children and the quality of education that it provides. The questionnaires show that almost all are very happy with most aspects of school. In particular, they say their children enjoy coming to school and make good progress; they are very pleased with the leadership and management of the school; they strongly support the school's values; and they say the school is very approachable.

50. As the children join the nursery, there are home visits to make initial contact. When children join the school, in either the nursery or the reception class, there are introductory meetings with parents at which they receive a prospectus, guidance on helping with early learning and a copy of the home-school agreement. Very close links are established at the outset and this ensures that thereafter parents make a good contribution to the life of the school and what it achieves. The school regards itself as an integral part of the community and works hard in partnership with the church and the pupils' families, sharing a common goal. 'Kidzone' is a direct result of the school responding to a local need. Although there is no longer a formal friends' association, a group of parents works with staff to organise social events and these efforts directly benefit their children. Parents are invited to attend school liturgies and there are numerous special performances for parents, such as at Harvest and Christmas, all of which are well attended. There are a good number of parents who help directly in the classroom and many more help with supervising educational visits. Several of the present teaching assistants began their careers as parent helpers.

51. Parents are given a good range of information about the school and what their children are doing. Day-to-day matters are dealt with by individual letters and there are regular school and parish newsletters about forthcoming events as well as topics and curricular matters. There are opportunities for parents to talk to staff informally at the start and end of the day and parents confirm that they are confident to approach the school at any time. More formal consultation meetings are very well attended by parents. The pupils' annual reports give a broad picture of progress. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept fully informed about progress and involved in discussing their targets or any reviews of arrangements.

52. The school believes strongly that it has a successful partnership with parents. Most parents appreciate this and make a good contribution to their children's successes at school. Almost all ensure their children come to school regularly and punctually. Homework is supported by most parents although a number say they would like to see more for the older pupils. Almost all parents are keen to attend and discuss progress at consultation evenings, particularly where their children have special needs. The school works in close liaison with the local education authority's Travellers' Education support service and the parents of these children have developed great confidence in the school and the high quality of care and education it provides for its pupils. The school is now full and regrets that it is unable to offer places to more families.

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

53. The leadership and management of the school were very good at the last inspection. Since then, leadership has improved and is now excellent. The headteacher, in partnership with the recently appointed deputy headteacher, provides very clear educational direction for the school, focusing great energy on continuously improving the opportunities for the pupils to learn. There is an excellent reflection of the school's aims and mission statement in its work. A climate of partnership within the school involves the governing body and all staff in a shared commitment to the highest standards of achievement for pupils. Their efforts since the last inspection have been rewarded by standards which well exceed the national averages. There is an excellent capacity within the school to continue this upward trend.

54. The teachers leading the key subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT are very well focused on maintaining the high standards in teaching and learning, and the headteacher gives them good support and encouragement in carrying out their duties. Since the last inspection, all

subject co-ordinators have established very clear programmes of work and systems for checking pupils' progress, which take into account all national guidelines. Co-ordinators submit generally useful annual action plans for integration into the school improvement plan to which demonstrate how standards in the subject are to move forward. A clear two-year programme is set up in school to efficiently manage the monitoring of pupils' books to check standards across all subjects, although this system is in the early stages for subjects other than English and mathematics. Co-ordinators for English and mathematics have shared the planning and teaching of some lessons with other teachers throughout the school, as part of the very successful programme for raising standards. The evaluation of teaching and learning within lessons is the responsibility of the headteacher, with plans for the new deputy headteacher to supplement this work. While this method has had a significant impact on raising the standards of teaching and learning within literacy and numeracy, it limits the co-ordinators' overview of their subject and restricts the development of subject specialisms within the school. This lack of delegation means that the school is over-dependent on its headteacher, making it vulnerable to any changes in staffing which may occur.

55. The governing body is very supportive and interested in the success of the school. Governors are well informed on the school's strengths and the areas set for development. They have a strong sense of duty towards the pupils and carry out their business in an orderly and conscientious manner. Governors appreciate the high level of professionalism and dedication that the staff team invests in the school. All statutory duties are suitably met.

56. The school improvement plan is a clear and specific document, detailing suitable priorities for improvement. Action is carefully structured and staff and governors are suitably involved in its formulation. However, criteria identified for judging success are not sufficiently focused on the benefits intended for pupils, and this reduces their usefulness in helping staff and governors to evaluate action taken.

57. The school is committed to a high quality of education, suited to the differing needs of all pupils. The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is well integrated into the supportive ethos of the school, ensuring high expectations and very good achievement. The co-ordinator is becoming increasingly skilled at carrying out her role. The format for individual education plans has recently been revised and they are now much more clear and accessible.

58. The school has a good number of suitably qualified and trained teachers for all subjects of the National Curriculum and, in addition, makes good use of specialist teachers from external agencies. Since the last inspection the number of teaching assistants has also been increased and they have been trained well to fulfil their duties. Parents have commented particularly about this and say that this has had a positive effect on how their children are learning.

59. Overall, accommodation is adequate. The school is housed in a single block set on a sloping site. There have been recent good quality extensions to provide an ICT suite and management offices. The buildings are cared for well but are not without the problems associated with a building of its age. Classrooms are a satisfactory size, but there is little additional space for teaching small groups of pupils. Parents and teachers have successfully helped with the decoration of the school by providing colourful murals in the library and on playground fencing. Pupils attending the art club have provided murals for corridor walls. The sloping playground has disadvantages for the teaching of some aspects of physical education. The school field is too far away to supervise adequately in order to maintain it in clean condition for use. This limits the facilities available for physical education and for the pupils' recreation.

60. The school has an adequate range of teaching resources, and some subjects, such as science, are well resourced. There are still a few shortages in some subjects, but the school is aware of the need to remedy these and they do not seriously restrict teaching. The library facilities have improved considerably since the last inspection and good use is made of the local authority's library service. Pupils regularly use the locally based Pelaw Library to supplement their learning.

61. All the financial resources made available to the school are put to very good use. The

budget has increased through the rise in the numbers of pupils on roll, specific government grants to schools and successful bids for funding by the governing body. Spending is closely linked to the priorities identified within the school improvement plan. Specific grants are allocated suitably. The school seeks to provide best value for all expenditure. Data analysis and liaison with local schools are used well to compare the school's performance with that of other schools, and are used to inform management decisions. The headteacher and governors carefully monitor and review the school's budget. The governing body is guided by the specialist financial expertise of some of its members and this helps the school to decide on the best use of its funds. The administration staff manage the school's office procedures very efficiently. Daily routines are well established and the office runs very smoothly.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. The headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (i) seek to extend the high standards of attainment evident within English, mathematics and science to other subjects within the curriculum;  
*[paragraphs 7 and 31]*
- (ii) improve the quality of the pupils' presentation of their work.  
*[paragraphs 27, 84, 121 and 127]*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	21	15	5	0	0	0
Percentage	9	47	33	11	0	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)	19	205
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	42

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	35

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	11	18	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	10	11
	Girls	17	18	17
	Total	26	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (90)	97 (86)	97 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	11	11
	Girls	18	17	18
	Total	27	28	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (90)	97 (90)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	11	13	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	8	10
	Girls	9	7	11
	Total	18	15	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (85)	63 (88)	88 (96)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	9	10
	Girls	9	9	10
	Total	17	18	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (77)	75 (85)	83 (81)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	170
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.6
Average class size	29.3

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

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	186

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
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Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32
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Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.4
<hr/>	
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*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	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	413,324
Total expenditure	414,429
Expenditure per pupil	1,843
Balance brought forward from previous year	10,657
Balance carried forward to next year	9,552

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	243
Number of questionnaires returned	72
Percentage response rate	30

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	32	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	43	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	49	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	50	19	4	0
The teaching is good.	54	40	0	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	32	18	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	36	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	33	3	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	39	47	10	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	61	31	1	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	43	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	38	4	7	6

## **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**

63. Children start school in the nursery after their third birthday and transfer to the reception class in the September before their fifth birthday. On admission to the nursery, the attainment of most children is average, although the range of attainment represented is wide and fluctuates considerably from year to year. The children achieve well and by the end of the reception year, most exceed the early learning goals set nationally in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. Since the last inspection, this indicates a rise in standards, which is due to improvements in teaching in these areas of learning. In knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development, most children attain the expected level, indicating that standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. Children with English as an additional language or with a Travellers' heritage are provided with suitable support with their learning and, as a result, make very good progress.

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

64. Most children exceed the nationally set learning goals by the end of the reception year. The children achieve well because this area of learning has a high priority and teaching is very good. In the nursery, a strong emphasis is given to developing the children's confidence and success in learning. For example, the staff gave the youngest children very helpful guidance in following the story as they acted out Jack and the Beanstalk. The children enjoyed singing with adult support to a guitar accompaniment and co-operated with enthusiasm in a counting song. Sensitive discussion and encouragement helped the children to sustain concentration while carefully cutting and sticking materials to make 'a box of love' for Mother's Day.

65. In both the nursery and reception class, staff provide consistent support for the children and carefully organise activities so that the day runs smoothly and children gain confidence in themselves and their abilities. The involvement of the children in planning their own tasks at the start of each session means that the children are clear about the rules and routines. In the reception class, children remember the key questions for each activity area well and work enthusiastically to find answers. They form very good relationships, take turns and select and use resources independently. The use of stories helps the children to become aware of their feelings and those of others. For example, when dramatising Jack and the Beanstalk, the teacher helped the children to imitate anger, sadness and happiness. In the reception class, lessons in religious education help the children to develop an awareness of the values of the Catholic faith.

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

66. By the end of the reception year, the attainment of most children is above the level expected and the children achieve well. The quality of teaching is good in the nursery and very good, and sometimes excellent, in the reception class. In the nursery, a small group of younger children, sensitively guided by an adult, try to take turns in talking about their choice of activity. Key questions set for each activity help both adults and children to focus clearly on the task. In one session, two children decided to listen to stories recorded on audiotape. They chose a story, worked the tape machine without help and thoroughly enjoyed the story together. A younger group playing in the home corner needed an adult to help them to communicate successfully with each other. Older children are beginning to write their names although others still use early symbols to convey meaning. The staff in the nursery use 'snack time' skilfully not only to develop social skills but also to extend the children's communication skills and their language for thinking.

67. By the time they enter the reception class, many children are ready to listen attentively to a story. Because the teacher has a very good understanding of the needs of the age group, very high

expectations of behaviour and very good relationships with the children, they soon extend their learning, for example, of rhyming words and, with encouragement, find their own, such as *hat*, *cat* and *bat*. Questioning by the staff helps the children to think about what they might achieve in the construction, water or sand activities. As a result, a group of children confidently discussed how they would build bridges over a road system they had made. The teacher and the nursery nurse are quick to see when the children need guidance to focus and extend their thinking. Adults use a wide vocabulary that helps to promote the children's learning.

68. The teaching of reading and writing is very good. Most children can recognise and write their name because in the nursery they are encouraged to do so from an early age. They find their name card by initially looking for the first letter and eventually try to copy it to name their work. These skills are taken further in the reception class, where the children make simple 'flap' books in the writing corner or learn how to write an interesting sentence in a lively session based around the story of 'When the boy lost his bear'. Challenging questions deepen the children's understanding about sentence structure and content. They become engrossed in the task, concentrating hard and eager to do their best. A suitable reading programme is provided for a child identified as having a gift for reading, and very good progress is being made.

69. Language for thinking is developed through the use of imaginative role-play and through a good range of practical tasks. Adults, both in the nursery and the reception class, work in successful co-operation to extend children's communication, language and literacy skills. They are sensitive to the children's needs and very supportive, secure in their ability to deepen the children's knowledge and understanding.

### **Mathematical development**

70. Attainment exceeds the early learning goals for most children by the end of the reception class and they achieve well. Teaching is good in the nursery and very good, and sometimes excellent, in the reception class. Mathematical understanding is taught well in the nursery, using every available opportunity through stories, songs, games and imaginative play. A very good selection of counting games in one session, for example, kept the children keen and interested. The good use of mathematical vocabulary by all the adults, using words such as 'one more than' or 'two more than' increases the children's early understanding of addition, and keeps the activities moving and the children involved. The strength of the teaching is in this good use of practical activities to develop the children's knowledge. The teacher makes sure that she challenges suitably a child who is gifted in mathematics for his age so that he continues to make good progress.

71. By the time they transfer to the reception class, most children are confident and enthusiastic to join in with or talk about mathematical activities. The teacher's very good subject knowledge and the provision of very suitable but challenging tasks ensures very good achievement. In one group, the children were able to explain quickly and confidently the game they were playing. They had to throw the dice and then take one away from the number shown, and then take that number of cubes from the 13 they had in their hand. After a clear explanation from the teacher, the children organised the game themselves. Another group concentrated hard as they added one more to the number shaken on the dice and placed counters carefully on a picture of a fish, to represent spots. A lower achieving group of children needed help while enthusiastically playing a game of skittles. They counted sensibly with the adult and recorded precisely the number of skittles left. Very well planned and organised lessons like these extend and challenge the children's thinking consistently well. Many children already count beyond 20 with ease, name basic shapes, such as square and rectangle, and use the vocabulary needed for using money.

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

72. Most children are on course to meet the early learning goals and they achieve well. This is due to the way the nursery and reception class staff plan as a team. The quality of teaching is good. Interesting topics are used to develop and extend experiences in science, information

technology, geography and history. Children in the nursery operate the tape player successfully and use the 'mouse' on the computer with increasing control to draw pictures. In the reception class, the children extend this skill to 'left click, hold down and drag' on the 'mouse' to build a roadway for a model town. A more able child knew that he needed to rotate a shape to make it fit. The children begin to develop a sense of place during their project on homes. They observed the houses and buildings as they walked around the local area and then painted their own. Literacy skills were put to good use within this project; the children made their own books and wrote their own captions for a display. The children are helped to develop a sense of time through activities such as a visit to a toy museum.

73. In both classes, the children suitably develop their skills of investigation. For example, in the nursery, the children raced with flags as they learnt about the force of the wind. In the reception class, the teacher, through thought-provoking questions, helped the children to investigate which materials are porous. A good balance of planned activities such as these and carefully framed questions help the children to develop curiosity, interest and excitement about their learning.

### **Physical development**

74. Children achieve well in physical development and most attain the expected level by the end of the reception class. The quality of teaching is good in both the nursery and the reception class and good planning provides the children with a suitable range of opportunities to develop and refine their physical skills, both indoors and outside. The staff help the children to develop control over their bodies and their movements, and to learn and practise new words and ideas in practical situations. In the nursery, for example, the children learn to control wheeled toys by fast pedalling or pushing or changing direction to avoid obstacles. On a small beam, they learn to explore their sense of balance as they walk along its narrow surface. A small group of children in the reception class selected materials confidently for a task, and cut and glued carefully and precisely. The good range of opportunities provided in the nursery prepares the children well for the reception class, where most children are able to pour and fill containers in the water tray successfully or, together with other children, build co-operatively and creatively in the sand.

### **Creative development**

75. The attainment of most children meets the early learning goals set for the end of the reception class and most children achieve well. The quality of teaching is good in the nursery and very good in the reception class. Good planning successfully allows the children time to explore and experiment with ideas, materials and activities. In the nursery, for example, two older children were quietly discussing what materials they needed to make a model. They took time to choose from a range of paper, card and ribbon organised carefully so that children can develop their own ideas. In the reception class, these skills are consolidated and extended as children design a seed packet or make their own 'flap' books in the writing corner.

76. In the nursery, good teaching encourages the children to move to music and to join enthusiastically in singing games and rhymes. In the reception class, these skills are developed very well as the children pass a rhythm around the class sitting in a circle or sing with tuneful enthusiasm to a guitar accompaniment. In both the nursery and the reception class, the children explore colour, texture, shape and form through painting and drawing. Higher attaining children in the reception class use pastels successfully to draw a good representation of fruit from other countries. Paintings made of the children in the reception class as they skip, balance and run show a good developing form and perspective. Staff in both classes help the children to feel secure as they try new experiences so that they are learning through all of their senses. Adults play with and alongside the children in the construction corner to help to develop language, sensitively teach children how to mix colours correctly or to explore ways in which our bodies move through music and dance.

## ENGLISH

77. Standards are well above the national average for both seven and 11-year-olds, showing very good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were average. For seven-year-olds, inspection evidence confirms the very high standards in reading and writing indicated by the national test results in 2001. For 11-year-olds, inspection evidence indicates that standards are maintained in reading and rising in writing. Consequently, results are likely to be higher in English this year, and well above the national average. Compared to those of schools with pupils from a similar background, results are much higher than average; for seven-year-olds, results in reading and writing are in the top five per cent.

78. The pupils' skills in reading are secure throughout the school. Pupils get considerable extra practice through reading their books at home as well as in school. These books are changed promptly and this maintains the pupils' and the families' interest. Standards are generally above average as pupils transfer to Year 1 from the reception class. Very thorough teaching of letter sounds, blends and frequently used words during Year 1 and Year 2 means that the pupils learn at a more rapid rate than average to recognise words and to develop the means of finding out the ones they do not know. Familiar stories, such as the Three Little Pigs, are displayed on the classroom wall to encourage further interest and practice in reading. From Year 1, the pupils also read non-fiction books and this means that the pupils have a lot of practice in finding information from texts and working with words that are used with precision. This skill transfers to the pupils' work on storybooks and enhances comprehension.

79. The school has made a policy decision to end each day with a story of good quality to make sure that pupils hear the rich vocabulary included in texts of high quality on a daily basis. This intention is not fully transferred to the pupils' individual reading programmes. The more able readers are sometimes kept too closely to published reading schemes and do not always have sufficient access on an individual basis to well-known children's literature of high quality. This misses opportunities to extend further their understanding of nuances of style and character and to give them practice in discussing the finer points of meaning within the text. The school has responded well to the national research which indicates that boys learn most successfully from using non-fiction texts. The older pupils confidently access information from books and other sources in English lessons and also within lessons in other subjects. For instance, pupils in Year 5 showed a good ability to collect information on water from a range of written sources, including leaflets, reference books, computer programs and the Internet. Pupils in Year 6 enjoyed sharing an excerpt from a book that provided a very good example of the 'suspense' style of writing. From Year 2, pupils are able to use alphabetical order with confidence to locate words in dictionaries and thesauri, and to research information from books. From Year 5, most pupils are adept at locating a book through use of the Dewey Decimal library reference system.

80. The school gives a very high priority to the development of writing, which is reflected in the high standards achieved. The early blending of letters into three-letter words is worked on with imagination and rigour by the teacher in Year 1. For example, puppets add interest to work on letter sounds, with the pupils learning as they spot the puppet's mistakes. Attractive, eye-catching displays of rhyming words challenge the pupils to read and re-read the words they are learning to spell. A similarly thorough approach is used to add interest to teaching more advanced blends of letters. In Year 2, very useful wall charts encourage pupils to add to lists of words with similar spelling patterns. The teacher welcomes all suggestions and this encourages pupils to become interested in practising spelling.

81. By the time the pupils transfer to Year 3, the very thorough approach to teaching ensures that the pupils' spelling skills are secure, with common rules and familiar words well established by a very high proportion of the class. Punctuation for sentences is also well understood and most pupils are working on including speech marks to denote dialogue. Pupils in Year 5 practise note taking as they gather information about their chosen aspect of water. The teacher's expectations are high, pupils are mature and they achieve a good level of work for their age. The teacher gives

pupils the definition of 'plagiarism' and reminds them that direct copying is to be avoided. This successfully encourages pupils to put information into their own words and to blend it in with other information gleaned. In Year 6, pupils show that they can also write fictional accounts. The teacher presented a high quality text to the class, which captured their interest and provided them with an excellent model for their own work. The pupils worked hard to analyse features of the 'suspense' style of writing before writing their own very good quality paragraphs in a similar style. All pupils in the class made excellent progress with this work.

82. Speaking and listening skills develop to an above average level overall. Pupils are confident and fluent in social situations and when answering questions in class. However, they do not generally engage so readily in extended discussions although there are exceptions, such as was observed at the very purposeful School Council meeting. This is because few opportunities for the specific practice of discussion skills are planned. The recently updated curriculum to teach pupils about citizenship provides increased opportunities but drama and discussion times are not regular features of the timetable. The small number of pupils who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language have been in school only a short time but have already made very good progress due to the sensitivity of the staff to their needs. A teacher from the local education authority's bilingual support service provides guidance for staff and works in the classroom sometimes to provide support for individual pupils.

83. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school and the lessons observed in Years 5 and 6 were excellent. In the excellent lessons, teachers very skilfully developed the pupils' learning to a very high level of achievement. The lessons were exceptionally well organised, resources motivated pupils very well, and the atmosphere for learning became 'electric' as the pupils made maximum effort to achieve high standards of work, surpassing their previous best. Throughout the school, well thought out wall displays help pupils' to learn and in these lessons, reminders and expectations of basic skills at a challenging level for the pupils' ages were backed up by reference to displays. These provided very useful reinforcement of teaching and learning.

84. The staff are very secure in their understanding of the subject, with training for the National Literacy Strategy supplementing their skills well. The school plans rigorously for all lessons and plans include very clear learning objectives which teachers shared with pupils at the start of each lesson. This helps pupils to understand the lesson well right from the beginning. The targets set within the individual education plans of the pupils with special educational needs are carefully linked into the planning for the whole class. This makes sure that these pupils practise the skills they need frequently and are helped to make good progress. The teachers set individual targets in literacy for all pupils and these are recorded in the front of their workbooks. This helps pupils to remember their next steps in learning. Although generally very specific, these targets are not always written in language that is easily understood by pupils and this detracts from their usefulness. The co-ordinator checks writing books throughout the school and any shortcomings in teaching or learning are identified and generally promptly addressed. A weakness noted in handwriting and the pupils' untidy presentation of their work was followed by the introduction of a new system for teaching handwriting throughout the school. This is an area that requires much further development in all classes, although the handwriting and presentation of pupils in Year 6 has improved remarkably over the year.

85. Classroom assistants significantly extend the learning opportunities for the pupils. They are well informed, adept at keeping the pupils focused on the learning objective and know how to extend the pupils' learning according to their differing needs. Those in Year 1 and Year 3 are specifically trained to organise literacy support programmes. Support teachers specialising in special educational needs, English as an additional language and pupils with a Travellers' heritage provide valuable guidance to pupils and staff.

86. The management of the subject is very efficient and ensures that high standards are maintained. The co-ordinator works diligently to check teachers' termly plans and has an annual programme for the checking of pupils' workbooks. Test papers are used and results analysed to check the success of the teaching and learning in the subject. Analysis of differences between the



results of boys and girls has led to changes in the teaching programme for reading and writing. It now includes more factual rather than fictional texts and this action has largely resolved the problem. The quality of teaching has also been improved through the opportunities provided for the co-ordinator to work with teachers in their own classes, jointly planning, teaching and reviewing lessons. The monitoring of teaching and learning in lessons is the responsibility of the headteacher and has proved to be a very useful system for evaluating and improving teaching.

## **MATHEMATICS**

87. Standards are well above the national average for both seven and 11-year-olds. Pupils achieve very well, reaching at least the standard expected nationally for their age, with a high proportion of pupils exceeding this level. For seven-year-olds, standards show very good improvement since the last inspection and are in line with the results of the national tests in 2001. For 11-year-olds, standards show good improvement on the findings of the last inspection and a very good improvement on the unusually low results of the 2001 national tests, where the school's trend of high achievement was depressed by the performance of the cohort for that year. This was largely due to a high number of pupils with special educational needs within the class.

88. The very good quality of teaching through out the school ensures the very high standards achieved. Lessons are rigorously planned, following the guidelines of the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers explain the purposes of lessons to the pupils so that they know clearly what is expected. For example, in Year 3, the teacher explained the objectives concerning partitioning in tens and units at the beginning of the lesson. This helped pupils to focus fully on the target of the lesson. The teacher returned to the objectives at the end of the lesson in order to summarise new learning to help pupils to remember what they had achieved.

89. A strong feature of the teachers' success is their very good understanding of how to teach the skills of the subject. For example, in Year 1, the teacher ensured that through opportunities for careful practice at a brisk pace, pupils learned to count on and back to 30 and beyond. In Year 2, the teacher explained the relationship between multiplication and division in steps that enabled a very clear understanding. The teachers' high expectations are closely related to the high achievement and very good progress of the pupils. So that, for example, by the end of Year 6, a very high proportion of pupils have a very good understanding of the rotation, reflection and translation of shapes, and can estimate and measure angles accurately.

90. Work is presented in lively and interesting ways so that pupils are captivated, sustain their concentration well and make very good progress. For example, in work on odd and even numbers, the teacher in Year 1 used the playground markings, number sequence lines in the corridor and dice in order to broaden the pupils' experience and understanding. Pupils in Year 5 were asked to correct an inaccurately completed graph in order to help them to understand more about data presentation.

91. Teachers use questioning very well to help pupils to think hard and deepen their understanding. Pupils are confident to use their own mental strategies to solve problems and to explain these to the teacher and the rest of the class. For example, pupils in Year 6 described how they used the four operations to solve number problems. In Year 4, pupils explained their calculations to the class so that their own understanding was reinforced and other pupils learned a variety of approaches. Relationships between the staff and pupils are excellent; other pupils generally listen attentively and the teacher values their contributions. Management of the pupils is very good, ensuring that pupils behave very well and concentrate successfully on their work.

92. Teaching and learning is underpinned by the school's very good systems for checking the pupils' learning. This enables teachers to build very securely on learning that has gone before and helps them to set targets for improvement, on an individual, group or class basis. For example, following an analysis of assessment results, it was discovered that the teachers of pupils in Years 3

to 6 needed to focus on strategies for dealing with written mathematical problems. This action led to good improvements in the way the older pupils approached this aspect of their work. Teachers generally make good use of group and individual targets. These usually refer to specific areas, for example, 'the rapid recall of addition and subtraction facts to 10', giving very clear guidance to pupils in their next steps. Where targets are more general such as, 'develop strategies to solve a variety of word problems', they are less useful because pupils do not fully understand what they need to learn to do.

93. The teachers check the pupils' learning within lessons very well in order to help clarify misunderstandings and guide pupils towards further learning. In Year 4, for example, the teacher moved from group to group helping individuals and at the end of the lesson discussed any common misunderstandings. This helped to reinforce their understanding of place value and to extend their skills in using quick and flexible methods of multiplication. Because teachers evaluate their lessons daily, they are able to plan further work in the light of the progress made by the pupils. For example, in Year 5, the teacher adjusted the planning because on the previous day most pupils had made better progress on the interpretation of data and subtraction of money than had been anticipated.

94. The pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers generally write comments and explanations which are useful in clarifying understanding and helping pupils to understand how to improve their work. For example, the teacher in Year 4 reminded a pupil to work out the calculations in brackets first. The pupil followed this advice and completed further examples accurately. Where teachers have very high expectations of the pupils' work, pupils are reminded of the importance of presentation to enhance the accuracy of their calculations. In Year 5, the teacher ensured that her own writing on the blackboard was well presented. This helped the pupils to understand the need for the numbers to be placed in the correct columns.

95. The teachers prepare work which challenges pupils well, according to their needs. For example, in Year 6, during work on the equivalence of imperial and metric measures, higher achieving pupils gathered information from food packaging and used conversion tables to change grams to ounces. Pupils of average ability used conversion tables to solve written problems. Lower achieving pupils, guided by the classroom assistant, used their understanding to indicate if given statements linking imperial and metric measurements were true or false. However, specific targets for mathematics are not included within the individual education programmes of the pupils with special educational needs. Because targets in mathematics, as in literacy, are set for all pupils, this has no noticeable effect on their learning. Teachers are very aware of the importance of mathematical language in the understanding of pupils for whom English is an additional language. They speak clearly, allow extra time for these pupils to answer and use the skills of the language support teacher well so that very good progress is made.

96. Lessons generally run very smoothly so that time is not wasted. This is because teachers organise pupils and materials very efficiently and clearly explain what they have to do. For example, in Year 2, pupils moved from the whole class discussion on the carpet and settled quickly to work with multiplication and division, at different levels according to their abilities, because everything they needed was to hand and they knew clearly what was expected.

97. Teachers give pupils many opportunities to practise their numeracy skills in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, in history in Year 6, the pupils' understanding of the interpretation of data and their approximation of measurement skills were improved when they worked with imperial measures as part of their study of the Second World War. In geography, pupils in Year 5 developed their map work during a residential visit, through practice in using co-ordinates. Pupils in Year 1 were helped to understand the passage of time when they used time lines in history. Within their scientific work on trees, pupils in Year 4 measured the area of leaves. Computer programs are increasingly being used, since the opening of the ICT suite, for valuable practice of numeracy skills and for recording and analysing data.

98. A significant factor in the school's success in mathematics is the very effective co-ordination and development of the subject. The newly appointed co-ordinator has a very good

understanding of the subject and works very hard to ensure that it is organised well. Assessments are well analysed and pupils' workbooks in all classes are regularly checked. She reviews the planning for lessons and supports colleagues well. There are plans for her to improve her understanding of the quality of teaching and learning through opportunities to observe lessons. This will build on the success of the headteacher and the previous deputy headteacher in raising standards further in the subject. The good range and quality of resources are fully used.

## **SCIENCE**

99. For both seven and 11-year-olds, attainment is well above the national average. For seven-year-olds, standards show very good improvement on the findings of the last inspection and maintain the high standards reported in the teachers' assessments for 2001. For 11-year-olds, standards show further improvement on the good standards reported in the last inspection and on the results of national tests in 2001.

100. A significant factor in the well above average attainment is the very good quality of teaching and learning. This is complemented by very good systems for checking pupils' learning. The results of these assessments are thoroughly analysed and used to set targets for improvement for groups and individuals. For example, following an analysis of assessments, teachers were made aware of the need for pupils in Year 6 to reinforce their work with graphs and to extend their understanding of the functioning of the heart.

101. As they get older, most pupils develop a thorough understanding of how to conduct scientific investigations. This is because teachers have a very good understanding of how to teach basic skills. In Year 5 for example, pupils knew how to conduct a fair test in their work with parachutes and air resistance. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and this helps pupils to achieve highly and make very good progress. For example, in Year 2, pupils searched for 'mini-beasts' in the school grounds and predicted which creatures were likely to be found in different locations. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils show a clear understanding of how micro organisms bring about decay and conduct investigations into how decay occurs under different conditions. Pupils in Year 3 have a basic understanding of the planets and the changing seasons. By Year 6, pupils know about the earth's axis, understand its position in the solar system, and can describe the phases of the moon and the causes of eclipses.

102. Throughout the school, the teachers present work in lively and interesting ways with lots of practical activities. This helps to engage the pupils' interest and encourages them to work enthusiastically. For example, in Year 5, pupils were engrossed in an investigation into how the chemical reaction between a solid and a liquid may produce gas. They were fascinated when vinegar reacted with bicarbonate of soda and the resulting gas inflated their balloons. Teachers also make scientific work relevant by linking it with work in other subjects, such as health education, ICT, mathematics, English and physical education. For example, pupils in Year 6 know about the function of the lungs and how smoking is detrimental to this. They understand the positive and negative uses of drugs. Pupils in Year 2 know about the constituents of a healthy diet. In Year 5, pupils understand how the muscular system works. They link this with the importance of warming up and cooling down in physical education lessons. In sharing their descriptions of investigations into chemical reactions, the teacher in Year 5 reminded the pupils about their work in English on the use of lists, commas and brackets. In Year 3, pupils use their measuring skills in work on forces, using Newtons. Pupils in Year 6 use the Internet to research micro-organisms. The linking of science with other subjects helps the pupils to see a purpose to their work and enhances their understanding both of science and the other subject.

103. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide useful comments to help pupils to improve their work. In Year 2, for example, the teacher's comments helped a pupil to clarify the understanding of the effects of different ramps in work on forces. In their marking, teachers generally remind pupils of the importance of presentation in the production of clear and accurate

diagrams and accounts of investigations. Nonetheless, standards of presentation are sometimes inconsistent.

104. Teachers generally organise lessons efficiently so that they run smoothly and pupils work rigorously. For example, in Year 1, the pupils' understanding of plant growth was enhanced when the teacher presented a variety of plants and shared the supervision of activities between herself and the nursery nurse. Lower achieving pupils and those with special educational needs usually make very good progress because teachers provide them with additional help and present them with work which is suited to their needs. For example, in Year 2, in a lesson on seeds and their dispersal, the teacher ensured that pupils who might have difficulties in reading worksheets were helped and had full access to the activities. Higher achieving pupils were expected to read the instructions and questions independently and to write up their responses accurately. In Year 1, the nursery nurse helped pupils who found difficulty in recording their plant growth diaries. However, the understanding of scientific concepts by lower achieving pupils is sometimes unclear. For example, in Year 3, lower achieving pupils were unsure of which materials were attracted to magnets, and the sketching and labelling of a diagram of the heart by lower achieving pupils in Year 5 was not clear.

105. Teachers plan their work very carefully and share the lesson's objectives with pupils. When the introduction includes swift revision of previous work, as in Year 6 in a lesson on micro-organisms, pupils have a very clear idea of their tasks and this helps them to make very good progress. Teachers generally have high expectations and challenge pupils to extend their skills and understanding. In an excellent lesson in Year 4, for example, on how sound travels through materials other than air, pupils devised their own methods, including fair testing, selected their own equipment and collaborated independently of the teacher. This resulted in excellent standards of learning and very high achievement. Because relationships are excellent, pupils are confident to discuss their findings with the both the teacher and other pupils because they know that their contributions will be welcomed and valued. In Year 6, the teacher engaged the pupils in an on-going dialogue of questions throughout the lesson so that the pupils' understanding of micro-organisms was extended and refined.

106. Teachers are very good at assessing what pupils know. On a day-to-day basis, they do this through careful questioning. Questions such as "Why is the balloon inflating?" make pupils think about what they are doing. As a result, pupils in Year 5 increased their understanding of chemical reactions and their knowledge of solids, liquids and gases. Teachers manage pupils very well so that pupils behave very well, work hard and use equipment and materials well. In Year 4, pupils worked very well during their investigations into sound without the immediate supervision of the teacher. In Year 6, pupils handled samples of decaying substances sensibly.

107. The co-ordinator has a very good subject knowledge and works very hard to organise the subject and to support staff. She monitors the teachers' planning, samples of the pupils' written work, and analyses assessments in order to identify areas for improvement.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

108. Pupils are attaining standards at the level expected nationally for their age. Achievement is generally satisfactory and sometimes good. A few pupils in each year group attain standards that are above the level expected. The above average standards reported in the last inspection have not been consistently maintained due to the high priority given to literacy and numeracy, as required nationally.

109. Insufficient lessons were observed to make a judgement on the overall quality of teaching. In the two lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good in Year 2 and very good in Year 6. A review of pupils' past work indicates that the teaching of skills and techniques is generally satisfactory as the pupils move from class to class through the school.

110. By Year 2, the pupils are able to control a range of media to a satisfactory level of attainment. In a lesson in Year 2, pupils were given part of a painting to complete in order to develop their ability to use their imagination and to explore ideas. Good questioning in the initial stages of the lesson led the majority of pupils to try hard to produce some carefully thought out drawings to complete the original print. Concentration and perseverance were clearly evident although the range of skill in their representations was wide. Both the teacher and the classroom assistant encouraged and guided the pupils in thinking about how to refine and improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language were supported fully and achieved well.

111. In the very good lesson in Year 6, the teacher's clear and enthusiastic introduction, very good relationship with the pupils and high expectations significantly extended their understanding of how to make a design brief for headgear. Higher attaining pupils produced more accurate, neat and imaginative designs while less able pupils needed help in sketching their design and developing their ideas. The teacher used the example of a 'Celtic helmet' to inspire the pupils' imagination about the type of colours, textures and materials they might use in their designs. Literacy and ICT skills were used well as, with suitable guidance, small groups of pupils showed great interest and enthusiasm as they found and explored the web site of a local designer. This significantly extended their ideas for their own design.

112. Pupils in all classes investigate and use a range of materials and processes. They try out different tools and techniques to represent their observations. In Year 2, for example, pupils designed pictures of a chosen fruit and completed a good representation in stitches and textiles. In Year 4, pupils designed and made chairs in moquette that reflected their personality. In Year 5, pupils experimented with textiles to make a shared tapestry depicting Greek myths and legends. Suitable attention is given to the work of famous artists. For example, using a computer graphics program, pupils in Year 2 reproduced work in the style of Mondrian. In Year 5, pupils worked in pastel to record still life compositions in the style of Cézanne. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are able to attend an after-school art club, where they work confidently, either individually, in pairs or in small groups, to complete a chosen project. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour were exemplary in this session due to the enthusiasm of the pupils and the expertise provided by the teacher.

113. The subject is well organised and based on a clear policy and scheme of work. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when the policy and guidelines were not found to be sufficiently clear. Teachers now have procedures in place to assess the pupils' work regularly although there is no collection of work available to provide guidance on the standards of work expected as pupils progress through the school. Planning is checked by the co-ordinator but she has no opportunity to observe teaching and learning in lessons in order to help her to develop a full understanding of standards in the subject and to lead further improvements.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

114. The pupils' attainment is average overall by the ages of seven and 11, generally meeting national expectations in quality and range. Due to timetable arrangements, only one lesson was observed. This lesson, together with a review of past work, indicates that the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with evidence of good teaching and learning in work with textiles. Overall standards are not as high as at the time of the last inspection due to the increased priority given to literacy and numeracy, as required nationally.

115. The sample of work seen indicates that skills of the subject are taught well, with evidence within most work of a suitable investigation of need before the careful planning of designs and methods. Pupils practise different methods of joining, such as stitching, before making the product to ensure an appropriate standard of work. The whole process is reviewed on completion to help extend the pupils' skills further. An example of such work in Year 2 showed that pupils investigated different methods of making glove puppets before setting their own plans. Some pupils used a

computer program to record their plans. Materials selected were carefully sewn together, and finished to a high standard. The pupils reviewed the quality of their own work successfully, making suggestions for improvements. The completed puppets were finally put to their intended use within a puppet theatre performance. In another example of good work in textiles, pupils in Year 4 designed and made useful money containers. Their work included research into different types of fasteners and a prototype made in paper. They practised joining materials with close stitching and checked to ensure that small coins would be retained securely. They made careful measurements before cutting out fabric, giving a good opportunity to practise mathematical skills.

116. Other samples of work indicate that the expected range of work reaches a suitable standard for all pupils, including those with a Travellers' heritage and those with special educational needs or English as an additional language. The work includes musical instruments made in Year 1 from reclaimed materials, and lever and slide mechanisms for word games. In Year 5 pupils produced mechanical toys with moving parts based on cam and follower mechanisms made from wood. In Year 6, pupils experienced working at the secondary school to which most pupils transfer, using a computer design program and specialist facilities to design and make plastic key fobs and pencil containers.

117. In the one lesson observed, teaching was of satisfactory quality and extended pupils' skills in food technology. The teacher provided a very wide range of breads, from a variety of different cultures, which enabled good opportunities for research before pupils made plans for their own designs, to suit the tastes of guests at a chosen social occasion. Opportunities were sometimes missed to make sure that all pupils knew the meaning of the vocabulary in use, for example, that *Gruyere* and *Parmesan* indicate varieties of cheese. Nonetheless, pupils were able to taste a wide range of ingredients to help them to make individual choices for their own bread. Hygiene and safety procedures were suitable, including checking pupils' computer records for known allergies.

118. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject and has organised suitable long-term plans to meet the needs of each year group and to ensure that the full range of skills are taught. She has recently introduced a suitable system for assessing pupils' learning. The monitoring of completed work is informal at present but plans are in hand to include the subject in a more formal review programme. The quality of teaching within lessons has not yet been the subject of review. Resources are adequate and suitably stored.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

119. The subject is taught in alternate half terms and no lessons were observed during the inspection. A review of past work and discussions with pupils and staff indicate that standards have been maintained since the last inspection and remain in line with national expectations for both seven and 11-year-olds. It was not possible to make clear judgements on the overall quality of teaching but past work indicates that there are good opportunities for learning provided by educational visits. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall.

120. By the age of seven, pupils understand some of the contrasts in individual features of different localities, such as clothing, housing and transport. For instance, many know that people living in Newcastle travel mainly by car but might also use buses or trains. They know that in the village of Chembokoli in India, travel is mainly on foot or by rickshaw. The work of the higher attaining pupils shows a clear understanding of these contrasts and their map work shows good attempts to use a key to identify different areas on a world map. All pupils can produce a pictorial diagram of a journey at a suitable level for their age.

121. In Years 3 to 6, pupils learn to use more specific geographical vocabulary. For instance, pupils in Year 3 label the features of a river, making links with work in history on the River Nile and the life of Ancient Egyptians. In Year 5, pupils' written work includes specific geographical terms and in their work on the 'Water Cycle', most pupils try hard to explain the process using precise

terms. This is extended during English and lessons when pupils practise their writing skills through researching and publishing a leaflet on a chosen aspect of water, ranging from water safety to sewage treatment works. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate their understanding of the use of grid references in their work on rivers and settlements, which include a study of Newcastle and reasons why the city was built on a river. A consideration of recent changes includes the need for new building such as the new Millennium Bridge. Except in Year 6, the marking of pupils' work does not always draw attention to inadequacies within the presentation of written work and as a result the work of some pupils is untidy for their age.

122. The teachers plan a programme of visits each year to give pupils very interesting opportunities to learn about human and physical geography at first hand. For instance, to help pupils to recognise the reasons for the closure of a mine or to undertake independent investigations, such as taking measurements of river speed on fieldwork, recording results using information technology and plotting them on a diagram. The annual residential visits to outdoor education centres for pupils in Years 5 and 6 significantly enrich the curriculum for those who take part.

123. Since the last inspection, satisfactory progress has been made in the development of the subject. The school has produced a scheme of work, linked to the new national guidelines, which gives teachers helpful guidance on the development of geographical skills across the year groups. A comprehensive outdoor education programme has been developed further to extend learning in the subject, for example, through a more detailed study of rivers. A suitable action plan gives a clear indication of plans for future development, which includes new procedures to help the teachers to track pupils' progress. The teachers' planning is thorough, monitored regularly, and shows appropriate development as the pupils get older. Additional support in lessons ensures that pupils with special educational needs are thoroughly integrated into all lessons and, like other pupils, make satisfactory progress. Staff are aware of the needs of the pupils with English as an additional language and those with a Travellers' heritage and provide suitable help to support their learning.

## **HISTORY**

124. The attainment of most pupils is in line with national expectations by the ages of seven and 11, as was reported at the time of the last inspection. The achievement of most pupils is sound overall and sometimes good. Although good lessons were observed in Year 1 and Year 6, a review of previous work indicates that the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall.

125. From Year 1, pupils begin to sequence and order events and by the end of Year 2, have developed a sound understanding of some of the changes that occur with the passage of time. In Year 1, for example, pupils deepened their understanding of chronology through an interesting lesson using photographic evidence of schools in the past. Because the teacher introduced the lesson objectives clearly and frequently explained the importance of looking and listening carefully, the pupils increased their understanding well of changes compared to schools today. At the beginning of the lesson, less than a third of the pupils were able to place photographs in age order. By the end of the lesson, most pupils made good progress and were successful in drawing their own timeline. This was due to the teachers' good questioning, use of resources and continuous assessment of the pupils to help her to reinforce and consolidate their knowledge, skills and understanding. Lower attaining pupils were guided well in completing this task by the sensitive intervention of the teacher and classroom assistant. By Year 2, most pupils can use sources of information to answer questions about the past and present their understanding orally, in pictures or in writing. However, key questions are not always included in the lesson plans and this means that pupils are not always focused directly on important learning areas. This resulted in pupils losing concentration when looking at old photographs because they were not sufficiently focused by questions for investigation. They needed more help than was provided with the vocabulary needed to describe what they could see. Most pupils write satisfactorily about some of the main events in

the life of famous people in the past, such as Florence Nightingale. There is little evidence in their writing of extended knowledge and understanding, however, of why people might have acted in the ways they did.

126. In Year 5, higher attaining pupils make good progress in writing about the effect of transport developments on people's lives. This is consolidated and extended in written arguments for and against the invention of railways. 'Imagine a big steaming and noisy thing coming straight past you and frightening you or covering you with black smoke', writes one pupil evocatively. In Year 6, pupils enthusiastically discussed their factual knowledge about life during the Second World War. In a lively discussion with pupils about interviews with relatives and friends concerning life in wartime Britain, a group of Year 6 pupils demonstrated a good understanding of some of the events of that period. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were eager to demonstrate their sound understanding about sources of historical evidence and showed that they had read a good range of literature that supported their understanding of events in wartime Britain, including, for example, 'Goodnight, Mr. Tom'. The teacher's very good relationship with the pupils and their generosity in listening to each other led to sensible contributions to a question and answer session about food rationing during the war. Pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language or a Travellers' heritage are well supported by the teachers and classroom assistants, and consequently make good progress.

127. There has been sound improvement in the subject since the last inspection. The school has clarified its scheme of work and incorporated the national guidelines for history. An increased programme of visits and visitors enriches the pupils' learning through, for example, a visit to a Victorian School and to local museums. There are plans to review samples of pupils' work through the school in order to raise standards further. Procedures for assessing the pupils' progress have been recently introduced. The marking of pupils' work, however, does not often help pupils to understand that the presentation of work is important. Literacy, numeracy and ICT are used effectively to support the subject.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

128. As was reported in the last inspection, attainment is in line with what is expected nationally for pupils aged seven and 11. However, standards are rising rapidly. The school has recently installed a new and very well resourced computer suite, but there has been insufficient time for this to make a full impact on the pupils' attainment. The staff have received suitable training and the subject is in a very good position to move forward, accelerating pupils' learning and progress. The school has good links with the local secondary school and the college of further education, providing good technical support.

129. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers ensure that there is a good balance of activities between work on the computer in each classroom and the computers in the suite. Computers in classrooms are used for a variety of purposes, including the development of basic skills in English and other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 1 used a computer program to improve their understanding of letter sounds. Similarly, in Year 2, pupils developed their understanding of their reading and practised basic grammar exercises. Pupils in Year 5 experimented with alternative ways of opening a story. During a science lesson, pupils in Year 6 co-operated well and followed a rota in order to use the Internet to research micro-organisms. These activities are successful because teachers have a clear understanding of how the computer can be used and because their planning is very clear and the organisation of lessons is very good. Computers in the suite are used in a well-balanced way both to extend pupils' ICT skills and to support work in other subjects of the curriculum. Because the school has only recently installed new computers, staff have not yet had the opportunity to upgrade all the necessary software, so that for example, opportunities for simulations and modelling are limited. Older pupils develop their skills in the use of sensors and data logging on residential visits arranged for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils in Year 6 make use of the more advanced equipment made available by the local



secondary school. The school is very aware of temporary deficits and has plans to further improve resources.

130. The school makes good use of ICT in other subjects of the curriculum, which helps to extend the pupils' skills in both subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4 used digital cameras and combined text and graphics well in their guidebooks to Pelaw. This enhanced their work both in geography and in English. Pupils in Year 3 used the Internet to research the history of Ancient Egypt. They downloaded photographs of the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb and used a word processing program to write interesting journalistic reports in simulated news stories of the discovery. Pupils in Year 2 used a scanner in their design and technology work. Year 5 pupils word processed performance poetry and pupils in Year 6 used CD-ROM's in order to research work on structures in design and technology. Pupils are afforded this wide experience of ICT because teachers have a good understanding of its uses across the curriculum and the impact this has on their learning. Very good use of ICT skills was seen in a Year 5 physical education lesson where pupils used the digital camera to photograph their work in groups to enable them to evaluate and improve their performance.

131. As they get older, most pupils develop increasing confidence in their control of the keyboard and the 'mouse' and by Year 6, most pupils work independently on the computer. This is because teachers' good planning ensures that pupils build firmly on work that has gone before to ensure that most pupils make sound progress. In Year 1, for example, pupils write simple stories, draw outlines of figures and patterns. By Year 6, pupils interrogate data, retell Shakespearean stories using a variety of fonts, design web pages and create button links between pages.

132. Teachers generally organise pupils and resources well. This is an essential skill in the computer suite when a whole class is using computers. In Year 6, for example, because the teacher revised work from a previous lesson on linking pages and shared the lesson objectives with pupils, they knew clearly what was expected and the quality of their learning was good. In this lesson, the teacher's organisational skills were further tested when the class was unable to use the Internet as planned because there were connection problems with the system. However, she quickly adjusted the structure of the lesson and pupils' learning was not significantly impeded.

133. Teachers generally make good use of the skills of the classroom support assistants, volunteer adults and technicians to extend pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 3 lesson using a graphic art program to explore pattern, all adults were able to help pupils to learn how to flood, copy, resize and paste shapes, thus extending successfully the pupils' skills and understanding. During lessons, pupils are confident to answer questions to extend their skills because relationships are very positive and teachers make good use of their efforts and contributions.

134. Teachers generally have high expectations and challenge pupils to extend their understanding and skills. This encourages pupils in Year 6, for example, to create and refine spreadsheets and explore formulae. Higher achieving pupils consistently interpret data accurately and present their work clearly. Pupils in Year 4 use a variety of fonts and sizes in a hierarchical presentation of the school rules. Pupils in Year 5 combine text and graphics successfully in designing election posters. In Year 2, pupils edit writing and know how to save, re-open and print their work. Lower achieving pupils and pupils with special educational needs generally complete less work but their progress, as for other pupils, is sound overall.

135. The co-ordination of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator has a thorough subject knowledge and works very hard to advise other teachers. She has made a significant contribution to the development of the computer suite and the updating of equipment throughout the school. The teachers' planning and the pupils' printed work is checked and any problems in teaching and learning are put right. This is providing significant support for raising standards further.

## **MUSIC**

136. Insufficient evidence was available to make an overall judgement on the full range of music skills for 11-year-olds but it is evident that the quality of singing is good. For seven-year-olds, standards meet expectations nationally for the age group. Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained. Insufficient lessons were observed to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching.

137. Staff and pupils show a great enthusiasm for the subject. This is helped by the arrangements the school has for pupils in each class to be taught in alternate half terms by a specialist musician, who makes a very good contribution to teaching and learning. In these lessons, the pupils achieve very well. In Year 2, pupils can sing in tune and keep a steady rhythm. In Year 1, pupils are learning to remember the names of a wide range of instruments and to classify them into those that make loud or soft, or long or short sounds. Pupils can follow the pitch of tunes by raising and lowering their hands as they follow high and low notes in the music. During their captivating performance of 'We are the music band', pupils were able to sing and play instruments mostly in time, enabled by the guitar accompaniment of the teacher. In Year 2, pupils worked on identifying and recording long and short sounds, saying the words 'coffee' and 'tea' to help them to do so. The friendly relationships with the teacher encourage the pupils to take part and to do their best.

138. In Year 6, the sound quality of teaching led to satisfactory learning. Good links were made with the history curriculum as pupils listened to examples of songs from the Victorian era and learned that lyrics have social and cultural meanings. They were able to suggest different social occasions where songs may be heard, such as weddings, church services, coach trips and football matches, and the feelings they may express. However, plans for the specific vocabulary to be encouraged and questions to be asked used were not made in advance of the lesson and this limited the pace and efficiency of the teaching. In addition, the sound system available for use was insufficiently versatile to do justice to the music and this limited the pupils' appreciation of the sounds of the voices and instruments. Nonetheless, pupils enjoyed the lesson, showed a good interest in the songs presented and a strong feeling for music as they joined in, singing and clapping, with 'Campdown Races'.

139. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise and appreciate music during school assembly times. The Composer of the Week is a useful strategy. The headteacher leads a good discussion of the chosen music and the pupils' attention is drawn to significant features. For example, to help the pupils' appreciation of Pachelbel's Canon, the headteacher discussed with younger pupils the way the different sounds were 'woven' into the music and the different instruments that could be heard. The older pupils discussed how the music helped them to feel relaxed. The repeated melody that forms the basis of the composition was suitably pointed out. Music within school assemblies makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and demonstrates the strong feeling for music evident within the school. The singing in the assembly for Years 3 to 6 was good. Pupils sing in unison with a sweet tone, in tune and with very clear diction, showing a sensitive awareness of the mood of the song. They sing The Lord's Prayer with great sensitivity and the older pupils are able to sustain singing in parts extremely well. Without exception, all pupils contributed to the performance, demonstrating the strong sense of community within the school.

140. The co-ordinator brings great interest and enthusiasm to the subject. She makes sure that pupils experience a wide range of live musical performances, ranging from classical music and jazz to British folk songs. Pupils in each class take part in a music workshop at least annually. For example, pupils in Year 5 made gains in learning through working with a Japanese artist to make origami books and sing accompanying songs. A suitable scheme of work is in place and the co-ordinator works hard to incorporate the work of specialists to extend the curriculum. An assessment system has been established, based on national guidelines, and is to be used to record pupils' skills by the end of the year. Some opportunities are missed within lessons for support staff to record which pupils have played instruments to ensure equal opportunities for learning over time.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

141. Due to timetable arrangements, insufficient lessons were observed to make clear overall judgements on attainment. The evidence of teachers' planning and discussions with staff indicate that the school meets the statutory requirements for teaching in the subject.

142. No lessons were observed in Years 1 to 4. In the two lessons observed in Years 5 and 6, the quality of teaching was at least good. Teachers made sure that pupils warmed up their muscles thoroughly so that they were ready for vigorous activity, and then cooled down at the end of the lessons. The high quality of relationships in the school mean that pupils collaborate very well, for example, in passing and receiving in games and in composing group sequences in gymnastics. Teachers generally observe pupils' work closely so that they can help pupils to evaluate and improve their performance. Very good use was made of ICT skills in the Year 5 lesson in gymnastics, when pupils used the digital camera to photograph their work to help them to evaluate their sequences of movements worked out in groups. Pupils are managed well so that they behave well and exercise vigorously.

143. The school makes very good use of residential visits to Kielder Forest and Duke's House Wood, where pupils in Year 5 and 6 have many opportunities for outdoor adventurous activities and for learning to collaborate and live together. There are good links made with science and health education. Pupils in Year 5 learn about musculature and techniques for warming up and cooling down at the beginning and end of lessons. This helps to enhance the pupils' understanding of the functions of the body and how this relates to physical education. As they get older, pupils learn about the need for exercise and an appropriate diet as part of work in science and health education. For example, in Year 5, pupils accurately measure the pulse rate after exercise.

144. The school plans a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities provided by teachers and supported by parents. These include football, cross-country, athletics, dance, netball, basketball, hockey and gymnastics. Pupils compete with other schools in football, swimming, cross-country and athletics. There are plans to further sporting links with local schools through the local schools' sports co-ordination programme. Extra football coaching is provided by staff from Newcastle United Football Club. The school makes further provision for physical development through the pupils' supervised use of small equipment at lunch and break times. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 receive tuition in swimming at the local pool and many achieve high standards.

145. The subject is very well co-ordinated. The co-ordinator monitors the teachers' planning for lessons and has developed procedures for checking the progress of individual pupils. She does not have the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in lessons to supplement her knowledge of standards in the school, to enable her to suggest further improvements. She supports colleagues effectively and ensures that the school uses its suitable supply of resources well. However, the sloping playground causes some problems which affect efficient practice during games lessons. The school field is too distant to maintain successfully in clean condition, so is generally unavailable for use. This limits the pupils' opportunities to extend game skills through, for example, football team games.