

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ARCHBISHOP RUNCIE CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
FIRST SCHOOL**

Gosforth

LEA area: Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

Unique reference number: 108495

Headteacher: Mrs J Robson

Reporting inspector: Mr J Hagan  
1065

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> November 2002

Inspection number: 246798

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Christon Road Gosforth Newcastle-upon-Tyne Tyne and Wear
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	The Reverend R Hill
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1065	J Hagan	Registered inspector	Mathematics Physical education English as an additional language	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Leadership and management Key issues for action
13723	J Overend	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Partnership with parents and carers Pupils welfare, health and safety
2810	C McBride	Team inspector	Science Foundation Stage	Teaching and learning
32203	E O'Reilly	Team inspector	English Art and design Music Special educational needs	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
18154	S Rigby	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology History Geography Educational inclusion	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Archbishop Runcie Church Of England Voluntary Aided First School serves a residential area of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. The school is taking pupils from an increasingly wide variety of backgrounds. Whilst most of the children come from the immediate locality, about twenty per cent come from more deprived areas of the City. The nursery opened in the middle of September 2002. Thirty-six children, aged between 3 and 4 years, attend this unit part-time, either mornings or afternoons. There are a further 142 pupils on roll aged between 5 and 9 years. The school is much smaller than most primaries. There are large imbalances between the number of boys and girls in some classes. There are a lot more boys in the reception class, Years 1 and 2 and far more girls in the nursery morning sessions. The school population is predominantly white. There are 4 children who come from homes where English is not the main language spoken, which is slightly higher than most schools. Half of these are at an early stage of language acquisition. The main languages spoken are Arabic and Bengali. The percentage of pupils (8.2 per cent) identified as having special educational needs, including statements, is below the national average. Most of these have moderate learning difficulties. The school has identified 10 children as gifted or talented. The percentage of children eligible for free school meals (2 per cent) is below the national average. On entry to the school, children's overall attainment is above average. The school has gone through a difficult period due to long-term staff absence. This particularly affected the Year 3 class last year. There have been significant staff changes since the last inspection. Five of the seven staff have joined since then. The headteacher and her deputy have been appointed. There are 2 newly qualified teachers, both on temporary contracts, and another teacher who has just completed her first year in the profession. The school received a DfES Excellence Award in 2001.

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

This is a good school with a number of significant strengths, including its performance in national tests, which is consistently high. Teaching is particularly strong in the nursery and Key Stage 1, where there are more experienced teachers. Most pupils achieve well but progress has been less rapid lately in reception and Key Stage 2 because of staff inexperience or changes. This has affected the higher attainers especially. Leadership and management of the school are good. Developments in some subjects have not progressed as well recently due to staffing changes. This is a popular school, which gives good value for money.

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

- It achieves high standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science at the age of 7 years;
- The headteacher, key staff and governors have kept the school on course despite difficult circumstances;
- Pupils get off to a flying start in the nursery;
- Children achieve more in music than is normally seen;
- The school makes children feel valued and they develop as well rounded individuals with a growing respect for themselves and each other.

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

- The pace of learning for higher attainers in the reception class and in Key Stage 2;
- The provision for and teaching of pupils learning English as an additional language;
- Pupils' achievements and standards in design and technology are below average.

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

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

The school was last inspected in February 1998. Besides addressing the key issues identified in the previous report, the school has further improved its standards in writing and maintained its well above average performance in the national tests. Standards in art and design are now better, but in design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT) and some aspects of physical education,

they have slipped, owing to the staffing difficulties faced by the school since the last inspection. A good response was also made to improving children's independence, but this has also slowed up recently for the same reasons. The leadership and management of the school are much improved, as is its partnership with parents. Given the strong leadership of the headteacher, a more settled staffing picture and the support of the governors and parents, the school has a sound capacity for further improvement.

## 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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
Reading	A*	A*	A*	A	well above average A above average B
Writing	A*	A	A	A	average C below average D
Mathematics	A*	A	A	A	well below average E

These are impressive results for pupils aged 7 years and they are supported by inspection findings. Standards in reading are particularly strong, and the school's test performance places it consistently in the top 5 per cent of all schools. More children reach the higher than average Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics than in most schools nationally and in those with pupils from similar backgrounds. Teachers' assessments of their pupils show that this is also the case in science. The school sets high expectations for itself and achieves these targets.

Standards in speaking and listening are well above average at both key stages. Throughout the school, standards in music are well above average and in history and geography they are above average. In all other subjects standards are average except in design and technology where they are below those expected. Pupils, especially in the older classes, could achieve a little more in ICT, dance and gymnastics given their capabilities.

Children learning English as an additional language do not always progress well enough and some need more support. Pupils with special educational needs cope well and make good progress.

Pupils' achievements are not quite as strong at Key Stage 2 owing to staff absence and the less experienced teachers now taking these classes. Higher attainers, especially those with exceptional ability, do not always achieve as much as they could.

On leaving the Foundation Stage most children have exceeded the expectations for this age group in all areas of learning. In communication, language, literacy, mathematics, and personal and social development, they reach much higher standards than normally seen.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The vast majority of pupils listen very well and concentrate on their work. They enjoy lessons and are very keen and well motivated.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. They are polite and courteous. Children behave very well during lessons, playtimes and around the school.
Personal development and	Good. Relationships between all members of the school community are

relationships	very good. Pupils respond well to responsibilities they are given.
Attendance	Attendance is very high. It is the top ten per cent nationally. Pupils arrive on time and lessons start promptly.

Children get on really well together and show care and consideration for others. They are developing a good sense of how they can contribute to the happiness and well being of others.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good	Very Good	Satisfactory

*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 best teaching is seen in the nursery where it is very good and Years 1 and 2. In the classes where the teachers are less experienced the teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers mostly challenge the children really well and move lessons on at a good pace. Their questioning is effective because it challenges pupils to think more deeply and helps children to learn from one another. The younger and less experienced teachers are not yet as skilled at matching work to the needs of pupils in some lessons and higher attainers could be better challenged.

Literacy is taught well, particularly in the Key Stage 1 classes where some lessons are of excellent quality. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to good effect in developing pupils' reading skills. In writing, they are very good at helping children to consolidate their use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. The good teaching in all aspects of mathematics helps children to make particularly good progress in number work, handling data and in mental arithmetic. Key Stage 1 pupils are learning how to solve problems at a very good rate. Teachers give children plenty of opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. The teaching of music is good. Teachers are not as confident to teach some aspects of design and technology and the rate of learning in this subject is not fast enough.

Good support from teachers and other adults is helping children with special educational needs to cope with their work well and gain a great deal of confidence.

The pace of learning for some pupils with English as an additional language is not as good as it should be because most teachers are unsure of how best to help them.

All teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and manage their classes well. They have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Children respond positively and behave well during their lessons. In the majority of lessons teachers make very good use of adult helpers to support children's learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. Good use is made of visits and visitors to enhance the quality of children's learning experiences. A wide range of extra curricular clubs and activities are available for the children.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. They are well supported during lessons and achieve well against their individual targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Unsatisfactory. Most teachers are not confident and need support and guidance to enable them to provide more effectively for some of these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural	Very good. There is an excellent policy to guide and support staff. There is a strong emphasis on developing Christian principles. Good use is made of assembly times and subjects such as music, art and design

development	and history to promote children's understanding and development.
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How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Procedures for child protection are secure. Teachers know their pupils well. The school promotes racial harmony well.
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The school has an effective partnership with its parents. Whilst the curriculum meets the statutory requirements some aspects of design and technology are not covered well enough.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and senior staff provide a strong lead in key areas of the school's work and have kept the school on track during a difficult period. Some staff have far more responsibilities than teachers in most schools and, as a result, the development of some subjects has faltered.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. They are actively involved in the decision making process. They have successfully resolved some very difficult staffing issues. They make good use of their individual expertise to support the school's work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher and key staff have a good understanding of what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve. They have plans in place to bring about the necessary improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school applies the principles of best value well. It compares its performance to other schools and challenges itself to do even better.

Although there have been difficulties with absence and changes, the school has sufficient suitably qualified staff. Most subjects are well resourced, but more resources are needed for design and technology and also best use is not made of these or resources in ICT. The school's accommodation is adequate and well maintained.

### 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>• Children like school;</li> <li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school;</li> <li>• Behaviour is good;</li> <li>• The school helps children to become mature and sensible;</li> <li>• There is good teaching.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of work that children are expected to do at home;</li> <li>• Some feel they could be better informed about how their child is getting on.</li> </ul>

Parents have positive views about the school. They have confidence in the leadership and management and consider it to be a better school than it was at the time of the last inspection because the partnership with them has improved significantly. The inspection team endorses the positive views and whilst recognising the good quality of teaching, does however, identify areas where it could be better. The school's approach to the use of homework is inconsistent and the policy needs to be more effectively communicated and implemented.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Most children enter the school with better knowledge and skills than usually seen at this age. The school builds well on this and they achieve well in the nursery, and Key Stage 1 classes, but this tails off a little in the reception class and Key Stage 2, and in some subjects. The school has recently been through a period of upheaval with prolonged staff absence, covered by temporary teachers. This situation mainly affected the progress of pupils now in Year 4. Development in some subjects has stalled owing to staff changes, and where this is the case, pupils' progress has been hindered.
2. High standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science at Key Stage 1 have, nonetheless, been maintained against a background of uncertainty. Pupils start school with strong communication and language skills, but they develop an even richer vocabulary and become very confident and articulate speakers. The school successfully fosters their interest in reading and writing and their standards of work are well above average for their age at both key stages.
3. Standards in mathematics are also well above average throughout the school, with pupils showing particular strengths in mental calculation and in the way that they apply their knowledge to solve problems. They develop their numeracy skills well in other subjects such as science, where they use them to measure accurately and record their findings using tables and graphs.
4. Science is another area where pupils shine. They have a better than average knowledge and understanding of scientific facts and can conduct experiments with due regard for making their tests fair.
5. The achievement of some Key Stage 2 pupils is not as strong given the standards they reached in the Key Stage 1 classes. Last year, the headteacher took a major teaching responsibility for the current Year 4 class because of concerns over their rate of progress and the behaviour of a minority of children. Whilst this action helped to stabilise and improve the situation, the prolonged change and disruption has limited the achievement of the higher attainers in particular.
6. In the Key Stage 2 and reception classes where there are inexperienced teachers, higher attainers are not extended to their limit and those with outstanding ability underachieve. This is most noticeable in investigative work when higher attainers could be taken further, for example in setting up their own science experiments or in working with more complex problems in mathematics. In the reception class, higher attaining pupils could make more headway in developing their literacy and numeracy skills.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress given their learning difficulties. They receive effective support and encouragement and gain confidence in themselves.
8. The increase in the number of children learning English as an additional language is presenting a problem as the school has no other outside support to help teach them. Two staff have experience in this area but the rest lack confidence. Whilst the pupils make good progress in the nursery, throughout the rest of the school some are not as well supported and their language skills do not develop as fast as they could.

9. Standards in music are well above average, and many pupils are competent musicians. By the time they leave the school all pupils can read music and confidently play at least one instrument. The school has a very successful orchestra who perform to a high level for example, during assembly times.
10. Pupils could achieve a little more in ICT. Many children develop a good level of skill at home, but the school does not build well enough on this, especially in the older classes. Whilst standards are average, given the pupils' capabilities, they could be higher.
11. Standards in history and geography are above average and in all other subjects are average except in design and technology where they are below those expected. The slow development of this subject, as a result of the absence of the teacher with responsibility, has affected pupils' achievement. Some teachers lack confidence to teach some of the skills and techniques children need to use when working with tools and equipment to make quality products.

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

12. Pupils have very good attitudes towards the school, as was noted at the time of the last inspection. From their early days in the nursery, where they quickly settle into their classroom environment, children are very keen to explore new learning. They work hard, are very well motivated and persevere with their work. They try hard to please their teachers and are pleased and confident when asked to talk to adults about their work.
13. Almost all parents who returned the questionnaire or attended the meeting agreed that their children like school. This enjoyment stems from the very good relationships that exist between pupils and staff and the value that the school places on the children. Pupils clearly enjoy and respond well to opportunities to work together cooperatively.
14. Children's' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. They move around the school sensibly and at lunchtimes in the dining hall they calmly and happily chat with their friends. This represents an improvement since the last inspection where there were some concerns about behaviour in the playground. The children have responded very well to the improved playground facilities and strategies the school has introduced to develop positive play and games skills. As a result of these efforts children work and play together very harmoniously. No oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection. The children have been actively involved in drawing up the school rules. As a result they understand these rules and follow them well.
15. During assemblies pupils sit quietly and patiently while other classes arrive and their very good behaviour is reflected in their respectful silences for reflection and prayer and their enthusiastic singing and participation in all the activities.
16. There has been 1 fixed period exclusion in the last 12 months indicating the school's determination to ensure all pupils can have a positive learning experience.
17. The children are very polite. The teachers act as really good role models and children learn well from them. During a lesson in Year 2, the teacher realised she had made a mistake and apologised to the pupil in front of the whole class for it. This reinforces and helps them to remember the importance of saying 'sorry' when things have gone wrong. They share resources sensibly with one another and wait patiently for their turn.

18. Children show a good level of responsibility when they volunteer for or carry out tasks set by their teachers such as setting up the hall for assembly or working the overhead projector. This mature approach is also seen in lessons when teachers allow them to work independently or as part of a group. In a Year 1 English lesson one child acted as the teacher picking out words for the group to spell. They wrote their attempts on a whiteboard and had it checked by the 'teacher' before moving on. They praised one another for their efforts. When one boy missed a letter out of the word the 'teacher' congratulated him for trying so hard and nearly getting it right. Since the last inspection the school has been successful in helping children to become more independent but this could be taken further with older pupils. For example, in science they still need to be given more opportunities to devise their own line of enquiry.
19. Unauthorised absence is very rare. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are very good and contribute strongly to the progress they make in most subjects.

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

20. At the time of the last inspection the quality of teaching was judged to be good and a strength of the school. The experience and expertise of the staff is considerably different from when the school was last inspected. As a result the overall quality of teaching is not as strong as it was then. The strongest teaching is seen in the Key Stage 1 classes with the more experienced teachers, where lessons are consistently good and often very good. In the Foundation Stage the teaching is good overall, but especially strong in the nursery where it is very good. In the reception and Key Stage 2 classes, teaching by the less experienced staff is satisfactory.
21. A number of factors contribute to the strong teaching in the Key Stage 1 classes. Both teachers have high expectations and challenge the children really well during most lessons. Work is well matched to children's ability and as a result all groups make good progress. Both teachers move the children's learning on at a fast pace. They explain very clearly to children what it is they are going to do and why. This helps to motivate children and capture their interest. They give children a clear focus. For example, during a geography lesson on human and physical features, the Year 2 teacher asked the children to listen carefully to the story of 'Katie Morag and the two grandmothers' and 'to think how it is different from where they live?'
22. The Year 1 teacher is a leading literacy teacher for the local education authority. Her work in this subject is of a very high quality and she is a skilled teacher of reading and writing. Her very good questioning skills are used well to promote and reinforce pupils' learning. As she was reading a book to the class she stopped and asked them, 'Why am I changing my voice?' They knew it was because it was a different character talking. Later on she drew their attention to an ellipse. She asked, 'What does this tell us?' and helped them to realise that it told them the sentence had not ended, but that there was more to come.
23. In the Foundation Stage, relationships between teachers and their pupils are of a high quality. Staff are effective at building children's confidence. As a result, the children are very settled and happy in their work. The best teaching is in the nursery and children get off to a really good start. The teacher is skilled in ensuring that all the activities capture children's interest. In the reception class, children sometimes spend too long sitting and listening as a class and some activities do not always challenge the higher attainers enough.

24. In the Key Stage 2 classes, the teachers cater well for most groups but do not always challenge or engage higher attaining pupils as well as they might. In some lessons, the learning objectives are too broad and are not broken down into what the teacher expects these higher attainers to learn. In one lesson, the objective was to 'read and write vocabulary, recognise multiplication can be done in any order as an array and multiplication as repeated addition.' The same task was given to both the middle and higher attainers. There are times when they don't move the work on quickly enough because of their inexperience. In Year 4, the teacher demonstrated clearly how to approach an investigation and wanted them to continue the task and identify the pattern and rule. Some of the higher attainers picked this up very quickly and did not need to do the task but the teacher missed the opportunity to challenge them further by setting a more complex and challenging activity.
25. A good feature of teaching across the school is the way in which teachers manage their classes. Relationships are good and children respond well. Teachers encourage them to show positive attitudes to their work, and expect them to get on well when asked to work in pairs or as a small group.
26. In most lessons adult helpers are used very effectively. In the best lessons they are given very specific guidelines. These set out what they have to do with their group and what the expected outcome of the tasks should be. This enables them to support the children's learning well because they know exactly what it is they are doing and why.
27. The teaching of children with special educational needs is good. They are well provided for and receive good support particularly during group work from the teacher, adult helpers or classroom assistant.
28. The school has recently admitted children with English as an additional language and recognises that it needs to improve the quality of the provision and teaching for these pupils. The staff need training and support to enable them to engage these children more fully and consistently during lessons.
29. The teaching of some aspects of design and technology, in the Key Stage 1 and 2 classes, is weak. Some teachers lack confidence. They are not sure how to help pupils develop more advanced skills and techniques in these subjects. As a result, the rate of learning in this subject is not fast enough. Whilst the teachers know what to teach in physical education they are not always sure how to help higher attaining pupils develop further some of their skills and techniques in gymnastics and dance.
30. The teaching of art has improved since the last inspection and is now sound. Music is very well taught because the subject leader is knowledgeable and a skilled teacher. She uses her strengths well to provide her pupils with really good quality lessons and to support her colleagues, which increases their confidence to teach the subject. As a result, children are very well taught and achieve really well when performing or composing music.
31. Whilst there are some inconsistencies in the quality of marking, some of it is excellent. The Year 3 teacher's work is a model of good practice. It is detailed, thorough and moves pupils on in their thinking. Following an investigation in mathematics, the teacher wrote 'Fantastic investigation. I wonder what would happen if you multiplied two odd numbers?'

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

32. The school provides a good range of relevant and interesting learning opportunities, which enables most pupils to achieve well. This is a similar picture to that found at the time of the last inspection.
33. The newly opened nursery provides a rich variety of experiences for the youngest pupils, many of who come to school with higher attainment than normally seen for children their age. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage classes builds well on their knowledge and skills and challenges them further in every area of learning.
34. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 classes, careful planning ensures that literacy and numeracy skills are given sufficient attention, but not at the expense of other subjects. The curriculum has a good balance and pupils have the chance to achieve well in areas such as music, where many excel. A lot of practical work is included and pupils have plenty of opportunities for 'hands on' experiences. Visits to places of interest and visitors to the school add another rich dimension to their learning and enliven the curriculum. For example, a visit from two musicians who ran an Indian music workshop helped Year 2 pupils to learn about music from other cultures and to learn and sing traditional songs from another culture. Year 4's, visit to a Mosque developed their awareness and understanding of other cultures and beliefs. An artist in residence helped children to develop and improve their art skills
35. Pupils' learning is effectively reinforced well because the curriculum is planned in such a way that good links are made between subjects. Literacy and numeracy work is carefully threaded into other subjects so that pupils develop important skills through applying them in their other work. In science for example, they are able to practise writing reports and presenting factual information; they sharpen their mathematical skill through estimating and measuring or constructing graphs. Although satisfactory overall, pupils' learning in ICT is not as well developed as it could be in other subjects. There is scope for improvement here, especially as some pupils start with a good base of knowledge from the experiences that they have at home.
36. Most pupils face the right amount of challenge through their work to help them make good progress. However, higher attainers, and particularly those with outstanding ability in reception and Years 3 and 4, need more. The inexperience of some of the teachers, results in them planning work which is too low key to stretch the more able. This is most noticeable in activities where investigative or enquiry work are prominent, and they are given too much direction or tasks which do not make them think hard enough for themselves.
37. The curriculum does not meet the needs of the few pupils learning English as an additional language well enough. All are at different stages of language acquisition, but for all of them, except in the nursery, what is provided does not ensure that they progress as well as they should. The school's intake is increasing and action is needed to make adequate provision for them.
38. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are supported well. The careful assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage mean that those with difficulties are quickly identified. The school's very good relationship with its parents ensures a strong joint effort to support them. Whilst they are often given extra time or attention, they are expected to tackle the same work as the rest of the class and expectations of them remain high throughout the school.

39. The school's provision for children to participate in after school activities has improved greatly since the last inspection when it was judged to be poor. It is now good. The wide variety of clubs and after school activities gives many pupils an outlet for their creativity or the opportunity to socialise and to cement friendships. The school offers them more chances to develop interests and talents than usually seen for children of this age. Those who enjoy sport are able, for example, to take part in football coaching, while those who prefer more thoughtful pursuits can join the library club or the Christian club, which meets at lunchtime.
40. The school looks outwards for ways in which it can enrich the curriculum. Links with the local community, other organisations and schools are strong and provide many mutual benefits. For example, external agencies are used to support children who wish to learn a modern foreign language. Links with the local churches are very good and help to support pupils' religious and social education. Involvement with a local professional football club raises the profile of health education and sports awareness in the school.
41. The school has very good links with its partner institutions. The Gosforth pyramid of schools provides training opportunities for staff and access to shared resources. The children join with pupils from other schools to sing together. There are close links with the Diocese, which provides good support for the school. Links with the local middle school are very good. Visits, meetings and shared performances all help to ease and promote the transition of children from one school to the next.
42. The school's provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is good. It is supported by the strong commitment of the whole staff and governors. They have all taken part in training for drugs awareness and for 'Circle Time' (a time used in class for children to discuss pertinent issues). Good seeds for future responsible citizenship are sown through assemblies and in class discussions. Pupils are encouraged to see how they can make a valuable contribution to others within the school and wider communities. Pupils are actively involved in supporting many charities including local ones. This ensures they have the opportunities to give back to their own community and become more aware of the needs of others.
43. There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is an improvement since the last inspection. There is an excellent policy to guide teachers and help them to plan for this provision in their lessons. Pupils are encouraged to work together in harmony and across different age groups. They learn to respect themselves and each other and to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. There is a very positive climate evident in all lessons.
44. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Pupils are encouraged and given the opportunities to reflect on their own and others' experiences, feelings, values and beliefs in assemblies and through subjects such as religious education and music. The children learn to write their own prayers, which are prominently displayed in their classrooms and used in acts of worship. Children gain a sense of awe and wonder at the natural world through first hand experiences such as watching the development of frogspawn and caterpillars.
45. The provision for moral development is very good. The children know and understand their simple code of conduct because they helped to draw it up. Again, assemblies lend strong support to the teaching of principles that distinguish right from wrong. This is reinforced throughout the day as all staff and governors work to create an ethos in which Christian principles are lived out. Staff model this very well showing respect for their pupils at all times. The school very strongly supports children in charitable initiatives both for large national charities such as the 'Shoe Box' appeal and also

local ones as for the homeless and the Hospice. These help the children to be aware of the needs of others and more grateful for what they have.

46. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school has won a 'Tidy Schools' award, which demonstrates the effectiveness of the school's training to be aware of and to care for their environment. Children are given plenty of opportunities to develop awareness of social rules in different settings. The wide range of visits, visitors and community links help the children to understand more of their society.
47. The provision for cultural development is very good. The school finds many ways to expand children's horizons and increase their cultural development. A parent who is a practising Muslim visited school to talk to the children about Islam. Lessons are well planned to support understanding of different cultures. For example, Year 2 children studied the making of masks from around the world and their significance. Children are given opportunities to listen to music from many different countries during assemblies and music lessons. Displays are used effectively to make children aware of their own and other cultures and their languages.

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

48. This has improved since the last inspection. The school takes good care of its pupils and parents are very happy with the attention their children receive. A safe caring environment within which pupils are respected and can flourish is clearly evident. This helps to boost children's confidence as learners. Teachers know their classes well, and the senior and longer serving staff have a very good knowledge of the children's families. As a result, the school can help different children appropriately. The promotion of good social behaviour at lunchtime has been a big improvement since the last inspection.
49. Staff in the nursery have established routines that help children to quickly settle and feel well supported. Throughout the school, children with special educational needs are given good guidance and make good progress.
50. The school is not as successful in supporting some of the children who are identified as having a particular gift or those children with English as an additional language.
51. A strong emphasis is placed on promoting children's welfare, health and safety. Child protection arrangements are secure. The school has ensured that staff receive plenty of training. All staff and governors have attended child protection courses. Some staff have had training in aspects of health and safety or had their first aid training updated. The school ensures regular and thorough risk assessments are completed. Good use is made of an individual governor's expertise to check the buildings and make recommendations for bringing about improvement to existing procedures. The school has effective ways of teaching children how to keep themselves safe. It gives a high priority to the elimination and prevention of oppressive behaviour and bullying, for example through assemblies and class discussions.
52. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting regular attendance and punctuality are good. The attendance figures are very high because children are well motivated to learn, enjoy school and are keen to attend.

53. At the time of the last inspection pupils' behaviour was not as good in the playground and at lunchtime as at other times. The school has worked hard to tackle this by redeveloping the playground, providing markings for games, seating in quieter areas and play equipment. The midday staff have been included in training for behaviour management and, in particular, in how to encourage children to play games. In the dining hall, midday staff have better strategies to ensure rules and routines are followed. A behaviour book is kept by midday staff, which is monitored weekly to ensure the policy and practice is effective. Good behaviour is also promoted through the children remembering, understanding and accepting the rules in the Code of Conduct, which they helped to produce.
54. The school keeps a close eye on pupils' progress in their work and in their personal development. Records of their achievements are kept up to date and senior staff quickly spot those who are falling behind expectations. These records are also used to identify patterns or weaknesses in specific groups or classes, and the school is good at analysing results and taking action to address areas where the children need to improve. For example, the school is aware of the weaknesses in its provision for pupils with English as an additional language and in the challenge for higher attainers in classes where the teachers are less experienced.

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

55. The school's partnership with parents is good and has strengthened since the last inspection. A key issue was the need to improve the quality of information given to parents. Much time and effort is now invested in providing a variety of useful information for them. Notice boards and newsletters are regularly used to provide parents with day-to-day information. They receive a letter that tells them the topics the children will cover during the next half term. Teachers also send home a brief overview of their planning so that parents can help their children at home.
56. Parents find the occasional curriculum evenings to be very useful. For example, they were particularly pleased with the advice they were given on how best to support their children with their reading.
57. Parents also find the two formal consultation evenings each year to be very useful. They receive detailed progress reports and are able to discuss their children's targets and how they can best help them. The school responded positively to the difficulties some parents had in attending these meetings by providing a wider range of times and days. The written end of year reports have been improved and now give a much clearer picture of the progress made. Areas of strength and development are clearly explained and targets included for the next year.
58. Parents of children in the nursery receive excellent information before their child enters the school. They welcome visits which staff make to meet children in their own home before they start nursery. This helps to establish trusting relationships between home and school. They receive good quality information, which helps them to help their child settle as quickly as possible into school life.
59. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept well informed of their progress, and the school makes every effort to secure a strong partnership with them. This doubles the help that most children receive.
60. The school actively encourages all parents and benefits greatly from their involvement in the life of the school. They contribute to many of the clubs that run outside of lessons, including the very popular 'All Stars' club, football coaching and library club. Many parents turn up every week to help supervise the children on their way to and at

the swimming pool. Parents also have a significant impact on children's reading and computer skills through the help they give them at home. There is an active and very successful Parent Teachers' Association, which raises funds and runs a range of successful social events. One area where the school is not as successful is in the way it communicates the policy for homework to all parents. Some are not at all clear about what is expected.

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

61. Weaknesses identified in the management of the school at the time of the last inspection are no longer evident. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has formed a strong senior management team and is making best use of the expertise and experience of the other two senior staff. She has successfully seen the school through a difficult period and is now in the process of providing much needed stability, particularly for Year 4. The headteacher and governors have taken difficult staffing decisions and focused very sharply on the specific, more pressing priorities. Given the situation they have found themselves in they have had to give less attention to some areas.
62. The headteacher and her key staff have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They provide a very effective and strong lead in key areas of the school's work. They have a shared vision for the school and have managed successfully to keep the school on track and maintain its very good results at the age of 7 years during a difficult period. They are successful in their individual and collective responsibilities.
63. Their thorough analysis of the school's performance is raising standards for example, in writing. The school looked for the reasons why it was not getting as many children to the higher levels in writing as it was in reading. Guidance was provided for staff that enabled them to assess and pinpoint far more accurately where children were up to and what they need to do next. This helped teachers plan lessons more effectively and the immediate impact has been an improvement in the percentage of children reaching the higher Level 3 by the age of 7 years.
64. The responsibilities for the leadership and management of the subjects are shared between the four experienced teachers. Each of them has had to take on additional roles because the newly qualified teachers who are in their first year of teaching do not have subject responsibilities. At present, these four have a much wider range of responsibilities than teachers in most schools. This lessens the time and attention that they are able to give to any one subject.
65. Each of them has had a significant impact upon the developments in their main areas of responsibility but not so much on some others. Whilst some of the additional areas have ticked over, there has been slippage in pupils' standards and achievements particularly in design and technology, ICT and aspects of physical education since the last inspection.
66. The deputy headteacher effectively manages the provision for children with special educational needs. She has ensured that the school has maintained the good provision and support for these children, which was identified at the time of the last inspection. She also has responsibility for the Foundation Stage. In a very short space of time, she has established very good provision for the nursery children. She has a clear vision and plan of action for the development of the newly formed nursery and is already driving this into place.

67. The subject leader for mathematics is also doing a very effective job. She analyses data, children's work and teachers' planning. Through this weaknesses are identified and appropriate action is taken to bring about improvement. Having identified the need to develop children's problem solving skills, training was provided for staff. The impact of this is clearly seen in the quality of teaching and progress the children, particularly in the Key Stage 1 classes, are making during lessons. The impact on the Key Stage 2 classes is not now as evident because the staff have changed and the new staff have not had this training.
68. Good subject knowledge and strong leadership has had a major influence on other subjects, such as music. The enthusiasm, drive and commitment of the subject leader has ensured the quality and standards of the work are every bit as good as they were at the time of the last inspection.
69. The school has developed effective systems for checking on teaching and the work of the school. Good use is made of local authority staff to support the school's processes for self review. However, owing to the recent staffing problems some of these systems such as the programme for observing teachers by the senior staff have been put on hold. Until recently the head and key staff observed lessons. They provide teachers with feedback on what they do well and what they need to do to improve.
70. The school has established an effective performance management system. Objectives are set that reflect the key priorities for the school. The induction programme for the newly qualified teachers ensures that they have regular contact and advice from a senior and experienced member of the staff. This helps them to develop the skills and increase their confidence to deal with the challenges they face and those that are often associated with taking a class for the first time.
71. The governing body are a well informed and active group who are doing a much better job than they were judged to be the last time the school was inspected. They are meeting their statutory requirements. They have an effective committee structure. They take responsibility for making key decisions and check the impact of these on the standards and quality of children's education. They have successfully resolved a difficult personnel issue. They make good use of their own individual expertise to support the work of the school. For example, one governor played a major role in supporting and helping the staff to improve standards in art, which was identified as a key issue for action in the last report. She, like a number of her colleagues, visits school and observes lessons. Through this a valuable oversight of what is going well and what needs to be improved is gained.
72. The school budget is managed effectively. The headteacher and governing body earmarked the surplus in the school's budget to finance the development of the nursery unit. The principles of best value are applied well. The school compares its performance with all schools in both a national and similar context. It consults its pupils, for example on the school's code of conduct and the development of the outdoor area. This ensures that the children's views are taken into account. Whilst it does consult with parents, it could do more to seek their views and communicate with them over the policy for homework.
73. The office administrator ensures that the day-to-day running of the school is efficient. This enables teachers to concentrate on their teaching because there are no disruptions. Resource levels are satisfactory in all subjects. However, best use is not made of the available resources to support the teaching and learning in design and technology. The resources for ICT could also be used more effectively to support work in other subjects. Whilst the building is adequate, the hall is small and because

much of the perimeter is used for storing apparatus and furniture, the space is reduced for physical education lessons and restricts children's learning.

74. The school now has formal systems for identifying children who are gifted and talented. Work programmes are written for these pupils but more needs to be done to ensure that they are sufficiently engaged, interested and challenged during some lessons, particularly in the Key Stage 2 classes.

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

75. To continue to raise standards and improve pupils' achievement, the governors, headteacher and staff should address the following issues:
- a) increase the pace of learning for higher attainers in the reception class and in Key Stage 2;  
(paragraphs 1, 5, 6, 10, 23,24,36, 49, 73, 78, 84, 97, 106, 119, 130, 158, 159)
  - b) make better provision for pupils learning English as an additional language;  
(paragraphs 8, 28, 37, 49, 78, 85, 107, 143)
  - c) improve achievement and raise standards in design and technology;.(paragraphs 11, 29, 64, 139, 141, 142)

The following areas, whilst not key issues, should be considered for inclusion in the post inspection action plan:

- the use of ICT to support pupils' work in other subjects;  
(paragraphs 35, 124, 159)
- ensure that all parents are aware of the school's approach to homework and that the policy is implemented consistently;  
(paragraphs 59, 71, 155)
- improve teachers' confidence to teach elements of the dance and gymnastics programmes of study.  
(paragraphs 29, 64, 167, 170)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	9	9	9	2	0	0
Percentage	3	30	30	30	7	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 three percentage points

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	19	141
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	6

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	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.9
National comparative data	5.4

#### 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
	2002	11	17	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	26	26	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (100)	93 (100)	93 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	26	26	26
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	93 (100)	93 (100)	93 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
132	1	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Average class size	28

### Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	54

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	26
Number of pupils per FTE adult	9

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2001 - 02
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	£
Total income	304311
Total expenditure	324665
Expenditure per pupil	2209
Balance brought forward from previous year	37502
Balance carried forward to next year	17148

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	179
Number of questionnaires returned	104

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	31	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	46	3	1	11
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	50	4	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	33	13	3	22
The teaching is good.	48	41	1	0	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	46	18	2	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	37	1	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	43	1	2	8
The school works closely with parents.	41	41	11	2	8
The school is well led and managed.	50	34	7	3	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	36	0	0	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	42	10	0	13

Percentages are rounded to the nearest integer and may not total 100.

## **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**

76. The school's purpose built nursery opened after the start of the autumn term. It admits children at the start of the term after their third birthday and parents choose either morning or afternoon sessions for their children. Currently 23 children (19 girls and 4 boys) attend during the morning session and 13 (5 girls and 8 boys) attend during the afternoon. They are taught by two experienced adults, a teacher (who is also the deputy headteacher) and a nursery teaching assistant.
77. The nursery admits children from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences but overall, they show better skills and knowledge than most three-year-olds in all areas of learning. They have particularly well developed language and communication skills, personal and social skills, and also a good understanding of the world around them.
78. Children transfer to the reception class in September of the year in which they are five. There are at present 11 girls and 19 boys on roll. A teacher and qualified nursery nurse teach this class. When they leave the reception class, most children are exceeding the expectations for their age in all areas of learning, and their personal and social skills are much better than usual. About a third of the children are also attaining much more than is expected of them in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.
79. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage, although their rate of learning is much faster in the nursery where the teaching is very good in all areas of learning. The teacher is very skilled and experienced. Here, adults are particularly good at making sure that all children are challenged well. Action is taken, for example, to ensure that the needs of both boys and girls are met. As a result, all children including higher attainers, those who are learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, progress well. In the reception class, whilst it is satisfactory, the pace of learning slows for these groups. Teaching is satisfactory overall in the reception class but the teacher is not as skilled at matching work to their needs.
80. Staff in the Foundation Stage have a very good partnership with parents and they are made welcome in both the classes. At the start and end of sessions the atmosphere is cheerful as parents and staff update each other about the children. The security of this relationship is one of the reasons why children settle so well in school and quickly show trust in adults.
81. The work of the Foundation Stage is very well led and managed by the deputy headteacher. She is a knowledgeable practitioner who sets an excellent example for staff through high quality teaching. She has a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, and manages the work of the team in addressing areas for improvement well. Her strong sense of purpose has been a key factor in influencing developments in the provision for the school's youngest children.

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

82. Although they relate confidently to adults, some of the children are rather reticent about choosing their own activities and selecting resources when they first come to nursery. The adults encourage them to take increasing responsibility for looking after themselves and deciding what they want to do. As a result, they increase their independence well and start to initiate their own ideas.
83. Nursery staff place a high emphasis on helping children to relate well to others and make friends. Most play happily together, share their toys and take turns when, for instance, they use the wheeled vehicles during outdoor play. This strong start is built upon in the reception class, where children show good co-operative skills during lessons. During mathematics games, for example, they wait patiently for each other to throw dice and move their counters along the board.
84. In both classes, adults listen carefully to what children have to say. The children learn through this good example and listen carefully to others.
85. In the nursery, children begin to spend longer periods of time on activities and start to concentrate really well. This is because the adults have a sharp awareness of what it is that will hold their attention, challenge them and engage them sufficiently. During one extended activity an adult looked at photographs of the children as babies with them. The children stayed with her for a long time talking about themselves and what they were like then. Some activities in the reception class do not maintain children's interest because they are either too complicated or too easy, so children drift away to look for other things. In some lessons they sit listening to the teacher in a large group, and although they concentrate at first, they start to fidget and lose interest when this goes on for too long.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

86. When they arrive in the nursery, most children already speak clearly and quite fluently. Most make good progress in the Foundation Stage classes because adults take every opportunity to engage them in conversation and prompt them to explain what they are thinking or doing. Children in the nursery change their voice to pretend when they use the role play home area. In the reception class they use their language skills increasingly well in creative work to imitate characters when playing with small figures or toy animals. Children learning English as an additional language do not progress as well in the reception class where adults are not confident enough in developing their language skills.
87. Nursery children are good at handling books and most recognise their own names. Higher attaining children know the initial sounds of some words and can match them to letters. By the time they leave the reception class, most are reading familiar words and sentences. They are used to handling books and when sharing books with adults they enthusiastically join in with familiar parts or repeated lines in stories. They can remember the main events in a story and know the sequence in which they happen.
88. Some of the higher attaining nursery children write their own name, and the plentiful supply of pens, pencils and paper encourages them to extend these skills. In both classes, children see writing as purposeful because teachers ensure that writing tasks are an integral part of many activities. In the nursery, for example, children make marks in the appointments book in the baby clinic role play area. Most children in the reception class are in line to exceed expectations for their age by the end of the year for example, by writing words and sentences independently and illustrating their drawings.

## **Mathematical development**

89. Most children count well beyond ten by the end of their reception year and they know how to find one more or one less than numbers from one to ten. They get off to a very good start in the nursery where adults are skilled at developing their knowledge of numbers and shapes. Much of this is done through everyday activities that are part of the nursery routine, such as counting out the right number of snacks at break time. During baking activities, children thoroughly enjoy developing their skills of estimating and counting by choosing the number and shape of decorations for their biscuits.
90. In the reception class, progress is steady and number work is developed through songs and counting games. Some activities do not move children on as quickly as in the nursery because they are too complicated and need more support from an adult.
91. Children confidently use mathematical language to count or to describe the shape and size of objects. In both the Foundation Stage classes, they express what they mean in terms such as 'bigger', 'smaller', 'taller than', and they refer to the position of objects. During outdoor play, for example, one nursery child told another, 'Put your toy on the back of my bike and I will carry it for you.'
92. The nursery provides children with many opportunities to develop their recognition of patterns and shapes, as there are a great variety of good quality resources such as jigsaws and shape puzzles. In the reception class, children enjoy reinforcing their skills through computer work with programs that prompt them to count or select the correct shapes to complete a game.

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

93. Many children start in the nursery with a better knowledge of the world around them than most children of their age. The nursery builds on this well and develops their natural curiosity through practical experiences. When a health visitor came to school, they were keen to ask questions and compare themselves to the baby she had brought. Baking activities help them to learn simple scientific facts. For example, when baking 'firework' biscuits they recognised that the ingredients changed once they were mixed together and cooked.
94. In the nursery, adults make good use of programmable toys to develop children's sense of direction. They show a tremendous sense of wonder as the 'ladybird roamer' moves towards the flower pictures laid out on the floor.
95. In the reception class, children confidently use the computer without adult support and can use the mouse to control the program. Through their play in the Foundation Stage classes, they learn that many everyday objects are controlled by technology, for example the toy domestic equipment in the 'home play' and 'baby clinic' areas.
96. Reception children have a good awareness of the surrounding area and talk confidently about the local amenities near their homes. They reflect this knowledge in their play with construction apparatus and show that they understand the basic construction of buildings, by adding roofs and doors. At the end of the reception year, children handle a variety of tools and equipment safely and can use both small and large building blocks in construction work.

## **Physical development**

97. When they start in the nursery, most children have good co-ordination and show good control in their movements. Some are a little uncertain about more adventurous activities, such as using the climbing frames, but adults support them well and encourage them to try things out.
98. The outdoor provision for the Foundation Stage children has only recently been installed and additions are still being made. Although there are opportunities for children to use wheeled vehicles and large climbing apparatus, they are restricted in some weather because of muddy surfaces and cannot safely develop their physical skills to the full extent.
99. Reception children show better control over small movements than normally seen, and for instance, they manage clothes fastenings very well. They manipulate small objects easily, such as the button on a camera shutter or joining small building block pieces.

## **Creative development**

100. Children exceed the expectations for their age in drawing and painting. Reception children draw figures of people and animals with recognisable features; they make collages and models with recycled materials such as fabric and wool, and they mix paint confidently. In both classes, children make good progress because they are given plenty of opportunities to experiment with different materials and express themselves through their work. Adults skilfully draw on the children's experiences and interests to stimulate their creativity. Nursery children for example, used bold brush strokes and bright colours to make striking paintings of fireworks.
101. Both classes are often heard singing and children develop a good repertoire of favourite songs and rhymes, although they need more opportunities to compose their own music and experiment with sounds.
102. Children show good imagination in role play activities. Reception children suggest ideas and adapt their own play well to that of others, and enter enthusiastically into each other's imaginary worlds. Three children played with the sand and made up stories about a bear hunt. They used small plastic figures and added their own parts to the story line, each taking on different roles and voices and developing ideas together. Adults in both classes are good at joining in with role play and then withdrawing at an appropriate moment when the children seem ready to continue on their own.

## **ENGLISH**

103. Standards observed during the inspection are the same as indicated by the national test results at the age of 7 years and similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. They are well above average because far more pupils, at the age of 7 years, achieve the higher Level 3 than in most schools. In the present Year 2, virtually all the pupils are on course to achieve the national average and a significant number are working at the higher Level 3.
104. In Years 1 and 2 teaching is very good. Both teachers have very good subject knowledge and use it really well to support children's learning. They are very clear about what they want their class to learn and share this effectively with the children. As a result, children understand what they are doing and why. Children develop a secure knowledge of phonemes and sound blends. They make good use of this

learning to support their reading and independent writing. Lessons are very well planned and the work is set at the right level for the different ability groups within the class. This helps all children including those with special educational needs to make good progress. Throughout lessons, previous learning is appropriately recalled and reinforced; for example, children are reminded of the use of full stops, capital letters, speech and exclamation marks and sentence construction. This is a reason why children produce well constructed sentences with correct punctuation. Handwriting is also taught well and is setting solid foundations for good future standards of neatness and presentation. Lessons move at a fast pace. Children are really well challenged because the teachers have high expectations. Pupils are given a lot of positive feedback and encouragement. All these factors plus skilful questioning by teachers and opportunities for children to discuss their answers contribute to the effective learning.

105. Pupils are able to work independently with good levels of accuracy. They write confidently and assess and check the accuracy of their own work through the use of 'ticks.' For example, in one excellent Year 1 lesson, pupils were able to see a full sentence with capitals and a full stop all used correctly and then use this to assess their own work. They put a tick in the bottom left hand corner of their work if it was correct.
106. Children enter school with very good standards in speaking and listening. Staff are aware of this and pitch lessons accordingly. Children are articulate and thoughtful in their responses. Their attention is captured by the quality of teaching. They listen and behave very well in lessons. Good classroom routines are in place to support pupils and extra adult support is used very effectively.
107. In the Key Stage 2 classes, children build on these very good foundations and continue to make progress, albeit at a slightly slower rate. Both the teachers are new to the school. Their subject knowledge is sound. However, planning of lessons does not always take into account pupils' differing abilities and work given to the higher attainers is sometimes too easy. Teachers are enthusiastic in their delivery of lessons and pupils listen attentively, respond well with a very good range of vocabulary and produce good quality work. They spell words accurately and use punctuation correctly. They write in a wide range of styles, for example, letters, reports, stories, lists, arguments and recipes and have a good understanding of purpose and requirement. Pupils continue to work independently and are able to discuss the good points of their work and note areas for improvement in order to re-draft. Their progress is aided by the very good quality of marking, especially in Year 3. Here the teacher makes clear in her written comments to pupils why their work is good and offers suggestions for further development. She writes questions inviting pupils to respond in writing underneath or in conversation.
108. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language needs to be stronger. Some do not acquire language skills at a fast enough rate, and more experienced English speakers need better support in areas of weakness, such as their written English.
109. Reading is strength of the school. Guided and shared reading sessions help pupils to develop their reading skills at a fast pace. Very good teaching in the Key Stage 1 classes gives children a wide range of strategies to help them tackle unfamiliar words. This helps them when they transfer into the Key Stage 2 classes and deal with more complex reading material. Pupils read at high levels in relation to their ages. They read fluently at an appropriate pace and use expression very well. They enjoy reading from a range of texts and are able to retrieve information from a variety of books.

110. Writing has been a priority for the school, as standards in test results whilst very good did not match the excellent performance in reading, especially in terms of the number of children achieving the higher Level 3 at the age of 7 years. Improved procedures for checking on pupils' progress, better planning, and more rigorous monitoring has paid off. In the 2002 national test results the number of children achieving the higher level was significantly better than in previous years. The work in the present Years 1 and 2 shows children are also benefiting from these improvements.
111. Leadership of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge. She supports and guides her colleagues effectively. She is aware of the strengths and areas for further development. Children's work is regularly monitored, the quality of the work is discussed and strategies for improvement agreed. This work is also well supported by the headteacher and leading literacy teacher who between them have a strong vision and commitment to high standards in English. They work as an energetic team to develop and support the less experienced staff.

## **MATHEMATICS**

112. Standards are well above average because far more pupils, at the age of 7 years, achieve the higher Level 3 than in most schools. In the present Year 2, virtually all the pupils are well on course to achieve the national average and a significant proportion is working at the higher Level 3.
113. Over the last four years the school's test results have been either A\* (top five per cent in the country) or grade A (well above average). There are a number of reasons why the good standards and progress in the Key Stage 1 classes have been maintained and sustained over a prolonged period of time.
114. The teaching in the Key Stage 1 classes is consistently good and much of it is very good. Teachers have high expectations and challenge pupils really well during lessons.
115. They make accurate assessments of how well children are doing during lessons and what they need to do next. This information is then used very effectively to plan the next sequence of lessons. As a result work is matched carefully to pupils' abilities.
116. Children's understanding of number is developed really well. They have a very good understanding of place value and are confident and competent when working with large numbers. Higher attainers in Year 1 can order a range of two and three digit numbers, for example, 30, 87, 105, 115 and 148. In the Key Stage 1 classes, the children have good recall of their number bonds. From the earliest age children are taught to develop their skills of mental calculation. Pupils in Year 2, when asked to take 9 away from a three-digit number, have strategies to do it. For example, they take away 10 and add 1. They are given plenty of opportunities to improve their skills of calculation and use and apply their knowledge and understanding of mathematics.
117. Pupils are taught effectively how to approach and solve problems. For example, in a Year 2 lesson the teacher asked the children 'How many parts to the question?' 'What will you do first?' She also stressed that whilst it was important to get the right answer it was as equally important for them to be able show how they did it. This helps their confidence to have a go and enables the teacher to check their understanding. By Year 2, most children are confidently working out answers to problems involving one step and higher attainers are moving to the next stage, dealing with problems involving two stages.

118. The strengths identified in the previous report have been maintained in the Key Stage 1 classes but the teaching is not as strong as it was judged to be in the Key Stage 2 classes. There has been a complete turnover in staff with very experienced teachers leaving and relatively new and inexperienced staff joining.
119. By the time they are in the Key Stage 2 classes, pupils have a good range of strategies to help them work out answers to the problems they are given. The strong emphasis on developing children's understanding of number is also evident in the Key Stage 2 classes and as a result children continue to make good progress. They extend their knowledge and understanding of place value and already some higher attainers in Year 4 are confident when working with 6 figure numbers. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 also have quick recall of their times tables and are good at mental calculation.
120. Whilst the majority of the children in the Key Stage 2 classes are working at the level expected for their age and some are beyond it, the overall picture is not as good as it is in the Key Stage 1 classes. The rate of progress for the present Year 4 has slowed since they left the Key Stage 1 classes. They are not achieving as much as could be expected of them based on their performance at the age of 7 years.
121. The quality of teaching in the Key Stage 2 classes is satisfactory overall, and it results in largely satisfactory progress. Higher attaining pupils including those with the most outstanding ability need more challenge in their work. Inexperience makes it more difficult for the teachers to plan specific activities to meet the needs of all groups. As a result work is often better matched to lower and middle attainers. This is a reason why higher attainers are not always as well challenged as they could be. The school is aware of this and has allocated each of them an experienced teacher to act as a mentor.
122. In both the Key Stage 1 and 2 classes, teachers make very good use of their questioning skills to make the children think more deeply. They are encouraged to explain how they have worked out an answer and share it with the class. This helps children to develop their knowledge and understanding and enables them to learn from one another as well as their teacher.
123. Marking of work has improved since the last inspection. Whilst there are still some inconsistencies there are now some examples of excellent marking. For example, it is very thorough and detailed in Year 3 where the teacher provides children with a very clear understanding of how well they have done or how they might improve their work.
124. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in most lessons. They are well supported by adult helpers particularly during group work. The teachers ensure their assistants are very well briefed. As a result they are clear about the activities and what they need to do to help the children achieve.
125. Teachers ensure that pupils use numeracy skills in other subjects such as geography and science. It is particularly good in science because they are given plenty of opportunities to measure, calculate, record their results and draw and interpret graphs. Satisfactory use is made of ICT to support work in this subject. It is particularly well used to improve children's skills in handling data but more use could be made of the available programs to support and consolidate children's number work.

126. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader has a very clear understanding of what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve. She has analysed test results, teachers' planning and children's work to identify shortcomings. Appropriate action has been taken to bring about any necessary improvements. For example the school has made good use of training opportunities to improve the teaching of problem solving skills.

## SCIENCE

127. Inspection findings support the strong picture of test results, which show that almost all pupils reach the average of Level 2 for their age at 7 years, and over half of them achieve the higher Level 3.
128. Good teaching in the Key Stage 1 classes develops pupils' breadth of knowledge across all aspects of science. Pupils have a very secure understanding of how living things grow and move. They can correctly identify how materials differ in their look, feel and the properties they have, and they know simple facts about physical phenomena, such as forces and gravity.
129. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to learn through practical work. Year 1 pupils for example, investigate the different materials in their classroom and record what objects are made of. Year 2 pupils learn about forces through testing the distance travelled by toy cars on different surfaces and the way that friction affects this.
130. Teachers ensure that pupils conduct experiments systematically and understand how to make their test fair so that pupils learn how to apply scientific processes at a good rate. For example, they predict outcomes and note the results in tables, graphs and pictures. Pupils with special educational needs cope well with this work by recording their findings through illustrations or less complicated presentation of data. Higher attainers are challenged during class discussions. Teachers prompt them to think more deeply through targeting them with difficult questions and encouraging them to explain what they know to the rest of the class.
131. Pupils in the Key Stage 2 classes extend their knowledge of scientific facts at a steady rate. For example, they increase their understanding about physical processes such as the reason for shadows, and which materials are better conductors of electricity. However, they don't progress as quickly as they did in the Key Stage 1 classes because the teachers are less experienced and they find it more difficult to match work to pupils' needs. In Year 3, pupils' investigative skills are developed really well, but in some lessons their rate of learning scientific facts slows because the work planned is too difficult. In Year 4 investigative work is not challenging enough, particularly for higher attainers, because the teacher does not allow them to pose questions for themselves, or enough freedom in setting up experiments to find the answers.
132. After the last inspection, the subject leader vigorously addressed areas for improvement and through training, teachers gained confidence, for example, in developing pupils' investigative skills. However, good progress has been hindered and currently the subject is not being led satisfactorily owing to the long-term absence of the teacher with responsibility for it. In the last year half the staff has changed and there is now less support for inexperienced teachers. Weaknesses in teaching and learning are not improving at the rate they were because the school has put its energy into more pressing areas for development, and science now has a lower priority in its improvement plans.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

133. Standards are average at the ages of 7 and 9 years, and have improved since the last inspection when this subject was identified as a key issue for action.
134. The subject has been led and managed well towards a steady improvement and the expertise of a member of the governing body was used effectively to support this. She participated in staff training sessions and helped formulate the policy for the subject. The school has adopted the national guidelines for art and design and uses both these documents to provide teachers with clear guidance to support their work. This has helped to improve teaching because now more emphasis is given to helping children to learn and develop their skills, year-on-year.
135. The subject leader checks teachers' planning regularly to ensure skills are being taught. She provides advice to colleagues if it is needed. Each teacher has a portfolio of children's art and design work, which have been carefully assessed and to provide teachers with a clear view of how their pupils are getting on and where they need to go next
136. At Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in exploring the use of different materials. Year 1 pupils for example, assembled bonfire pictures. They used a variety of paper, and were taught effectively how to fold, roll, or fan it to create a firework collage.
137. In both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils' skills develop steadily with their strongest achievement seen in their drawing. Their knowledge and understanding of different techniques increases, and they are keen to try these out in their work. In a Year 2 lesson for example, pupils were given a photograph of half an object and asked to complete the picture. They were able to discuss which pencil would be best to produce the desired effect and used their knowledge of lead pencils and colour blending to produce some very effective complete pictures. In another lesson, Year 3 improved their skills as they used torches to create shade and contrast on familiar objects. They talked excitedly about the effect of light. They used shading, dotting, cross-hatching and pencil blending to reproduce the desired effects.
138. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work. They listen attentively and go about their tasks eagerly. They cooperate well, share resources and wait their turn. They talk eagerly to one another about their choices and admire and comment on one another's work.
139. Teachers offer encouragement and help children to gain confidence in their abilities by carefully displaying their work around the school. Displays show children are experiencing and using a variety of media and that they are developing their skills through communicating and exploring their ideas through other subjects such as religious education.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

140. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be well above average, but have declined since and they are now below average at both key stages. A disjointed and unsatisfactory picture of leadership and management of the subject caused by staff absence has undermined the quality of teaching. As a result, pupils are not progressing as fast as they could in most aspects.
141. Pupils throughout the school make sound progress in developing their knowledge of materials and components. At Key Stage 1 for example, they use paper engineering to make masks and soft materials to make glove puppets. This is taken further in Key

Stage 2 where Year 3 pupils use paper engineering to design and produce a hinged picture frame.

142. Pupils have too little experience in generating ideas or developing them through plans, and overall progress is too slow because the breadth of their work is too narrow. Although they are enthusiastic, there are not enough opportunities for them to work in wider areas, for example with textiles or in construction. Year 4 pupils have not used softwood construction tools except at home, and they are not learning technology skills and processes at a fast enough rate.
143. Although no lessons were seen discussions with staff, pupils and analysis of work shows teachers' subject knowledge to be weak. Therefore, they lack confidence in tackling some topics. The subject is only being led and managed on a temporary basis at present, so the drive to support staff and regain lost ground is not as strong as it was at the time of the last inspection. Although many of the weaknesses are recognised by the school, the subject is low in its list of priorities and therefore the rate of improvement is slow.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

144. Standards are above average at seven and nine and have been maintained since the last inspection. Throughout the school most children including those with special educational needs make good progress.
145. Children with English as an additional language find the subject more difficult and are not fully engaged in the lesson because they are not supported well enough.
146. The subject leader is effective not only in maintaining good standards but also in bringing about improvements. A new scheme of work based on national guidelines and supplemented by materials and ideas from the subject leader has been drawn up. This provides teachers with clear guidance on what to teach and how to teach it. For example, it sets out specifically the learning objectives for each lesson and unit of work and how best to assess children's work.
147. Children have very good attitudes to learning and enjoy their lessons. They concentrate well and work hard to complete their tasks.
148. Teaching is good overall and never less than satisfactory. In a Year 2 lesson the teacher made really good use of the storybook, 'Katie Morag and the Two Grandmothers,' to help children understand the meaning and difference between physical and human features. By the end of the lesson the pupils had successfully drawn up two lists, one containing human features and the other physical features.
149. Children develop their geographical knowledge and important skills such as mapping at a good pace. In Year 2, children can identify their own city and the positions of different countries on a map of the British Isles. They are beginning to develop an understanding of how to use grid references. They can explain the water cycle and have an understanding of evaporation. By Year 4 they are confident when asked to locate continents and oceans on world maps. They are aware of climatic zones and can name characteristics associated with them. They show a good awareness of environmental issues. For example, they have a good awareness of the impact of pollution caused by vandalism, car exhausts and litter, and understand the value of recycling resources.

150. Good use is made of educational visits to support children's learning and helps them to see the relevance of learning in other subjects. Following a visit to St. Mary's Lighthouse pupils produced good quality reports and developed their understanding of co-ordinates which they used to map out and record the rock pools around the lighthouse. This work involved pupils in using skills learned in both art and mathematics.

## **HISTORY**

151. Standards are above average at the ages of 7 and 9 years, and have been maintained since the last inspection,
152. Overall teaching is good. Throughout the school, the majority of children make good progress, and particularly so in their knowledge and understanding of historical facts.
153. Good use is made of educational visits to bring the subject alive for the children. This not only adds to their overall enjoyment of history but also supports their learning really well. For example, Year 3 visited the Beamish museum. They took part in a role play in a Victorian classroom, dressed in period costume. They experienced sitting in straight rows and writing on slates. This helped them to gain a clear insight into what school was like during these times and how it differs from today.
154. Teachers make good use of resources to engage and interest their pupils. Artefacts such as ration books and gas masks were used very effectively in Year 4 to support children's learning about life and conditions during the Second World War. Good links are made between history and other subjects such as English and art as children are encouraged to write their own reports and illustrate their accounts.
155. Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of the past. Through their lessons about the Crimean War they have developed a good understanding of the role of Florence Nightingale. They speak enthusiastically about the 'Lady of the Lamp,' and can describe accurately the conditions she worked under.
156. Children from the earliest age are taught to develop their sense of how events relate to each other in time. By the time they are in Year 4, they can accurately place a number of civilisations such as the Egyptians, Vikings and Saxons in the correct time sequence.
157. The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable teacher. She regularly checks teachers' planning and analyses children's work. Through these activities she gains a good overview of the standards and progress children make and what needs to be done to further improve the subject. For example, she has identified that whilst pupils are given plenty of opportunities to locate information from books they do not use ICT enough to support their work in history.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

158. Standards are average at both key stages, but have dipped since the time of the last inspection. Whilst it is satisfactory, the quality of teaching is not as good as it was when the school was last inspected. The demands of teaching the subject have moved on. Changes of staff have taken their toll with more experienced and knowledgeable staff being replaced with newer ones, who have not had the benefit in-service training programmes.

159. At Key Stage 1 pupils make satisfactory progress showing their best achievement in exchanging and sharing information. Most pupils have a good awareness of different computer programs and demonstrate confident skills in using the keyboard and mouse. They are making sound progress in learning how to present their work in different ways and they can see the benefit of using technology to help them. Most pupils show a good understanding of the importance of technology in the modern world.
160. Pupils in Key Stage 2 progress well in using ICT to exchange and share information, but don't make fast enough progress in using it to develop their ideas or make things happen. There are too few programmable toys, so the important gains they make in understanding control technology in the Foundation Stage classes are not built upon well enough throughout the school. By the time pupils reach the Key Stage 2 classes they therefore do not have enough experience of creating sequences of instructions to operate simple devices.
161. Year 4 pupils have a good knowledge of how computers can be used as a research tool. They understand how to use the Internet and send emails. They know how scanners and modems work, but there are too few opportunities for them to use their knowledge. Teaching is not enabling higher attainers to extend their abilities, and their learning in school does not build well enough on the skills that they bring from home. Pupils need to make more use of ICT to support their work in other subjects, such as science and mathematics.
162. The subject is being satisfactorily led and managed and the school is beginning to make up ground again. Through monitoring, weaknesses have been identified and are being addressed through a comprehensive three-year plan. For example, resources have been considerably increased so that there is now a much better ratio of computers to children.

## **MUSIC**

163. Standards throughout the school are well above average. This is a similar picture to that found during the last inspection. All pupils including those with special educational needs make good progress because music is taught well and used effectively to raise their self-esteem.
164. Much of the success is attributable to the very good leadership, enthusiasm and skill of the subject leader. She has ensured even further improvement since the last inspection. Under her leadership, staff confidence in the teaching of music has increased. Children are taught well and learn quickly to play and enjoy music. A very good lesson in Year 2, for example, ended with all twenty-nine pupils playing recorders together in time, with tune, rhythm and enjoyment. They could easily identify a treble clef, say how many lines were required to write music and identify written notes. Through this excellent foundation children develop their musical knowledge and skills at a fast rate. By the time they leave the school most are able to read music, play at least one instrument and perform confidently.
165. Music has a significant impact on the life of the school. It contributes really well to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Pupils are introduced at an early stage to music from other cultures. They are encouraged to develop and use their musical skills and talents for instance, when they play and perform during assemblies. During one whole school act of worship the many pupils who make up the school orchestra played a range of instruments from around the world. This was a performance of extremely high quality for such young musicians.

166. Pupils show an eager enthusiasm to learn more challenging and sophisticated ways of composing and performing music. For example, based on 'Iron Man Music' children created a variety of sounds and put them together with a co-ordinated reading of part of the story. This produced an effective and atmospheric recording. Another example was seen in children's 'Red and Yellow Music'. This musical effect was put together to express the quality of different colours through sound. It consisted of different phrases, developed and put together in patterns.
167. The school has developed a wealth of video resources along with tapes for the children and the community to enjoy. Funding allocated by the local education authority is used well to promote children's love of music. The cost of bringing musicians and musical workshops into school is met from this budget. During an Indian music workshop, the performer asked a Year 2 pupil, 'Why do people play music?' She replied 'Because it teaches the whole world to love music and be happy!'

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

168. Very little work was seen in this subject. Based on the school's own evaluations standards have slipped since the last inspection because the school's provision and teaching are not as strong.
169. The school has identified the main weaknesses. Their analysis shows that whilst standards are average, children are not achieving as much as they could in gymnastics and dance. There are a number of reasons for this. Some teachers are not sure how to develop pupils' skills in some aspects; whilst they know what to teach they are not sure how to teach it. As a result, they do not always challenge higher attaining pupils to develop further.
170. Where teachers have undertaken training, the quality of lessons has improved and good learning has resulted. For example, the Year 1 teacher attended a training course to improve her own knowledge and expertise. The impact of this was clearly seen in a lesson as she encouraged the class to evaluate and improve their work. She drew well on the children's performance, as well as her own demonstrations. At one point she asked them to 'Watch our demonstration team' as a small group of children showed the others what they had done. This helped all the children to develop their dance techniques. By the end of the lesson, they had made really good progress in learning the initial steps of a folk dance. They could work with a partner and skip to the count of eight.
171. The school provides a good range of after school activities, run by qualified instructors or parents and supervised by teachers, which support children's progress and achievements in physical education.
172. The subject has suffered from a lack of effective leadership and management recently. It has been put on the back burner because of changes in staffing, other priorities and because there is no one with enough expertise to lead and guide the staff.
173. There are, however, a number of positive features. All Year 3 and 4 pupils attend a weekly swimming session, taught by local authority instructors. Over half of the present Year 4 has already achieved the national expectation of being able to swim 25 metres by the time they are 11-years-old. Virtually all the rest are confident in the water, can swim a few strokes and are also on course to meet this goal.