

INSPECTION REPORT

ST CUTHBERT'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

North Shields

LEA area: North Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108616

Headteacher: Mr M O'Brien

Reporting inspector: Mr G Brown
21060

Dates of inspection: 13th – 16th January 2003

Inspection number: 246809

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 5 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Lovaine Place
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Glen

Date of previous inspection: 9th February 1998

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21060	Mr G Brown	Registered inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Physical education Educational inclusion, including race equality English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19342	Mr T Heavey	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
17685	Miss L Spooner	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Foundation Stage	How well are pupils taught?
32392	Mrs J Watson	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School is situated near to the centre of North Shields. It is of average size, containing 232 pupils aged four to eleven years. It serves the immediate catchment area as well as some outlying areas of North Shields and beyond. Classes consist of single year groups that are quite large, each containing between 26 and 34 pupils. The number on roll also includes a total of 41 part-time children who attend the nursery. Significant numbers of children enter both the nursery and reception classes with below average attainment for their age. A broadly average number of pupils is entitled to free school meals. There are presently 38 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, a broadly average figure. Significant numbers have moderate learning difficulties or problems associated with speech and communication and two pupils have statements of educational needs. Almost all pupils are from white UK backgrounds but three pupils speak English as an additional language, two being at an early stage of learning. The school's mission is to develop all pupils to the best of their abilities within a caring, supportive and Christian environment. Many teachers have only recently taken up new subject and teaching responsibilities, following significant staff changes among the junior year groups.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Cuthbert's is a good school with many more strengths than weaknesses. It is a caring community that builds particularly well on the strengths and needs of individual pupils. The staff are hard working and conscientious and teaching is good overall, ensuring that most pupils achieve well and make good progress across the school. Standards are satisfactory overall, but are particularly good in English and information and communication technology (ICT). The leadership given by the headteacher is good and school management is satisfactory overall. Given children's below average attainment on entry and the standards many reach by the end of Year 6, the school is effective and gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' standards are above average in English and ICT. By the end of Year 2, pupils' standards are also above average in science, history, music and physical education.
- Children in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception) are well provided for and make a particularly good start to their school lives.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall enabling pupils to achieve well and to make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are also well provided for.
- The leadership provided by the headteacher is good and he is well supported by the acting deputy headteacher. An effective climate for learning is well established.
- The pupils' personal development is given high priority, including effective measures to support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The pupils' attendance is well above average and reflects their real enthusiasm for learning. Pupils behave well and working relationships are very good.

What could be improved

- By the end of Year 6, standards in science are below average and could be higher.
- The methods used to assess pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory overall.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

At the time of the previous inspection (February 1998), the standards achieved by the pupils, the quality of education and the management and efficiency of the school were all judged to be good or very good. Since then, the school has made satisfactory progress overall. Standards in English have improved and ICT is rapidly becoming a strength of the school. Standards in science among junior pupils have fallen overall. Initiatives such as the National Literacy Strategy have been successful whilst new forms of staff appraisal have been adopted satisfactorily as a means of extending staff development. The key issues from 1998 have been addressed satisfactorily although further improvement is still necessary. The governors' annual report to parents and the prospectus now meet statutory requirements. The analysis and use of assessment data has improved although assessment overall now requires some attention. The role of the subject co-ordinators was initially strengthened, but recent changes in staff have left the leadership of some subjects very new and in need of further development. The capacity to improve still further is good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	A	A	A
mathematics	C	B	C	C
science	E	C	E	E

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

Most nursery and reception children achieve well and are on course to either attain or exceed the early learning goals anticipated for their age by the end of the reception year. In the 2002 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2, the school's results were well above average in reading and science and above average in writing and mathematics. Inspection evidence points to current Year 2 pupils being above average in reading, writing and science and broadly average in mathematics. Year 2 pupils also attain well in ICT, history, music and physical education. In the 2002 tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, pupils' results were well above average in English, average in mathematics but well below average in science. These standards were also reflected when pupils' results were compared to those achieved by similar schools. Over time, pupils' results in English and mathematics exceed the national average, but in the same period, standards in science are below average. The inspection confirms that, whilst Year 6 pupils achieve well in English and ICT, and reach broadly average standards in mathematics, their standards in science are below average. Some more able pupils, in particular, are currently not on course to reach the higher levels. Standards in other subjects are at the level expected for Year 6 pupils. There are no significant differences between the standards achieved by girls and boys across the school, although the attainment levels of junior boys are rightly being monitored. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress. Targets for future attainment are challenging and are on course to reflect the school's determination that all pupils will ultimately reach their potential.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and regularly give of their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well and are mature and reliable in the way they conduct themselves around school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Working relationships are very harmonious. Pupils show respect for the feelings and personal development of each other.
Attendance	Very good and well above average. Punctuality is also very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	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 quality of teaching and learning is good overall. During inspection, almost two-thirds of all observed teaching was either good or very good and no lessons were unsatisfactory. As a result, pupils achieve well and make good progress, particularly in the Foundation Stage and in the infant years, where teaching is sometimes very good. In these year groups, expectations are high and pupils apply themselves well to learning. Teachers use a variety of effective methods, manage their classes well and good emphasis is placed on the teaching and learning of basic skills. Teachers' planning across the school is satisfactory and good use is made of available time and resources. Support staff are also used well, particularly during group activities. Good support is given to pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. The teaching of junior pupils is satisfactory overall with effective use made of homework to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. The work set for higher attaining pupils is sometimes not challenging enough, particularly in science, and this leads to uneven progress. The quality of teachers' marking is also not consistent across the school and pupils are not always aware of the targets they need to reach in order to improve. The teaching of literacy is good across the school, particularly the emphasis given to speaking, listening and reading. Mathematics is taught well in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactorily elsewhere. All subjects are taught to at least a satisfactory level. There are also teaching strengths in ICT across the school and in science, history, music and physical education in Years 1 and 2.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good in the Foundation Stage and also in Years 1 and 2. Satisfactory elsewhere. The junior curriculum, in particular, is enriched by a good range of visits and extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good throughout the school. Individual education plans are well targeted ensuring pupils learn in small, meaningful stages. The support given to pupils is effective and they achieve well.
Provision for pupils with	Good. Pupils are well supported by visiting staff as well as by their own

English as an additional language	teachers. This is reflected in the good progress the pupils make.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall and a strength of the school. The provision for spiritual and moral development is very good and reflects the school's Christian ethos. The good provision for social and cultural development is reflected in the pupils' work in the community and the very good personal relationships that exist across the school. Pupils are prepared appropriately for life in a diverse society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a caring community and matters relating to child protection and the welfare of the pupils are satisfactory. Effective procedures help support attendance and behaviour. The assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory overall as the school does not have a coherent record of what pupils have learned in several subjects, including science.

The parents' views of the school are extremely positive. There are also effective links between home and school that are used well to extend and encourage pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led by the headteacher who provides clear educational direction. The recent staff changes have resulted in many teachers being new to their subject responsibilities and, as yet, some have limited impact on monitoring standards in their own areas.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are supportive, well organised and have a sound knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are not sufficiently involved in strategic and school development planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school's priorities for development are an accurate reflection of how it evaluates its past and present performance. The monitoring of teaching and learning could be developed further.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Specific grants, the annual budget and general resources are all used well to help meet the school's priorities and targets. Financial planning is effective and the school gets good value from its resources. Staffing levels, the accommodation and educational resources are all satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children enjoy being in school, behave well and work hard. Standards are good and children learn effectively. The school is well led and works closely with parents. Teaching is good and the curriculum provides a wide range of good learning opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A minority of parents feel the school could offer more lunchtime or after-school activities. Some parents are not satisfied with the amount of homework given to their children.

The inspection team agrees with the positive points made by parents. The range of extra-curricular activities is well above that offered by many similar schools and represents a very useful part of the overall curriculum. The amount and range of homework set are generally good and used well to extend pupils' learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Significant numbers of children enter both part-time and full-time schooling with below average standards, particularly in language, communication and mathematical development. However, most achieve well owing to the good teaching and other learning provision in the Foundation Stage. By the time they reach the end of the reception year, most children are likely to achieve the standards anticipated for their age in all areas of learning. Several show above average standards in both reading and aspects of their personal and social development and this represents particularly good progress.
2. The school's provision for young children has continued to improve since the last inspection. The planning of the curriculum, the quality of teaching and the overall level of adult support and resources are all good. The strong emphasis given to the teaching and learning of basic skills ensures children learn rapidly and achieve well. Children in nursery enjoy a wide range of stimulating experiences that encourage their communication and personal skills in particular and most settle quickly into nursery routines. These skills are developed further in the reception class where children learn well about language and number and their knowledge and understanding of the world are also enriched. By the time they transfer to Year 1, children's skills, knowledge and understanding are all broadly average in relation to literacy and numeracy, creative and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.
3. The results of the 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 show pupils scored well above the national average in reading and above the national average in writing and mathematics. Based on teacher assessment, pupils' attainment in science was also well above the national average. In comparison to similar schools, Year 2 pupils scored well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. Pupils did particularly well in reading with significant numbers reaching the higher levels for their age. Over the past three years, standards in these subjects have generally remained above the national average with boys tending to perform slightly better than girls. The inspection findings confirm that standards in the current Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and science and broadly average in mathematics.
4. The results of the 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, show that standards in English were well above the national average. Standards in mathematics were broadly average, whilst those in science were well below average. When compared to pupils from similar schools, the attainment reflected well above average standards in English, average standards in mathematics but well below average standards in science. Science apart, these similar school comparisons give an indication that pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and that standards are good taking into account their below average attainment on entry. Over

time, standards in these core areas have fluctuated considerably, except in English, where pupils tend to perform very well, particularly girls. Scores in science have been less good with too few pupils attaining the higher levels. The results of inspection show that standards in English are above average among the current Year 6. Standards in mathematics are broadly average, but pupils' work in science reflects below average attainment overall. Science apart, standards across the school have continued to improve since the previous inspection.

5. The adoption of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has helped pupils to consolidate and extend many of their basic skills as they move through the school. Pupils make mainly good progress in their literacy and numeracy lessons largely because the work set is planned effectively and helps to build on their basic skills systematically. In Years 1 and 2, pupils use their listening and speaking skills well and talk with confidence and reasonable clarity about their work and what they are doing. By the end of Year 2, most pupils read particularly well for their age. Some are very expressive readers and show good understanding of what they read. Their records show that many read a wide range of books over the year. Standards in writing are also above average. Stories and other accounts are generally accurate, imaginative and of reasonable length when necessary.
6. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound grasp of basic number and show average ability to work mentally, for example in the rapid recall of number bonds and their number tables. Most know the basis of place value and have a sound understanding of the properties of several shapes. The emphasis on investigations in science is good, along with pupils' own observations and evaluations as to what they are actually doing. Standards in ICT, history, music and physical education are all above average and reflect good achievement and effective teaching, particularly in Year 2. Standards in all other subjects are broadly at the level expected for the age of the pupils.
7. Pupils in the junior years (Years 3 to 6) make good progress overall with their speaking and listening, reading and writing skills and many of those in the current Year 6 are expected to reach above average standards for their age. Most pupils, for example, are relatively confident when expressing their views or discussing the outcomes of their class work. Many are able to draw inferences from their reading and discuss a little about their favourite authors and characters. Significant numbers can use the Internet successfully and they also use non-fiction books well in order to research information. Current standards in writing among Year 6 pupils are slightly above the national average with significant numbers of pupils being able to write at length, in different styles and for a variety of purposes.
8. In mathematics, junior pupils, including those in Year 6, have benefited from increased emphasis on mental skills and also working orally at greater speed. These are useful outcomes of the Numeracy Strategy. However, some lack the range of strategies to work out number problems in different ways. Most are relatively accurate with addition and subtraction in particular. Their use of mathematical language is broadly average as they move towards the end of Year 6. Pupils show a satisfactory understanding of a range of mathematical topics including angles, shape, time, fractions and area. ICT is used to develop work with data handling, but could still be used more extensively to support other areas of mathematics.
9. In Year 6 and among junior pupils in general, standards in science are weaker than in most other areas. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts are not always secure and they do not show confidence in their knowledge and use of scientific language. Some of the work is over-directed by the teachers and pupils do

not consistently select their own equipment or explore ways of evaluating and recording their own findings. The challenge given to higher attaining pupils in particular is not always at the right level to extend and deepen their knowledge and understanding. Standards in ICT are good and above the level expected for the age of the pupils. Many are very much at home with basic wordprocessing exercises, storing and retrieving information, use of the Internet and working with different forms of software. Standards in all other subjects are on target to be at the level anticipated for pupils at the end of Year 6. The school sets realistic annual targets for its Year 6 pupils based on previous levels of attainment for each individual pupil. Taken as a whole, these targets are sufficiently challenging to help raise standards further in the longer term, particularly in science.

10. Pupils' learning across the school is often improved by their own positive level of response and the sheer effort they put in. The pace of work is particularly good in Years 2 and 6 where, in the main, experienced teachers set relatively challenging tasks and where the work ethic is high. The acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is good overall and reflects the teaching emphasis on basic skills and builds carefully on pupils' interests and enthusiasms. More could be attempted with the older and most able pupils in particular, to ensure they know the targets and levels they are trying to reach and to give them more responsibility and initiative for their own learning.
11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress set against their previous learning and develop skills and understanding in line with their individual education plans, where these are needed. Class teachers establish targets within such plans and the special educational needs co-ordinator teaches pupils in small groups to help implement these targets alongside the work done by the class teacher. Pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress overall as the result of the additional support provided by their teachers, classroom assistants and visiting staff.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The high standards in this area of school life have been sustained and in some respects improved in the period since the previous inspection, a judgement supported by the overwhelming majority of parents. Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour remain good, while their improved personal development and relationships are now very good. Taken together, these provide a strong platform on which to build their education. The good behaviour and response to learning are developed well from nursery onwards.
13. Fully 98 per cent of parents declare that St Cuthbert's is a good school that their children like to attend – a fact borne out by the very good attendance and punctuality rates. The pupils are happy and smiling as they enter the school premises. They greet adults and each other with affection and quickly settle to their work. Pupils show an eagerness to work hard and to concentrate as well as they can. On entering Year 4, for example, to observe the registration, the visiting inspector thought the room was empty until he saw that all the pupils were sitting in total silence copying new vocabulary from the chalkboard. Pupils also respond very warmly to good teaching. In Year 1, for example, the considerable skill of the teacher brought the characters in the 'Farmer Duck' story so much to life, that pupils became fully involved in the plot and speculated in vivid terms about how it might have ended. Indeed their re-enactment of the story demonstrated how well they had taken to heart the school's caring Christian

values. Such positive attitudes throughout the school continue to make a good contribution to pupils' learning.

14. The judgement that behaviour at the school is good is also supported by 98 per cent of parents who responded to the pre-inspection survey of parents' views. Children are polite and respectful with each other, the regular staff and towards adults visiting the school. There are no indications of aggressive or oppressive behaviour, and there have been no exclusions for several years. Such an orderly school community promotes a friendly and industrious atmosphere that helps to raise standards.
15. The high level of personal development the pupils display throughout the school provides a solid platform for learning and is acknowledged by almost all parents. Children act very sensibly both in and outside the classrooms, responding very positively to the 'Weekly Challenge' promoted at assemblies. As some pupils were entering the classroom at the start of the school day, a Year 1 pupil noticed that a coat belonging to one of his classmates had fallen from its peg. He identified the coat as that of pupil 'X', and not only did he hang it up but he sought out that particular pupil's peg and carefully replaced it there. In response to the most effective teaching, pupils work independently and in groups without much direct supervision. When the teacher is in difficulty, as in a Year 5 ICT lesson when most of the computers 'crashed', pupils showed understanding and solidarity with their teacher by working independently on other programs, or gathering in large numbers around the remaining computers to follow the lesson as best they could. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 in particular, eagerly accept responsibilities around the school, supporting the younger children at play, serving their peers in the dining room and clearing up after activities.
16. Older pupils in particular take turns as prefects while two members of each class are elected by their peers to serve on the well-established school council. All age groups demonstrate a growing sense of citizenship and also concern for the disadvantaged in society, by raising money for various charities both at home and abroad. Their regular contact with a missionary priest in Africa enhances their knowledge of that continent's culture, whilst also providing material aid. The pupils get much pleasure from filling shoeboxes with 'goodies' to be sent to Eastern Europe's poor, while nearer home, they support the nearby hospice, RNIB, Banardos, the British Legion Poppy Appeal and the local elderly population at Harvest Festival. Such involvement helps the school to fulfil its intention to educate the whole child and significantly promotes the notion of good citizenship.
17. The school's strong Catholic ethos is one of its strengths and is reflected in the very good relationships characterised by mutual respect and politeness. The result is a harmonious and disciplined working atmosphere that greatly enhances the pupils' learning experiences. Pupils respect and trust adults in the school, responding quickly to their directives, seeking to please them and speaking to them with confidence. For their part, adults do not treat pupils in a condescending manner, but rather as fellow members of the same Christian community. In the dining hall, for example, several teachers sit down to share their meal with the pupils, chatting to them in a warm and relaxed manner, and leading and supporting them by example. Several parents consulted refer to the much-valued triangular relationship linking school, church and home, links that make their children feel secure and happy. The inspection confirms this view.

Attendance

18. The attendance rate of 95.5 per cent for the last reporting year is well above the national average, placing the school amongst the top ten per cent in the country. This attendance rate also shows an improvement over its own performance for the previous year. The zero rate of unauthorised absence sets the school below the national average, another good achievement, whilst the very good punctuality at both morning and afternoon sessions ensures that pupils have full access to the whole range of the school's activities. The marking of registers has improved since the previous inspection and now complies fully with legal requirements. The school's attendance is now a significant strength.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is either good or better in just under two-thirds of lessons and is never less than satisfactory. This reflects a slight improvement since the previous inspection with no unsatisfactory lessons. The quality of teaching and learning is good in almost all lessons in the nursery and reception classes. It is good overall in the infant year groups. A high proportion of teaching is very good, particularly in Year 2. Teaching in the junior classes is satisfactory overall: about one-third of it is good and a small amount is very good. New staff in these classes continue to settle in very well.
20. A range of key strengths characterise the teaching across the school, including:
- good quality of teaching in all aspects of English which leads to above average standards;
 - very good relationships between all teachers and support staff and the pupils. As a result, pupils develop good attitudes to their work. Pupils are almost always managed skilfully, often through humour and praise and they behave well;
 - lively and imaginative teaching methods that engage the pupils' attention so that they want to learn. Effective use is made of homework to reinforce learning;
 - good teacher expertise in ICT; teachers use their own skills to develop pupils' learning. As a result, standards in this subject are higher than in many other schools.
21. Teachers in the nursery and reception classes have a good awareness of how young children learn through experience and talk. They have particularly good skills in supporting personal, social and emotional wellbeing through well-established routines and possess a sensitive awareness of the needs of individual children. Many opportunities are provided for the children to communicate in a range of ways, for example through talking about what they are learning and finding out about the world through exploration and role-play. Basic skills are taught systematically and this results in children achieving well in all areas of learning, particularly in reading where standards are on course to be above average by the end of the reception year. Teachers and support staff work well together as a team and this provides good consistency in provision. Occasionally, the immature behaviour of one or two children is not used as effectively as it might be as a learning opportunity for them and others to improve.
22. Pupils achieve well in English in both the infant and junior year groups and standards are above average in all aspects of the subject. This is principally because of the teachers' good subject knowledge and skilful questioning to engage pupils and check what they know and understand. The emphasis placed on developing reading skills and an appreciation of books, has resulted in pupils making good progress in this area of learning. Basic literacy skills are taught well and, as a result, pupils write in a

- joined legible hand, and spell and use punctuation and grammar correctly. Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to use their literacy skills for a wider purpose and audience and across other areas in the curriculum. Teachers do not always take advantage of the good ICT resources available in providing more opportunities for pupils to link their literacy and ICT skills.
23. The teaching of literacy in the infant classes is very good overall with some excellent features. Lessons in these two classes are generally full of lively discussion. Work is very closely matched to the needs of groups and individuals and a good level of challenge is provided for all pupils. The teachers are very skilful in engaging pupils by providing interesting activities such as drama to develop the skill of retelling a story with expression. An example of excellence was noted where the pupils re-enacted characters from a story and the rest of the class questioned them about the story, resulting in animated exchanges and speculation about how the story might end. As a result of such high quality of teaching, pupils tend to make notable gains in learning during many lessons.
24. The teaching of literacy in the junior classes is good overall. Lessons are well planned and teachers have good subject knowledge. The work set provides appropriate challenge and meets the needs of different groups of pupils. Teachers' questioning skills assess pupils' grasp of important ideas and also their understanding of the text. Activities are interesting and well thought out to reinforce effective learning. On occasions, teachers do not make it clear what pupils are expected to have achieved by the end of the lesson and target setting in general with pupils is a weaker aspect of teaching overall.
25. The teaching of mathematics is good in the infant classes and satisfactory in the junior classes. Particular strengths lie in the teaching of number, where oral mental sessions are normally conducted at a brisk pace and, as a result, pupils develop rapid recall of number facts. However, in both the infant and junior classes, pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to explain how they reached their answers and whether or not those answers were reasonable. Although some teachers share the lesson objectives and individual targets with their class, this is not consistent practice in all lessons. Teaching in the infant classes is characterised by some very good features, notably a dynamic approach and the use of imaginative activities that catch the pupils' interest, particularly in Year 2. Lessons in the junior classes are carefully planned and well organised. In some lessons, higher ability groups and sometimes pupils in other groups, are not challenged enough through questioning or the activities provided. However, this was not the case in several sessions, where the teacher ensured that activities matched the learning needs of all groups of pupils and the teaching was fully inclusive.
26. The teaching of science is good in the infant classes and satisfactory in the junior classes. Teachers make good use of the school's science resources, particularly during investigational work. The good teaching in the infant classes is characterised by the strong emphasis placed on developing pupils' own ideas. Work done over time indicates that pupils do well in developing the skills of scientific enquiry. Although there are some good features in teaching in the junior classes, there are also some weaknesses. Pupils understand clearly what is expected of them but not always what they are expected to learn by the end of the lesson. An appropriate emphasis is given to investigative work but not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to make their own decisions about, for example, where they might find information and how they are going to tackle an investigation with much of this work over-directed by teachers. Higher ability pupils are not provided with enough challenge to take them further in their work.

27. The school has invested in the development of teachers' ICT skills and expertise through a long-term training programme. This, combined with teachers' enthusiasm in teaching the subject, has resulted in above average standards. The quality of teaching is good overall. This is evident in lessons where pupils are given good support to enable them to build upon skills learned earlier and to use technical vocabulary accurately. Satisfactory use is made of ICT in other subjects.
28. Teaching is good in history, music and physical education in the infant classes. Teachers draw well on their subject expertise to set interesting and varied activities. A good example was observed in a physical education lesson where pupils were enthusiastic participants throughout the lesson because work was challenging and yet allowed them to explore the apparatus for themselves.
29. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good and they make good progress. Work set is closely matched to pupils' needs and appropriately challenges and motivates them to succeed. Class teachers and the co-ordinator for special educational needs work in close co-operation, with the pupils' needs seen as being of paramount importance.
30. The marking of pupils' work is a weakness across the school. Although good quality marking takes place in some classes, in others, pupils' work is rarely marked or is ticked without comment. As a result, pupils are not always provided with enough information on how well they are doing and how they might improve their work.

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

31. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good and it is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. This represents a slight fall in overall provision since the previous inspection. Particular strengths of the school curriculum are in English and ICT. Improvements in the content and organisation of science are needed. The curriculum includes all statutory subjects and satisfactorily meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The broad and balanced curriculum is central to the aims of the school and supports the standards and learning needs of the pupils. There are satisfactory policies and medium-term plans in place to manage all subjects. Some policies, however, are overdue for review. Long-term planning is also currently being reviewed. The school has implemented national guidelines for most subjects but these are not always delivered to the prescribed age range. The school is currently trialling some new schemes of work alongside national guidelines with the intention that building blocks for learning are established more effectively. The school delivers religious education in line with Diocesan recommendations. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. They have full access to the curriculum and good levels of support that enable them to access learning well.
32. The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is good and the school has built well on the strengths that were identified during the previous inspection. Long-term planning is well organised to include the six areas of learning and the early learning goals. This results in a good framework for teaching and learning, which is delivered through medium- and short-term plans, that have clear learning objectives linked to assessment. Strategies for early identification and intervention are having a positive effect on learning and, as a result of this and the good planning, children at this stage make good progress.

33. The curriculum is good overall in helping to meet the needs of all pupils and is based around sound principles of inclusion. The school also organises and divides its working day satisfactorily to help implement a broad and balanced curriculum that is central to its aims. It has adopted the National Literacy Strategy well and this continues to have good impact on pupils' standards. The national guidelines for numeracy have been integrated satisfactorily. The basic skills of literacy are taught well to all year groups and reading is a strength within the school. The skills of numeracy are taught well in the infant years and satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6. Training has been delivered satisfactorily to all staff to help develop a consistent approach to teaching and learning. Sound links are established with other subjects. A variety of writing styles have been developed in history and charts and graphs have been developed in science. Planning usually includes a satisfactory match of task to the different ability groups within each class but sometimes more challenge is needed for the higher attaining pupils so that they can achieve more, particularly in the junior year groups.
34. There are subject leaders assigned to all areas of the curriculum. However, recent staff changes in responsibility have meant that many subject leaders are new to their own areas and are still coming to terms with standards and priorities. Many, for example, have had insufficient time to monitor and develop a depth of knowledge for their subject. A clear programme for subject and co-ordinator development is, however, emerging and this is appropriate as it is aimed at raising standards still further.
35. Pupils with special educational needs in all classes have access to the full National Curriculum and make good progress as a result. They receive good levels of support when withdrawn in small groups and the special educational needs co-ordinator and teachers plan together to ensure that pupils' targets also relate to those of their class. All pupils identified as having special educational needs are well supported by high quality individual education plans, including those with statements. Provision is consistent with that found at the previous inspection. The very few pupils with English as an additional language are also well provided for by both class teachers and visiting specialists. There is as yet no acknowledged policy for the identification of gifted and talented pupils.
36. The school provides well for the personal, social and health education of pupils (PSHE). Much of this programme is linked to religious education. Other opportunities such as 'circle time' and other well-planned PSHE lessons supplement the programme and provide time for pupils to discuss sensitive issues. The school has good links with the school health adviser who works closely with the teachers of Years 5 and 6 to provide aspects of sex and health education. Sex education, drug awareness programmes and health education are also taught as part of the science scheme of work. The school health adviser holds weekly sessions when staff or parents can approach her for guidance. The school also invites a touring company to present themes related to emotional education and this is well received. The school recently received a well-deserved 'Activemark' for its good provision in sport and related activities. It also delivers a well-planned 'Food for Sport' programme from nursery to Year 6. All pupils from Years 3 to 6 have the opportunity to access swimming at a local pool some time during their time in school.
37. In their questionnaire, some parents felt that the school provided insufficient extra-curricular opportunities to support the curriculum. However, the inspection found that the school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils between

Years 3 and 6 in particular. Many pupils have the opportunity to attend clubs such as Saturday football, recorder, basketball, computer, choir, keyboard and sometimes French. Year 6 benefit from a residential visit to Keswick or York. Holiday activities with the local high school are also arranged.

38. The school has good links with the community and beyond. Links with other Catholic schools are strong and recently there has been a joint venture to deliver staff training in computers. The school is also actively involved in supporting community events such as the Young World Concert in Newcastle, North Shields Fish Quay Festival and the Tyne and Wear Youth Games. They have also forged links, using letters and photographs, with a priest in Tanzania and have supported their chosen African village well through fundraising. Such 'thinking outwards' is an important aspect of school life and enriches pupils' learning and experiences.
39. The school has close links with its local high school; for example, teachers from there deliver after-school French 'taster' sessions for Year 3, and some higher attaining pupils in mathematics attend a Saturday club at the high school. The school also follows special units in English and mathematics that help support the transition to secondary education. It has good links with local colleges and supports student placements on a regular basis.
40. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good overall. The school works hard to ensure that every pupil feels special and has an important part to play in the wider school community. At the heart of the school ethos are the values contained within the Gospels, and day-to-day life revolves around a celebration of all individuals. The weekly merit assembly is a particularly good example of this. During the inspection week, pupils' work, attitudes and lives were celebrated well. Staff were also praised for their extra work in preparing for the inspection week – all were made to feel special.
41. Pupils' spiritual education is promoted very well. Assemblies and religious education play an important role in raising pupils' awareness of the values and beliefs of others. In one assembly, pupils were encouraged to empathise with the feelings of other pupils when they are sad but also to celebrate the birth of a brother to a Year 2 pupil. This theme was extended to consider bereavement and had followed a very good 'circle time' in Year 2 when pupils were encouraged to explore feelings and to respect each other's appearance. The experienced teacher handled such themes with great sensitivity. Children in nursery were given the opportunity to consider the welfare of a 'lost' teddy and their thoughts were later celebrated at an assembly. All staff take similar opportunities at moments throughout the day. As a result, pupils consider the feelings of others on the playground, for example a pupil felt sorry for another pupil who was upset because her friend was on holiday.
42. There is a particular strength in the provision of moral education. The school council meets weekly and its contribution to the merit assembly enables moral issues to be raised by pupils themselves; for example, some pupils had been bending forks at lunchtime. The headteacher dealt with this issue sensitively, asking all pupils to consider the consequences of such actions and to support the school rules. Moral issues are considered in most assemblies and PSHE lessons also provide a good forum for considering the right and wrong of situations. The school has clear rules and sanctions that are discussed with pupils. In Year 4, pupils were considering the impact of litter on the environment and pupils showed very good knowledge of how to recycle a wide range of materials and items.

43. The provision for social development is good. Pupils show good social skills. At playtimes and in class, they play together well and demonstrate very good relationships with adults and each other. This is also the result of the good role models set by the staff and the many other opportunities for personal growth provided for pupils. Older pupils are encouraged to support younger children by being good role models, for example through being a lunchtime monitor in the dining room or by standing at the playground door and keeping track of pupils as they move in and out. Whenever possible, teachers are careful to organise opportunities for pupils to work together in pairs or small groups. There are also good opportunities for pupils to learn how to socialise well in a variety of contexts, such as after-school clubs and residential visits.
44. Provision for cultural development is good and is the result of strong links with both the local culture and other cultures around the world. The school involves itself in many local events such as the North Shields Fish Festival and North Shields Dance Festival. Pupils learn about famous British people such as Shakespeare and Grace Darling. They also learn about and celebrate Harvest Festival and important traditions from other cultures such as Eid. The school has links with Father Francis and his mission in Tanzania, enabling them to appreciate how other cultures exist. Year 6 pupils have gained a good understanding of the similarities and differences between our own lifestyles and those of people living in India. Pupils are developing an appreciation of music through a 'composer of the month' in assembly and Year 6 thoroughly enjoyed hosting an overseas guest who introduced them to Filipino dance and music.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The school's sound arrangements for the welfare, health, safety and personal security of its pupils satisfy legal requirements and help to create a climate of confidence and wellbeing that promotes good learning. The areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been made good.
46. The arrangements for child protection are satisfactory. They are based securely on those of the Area Child Protection Committee and a copy of the procedures is readily available to teachers. The headteacher has received appropriate training and takes proper precautions to ensure confidentiality.
47. The policies and procedures for health and safety comply with statutory requirements. Improved arrangements for pupils' personal security and safety are now in place both in and around the school premises. Termly fire drills and weekly testing of alarms ensure that safe exit procedures are well rehearsed. The twice-yearly risk assessment of the premises is supported by satisfactory procedures for reporting and recording hazards. The nominated first-aider is currently on sick leave, and the certificates of the other two first-aiders are now due for renewal. The procedures for reporting and dealing with accidents are satisfactory.
48. The very good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance include clear awareness raising among parents as to the reporting of absences and on the avoidance, where possible, of taking holidays in term time. Such measures are proving very effective in helping to raise standards at the school.
49. The school's good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are clearly evident in the high standards seen around the school. The procedures are consistently reinforced by the school's Christian ethos that emphasises a sense of

expectation, rather than material reward, as the main incentive for good behaviour. Pupils and parents understand and accept the high standards required by the school and supported by the church. The awards assembly is used to praise the exemplars of the school's high standards in both behaviour and academic effort. The duty to tolerate, respect and befriend others is a message that is consistently repeated, and one that has proved very effective in eliminating oppressive behaviour and bullying.

50. The school's good procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development make a good contribution to their learning. The vast majority of parents agree that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. The school and its partner church know children very well and make effective use of the triangular network, not only to set high standards but also to mirror these in their own lives. The introduction of the school council and PSHE including 'circle time,' have provided new and good opportunities for the school to mould its pupils into mature and responsible citizens for the future. The termly evenings for parents, the communication through work at home and the content of annual reports, all help parents and school to track the development of their shared charges.
51. The school has improved its procedures for analysing test results and other assessment information since the last inspection when this area was identified as a weakness and a key issue for improvement. Such procedures are now satisfactory. However, since then, the procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress have declined in effectiveness and are now unsatisfactory overall, including science and in many of the foundation subjects.
52. In the nursery and reception classes, staff assess satisfactorily what children do. These assessments are appropriately linked to planning the next steps in learning. Teachers assess children on entry and ongoing assessment takes place through observations and recording children's learning set against key learning objectives within the six areas of learning. Statutory assessments are also securely in place in Years 2 and 6. Satisfactory assessment procedures are in place for English and mathematics. Teachers track pupils' progress in English and mathematics and use this information appropriately to influence future lesson planning.
53. Procedures for assessing and recording progress in science and in the foundation subjects are unsatisfactory overall. Although teachers keep their own records, there is no agreed whole-school system in place to ensure a clear overview of attainment and progress throughout the school. As a result, there is no coherent overview of how well pupils are achieving in each of these subjects and what they need to learn next. A particular weakness is in the nature of assessment in science across the school. Current procedures in recording attainment in this core subject are too reliant on the teachers' individual knowledge of what pupils have covered and learned. Scientific knowledge is not rigorously monitored through the assessment of what pupils know and understand. In English, teachers check the accuracy of their judgements as to the levels reached by the pupils, by collating different samples of work. These procedures are not yet in place for other subjects.
54. A basic system of pupil self-assessment is in place whereby pupils in Years 1 to 6 can evaluate aspects of their work and set occasional targets for self-improvement. This provides them with opportunities to reflect on their own learning. However, there is no consistent system of target setting for individuals or groups of pupils by teachers. The quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work is also a weakness. Although there is some good practice clearly evident in workbooks, this is far from

consistent across the school. As a result, pupils do not have enough information on how well they are doing and what they need to do next in order to improve their work.

55. Despite these shortcomings, the monitoring and use made of assessment information the school does gather, are satisfactory overall. A systematic approach is in place and being developed further. Results of assessments are used appropriately to identify individuals and groups of pupils for extra support such as special educational needs or additional language support. They are also used to help identify strengths and weaknesses in learning in English and mathematics across the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. The school continues to maintain the good links with parents identified at the previous inspection; a view reaffirmed by the great majority of parents who expressed very positive opinions about the school prior to this inspection. Such an effective partnership between home and school makes a good contribution to the raising of educational standards.
57. Parents returned completed questionnaires in very good numbers. More than 90 per cent of parents responding to the questionnaire and most of those attending the meeting with inspectors, declared their children like school, behave well and make good progress. Similar numbers agree that the teaching is good and that the school expects their children to work hard. Most also feel it helps pupils to become mature people and that the school is well led and managed. There were no really significant criticisms of any aspect of the school's provision. The inspectors agree with the parents' positive views.
58. The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about their children's progress, is good. The clear and informative prospectus, the fully compliant annual governors' report and the three parents' evenings, are also supported by an informative weekly newsletter and occasional letters on particular matters. The pupils' annual reports are popular with parents and clearly state what pupils can do. However, they might be even more helpful if they were to include areas for further effort, or more individual targets. Parents comment very favourably on the reading diaries, seeing them as a useful way of communicating about their children's work. They also welcome the albeit reduced opportunities for informal exchanges with teachers at the school entrance.
59. The involvement of parents in their children's learning at school and at home makes a good contribution to the pupils' education because of the additional support it provides for class teachers. Parents not only ensure that their children get to school on time, they also ensure that they do their homework. They co-operate with teachers through the reading diary, by attending parents' evenings and support fundraising and social events through the very active Parents, Teachers and Friends Association. Several pieces of highly technical equipment seen during the inspection were provided through such fundraising efforts. Many parents help out in the classroom, hear children read or attend school trips. Such involvement makes pupils feel good and makes a good contribution to their children's education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

60. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides effective leadership and shares with others in management a clear vision for the school. Together with the acting deputy headteacher, he continues

to provide clear educational direction for further improvement. The priorities expressed in the school improvement plan are indicative of a school that has undergone several staff changes in recent times. It is recognised that a time of stability is needed so that the headteacher and other staff can implement and evaluate fully those changes already set in motion. As well as maintaining the past traditions and ethos of the school, the headteacher has developed a new sense of teamwork and commitment to further improvement and change. Some of this work remains challenging and at an early stage, particularly in relation to the new responsibilities given to several subject co-ordinators.

61. The role and influence of the co-ordinators have improved only marginally since the previous inspection. Much of this is undoubtedly due to the enforced changes in teachers' responsibilities following the recent departure of several experienced staff. With the exception of a few established co-ordinators, such as those for English, science and the Foundation Stage, the majority of co-ordinators have, as yet, had little opportunity to make tangible impact on standards in their subjects. Although their enthusiasm and commitment are unquestionable, most have not as yet, been able to make clear and informed statements as to the priorities for growth and raising standards in their subjects. In this context, the monitoring of pupils' standards and the quality of teaching and learning in all but a few subjects, has been difficult to accomplish. The headteacher is endeavouring to counteract this by introducing a phased programme for staff release aimed at providing additional opportunities for staff training and, in time, a more accurate evaluation as to the point of development each subject has reached. This measure is appropriate, given the newness of many co-ordinators to their current roles.
62. The overall effectiveness of the governing body is satisfactory. It meets statutory requirements and helps the school meet its declared aims and objectives. The attention paid to meetings and other statutory requirements is therefore generally good. As with other parts of school management, governors are seeking to strengthen their own monitoring role and to increase their influence in shaping the school's future educational direction. They currently have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have begun to raise their own profile in areas such as the curriculum, a move that is designed to raise standards still further and improve the quality of education. To this end, governors remain very committed and share their time, interests and expertise to the benefit of the school. Several, for example, visit the school on a regular basis and show a sound grasp of much that occurs. As it becomes more informed, the governing body has begun to be more involved in strategic planning through a more pro-active approach towards the annual school development plan. The committee structure of the governing body is good and encourages governors to carry out their business in an efficient manner. Several governors are particularly influential and experienced in matters of finance, buildings and other site matters.
63. The management of special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator is experienced and has an effective overview of systems including the development of the new Code of Practice. She ensures that pupils are identified at an early stage and that the current register is reviewed regularly. Parents are involved at the correct times. The management of the school is also looking at the needs of different groups of pupils to ensure it remains fully inclusive in its philosophy and practice. In this connection, the needs of the most able and talented have yet to be fully addressed. The school continues to move forward satisfactorily in relation to the many initiatives it has faced, including the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, the formal implementation of personal and social education and the introduction of new forms of

staff appraisal through performance management. Good systems are in place to support the induction of two newly qualified teachers. Various diverse areas for further development have been identified correctly, including how best to raise standards in science among junior pupils and improvements to the hall floor. The work carried out in raising the profile and standards in ICT has been very effective.

64. The systems for the monitoring and evaluation of the school's overall performance and taking effective action are satisfactory. Policies and procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory, but there is considerable scope for involving more staff in the process. The school has become more self-evaluative and is looking more critically than before at its past results including those aspects of pupils' attainment that need to be improved or strengthened. For example, a current priority on the school development plan is to improve the quality of provision in science in Years 3 to 6, and this is appropriate. A relative teaching and management weakness is the lack of tangible target setting for groups or individual pupils following a close analysis of their performance in some core subjects and many of the foundation subjects. This needs to be done more rigorously in the future involving all teaching staff and subject co-ordinators.
65. The annual development plan presents a general survey of the needs of the school in a wide range of areas. The priorities expressed are appropriate to the growth of the school and the management has made steady progress in the areas currently under review. In some areas, the school is not precise enough about what it is trying to achieve and who will have overriding responsibility for proposed actions. The current model for school improvement is set for the current academic year only. The headteacher's intention is rightly to widen the approach and timescales involved, when the new subject co-ordinators have carried out more informed audits of priorities in their areas.
66. The school's finances are well administered and monitored by the headteacher, school secretary and governors. The most recent school audit showed that financial systems and procedures are satisfactory overall. The school makes good use of its annual budget and financial grants are correctly targeted and accounted for. Stronger links could be made between the annual budget and some priorities expressed in the school development plan. However, the school presents itself as an efficient unit. It is aware of the need to gain best value in its purchases and use of educational resources, and applies such principles well. The underspend currently showing in financial printouts has been earmarked for the school's share of the overall costs of the new ICT suite and this is appropriate and good use of available funds. The day-to-day running of the office is very good and is well organised by the headteacher and an experienced and efficient secretary. The school makes very good use of new technology including the very latest means of raising and processing orders and maintaining its records on databases. Overall, the school gives good value for money.
67. Current staffing levels are satisfactory in meeting the pupils' needs as well as the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. Support staff provide experienced and well-informed help to pupils and teachers in a wide range of everyday situations. This has a marked impact on the pupils' progress, including those with special educational needs and the few with English as an additional language. The level and quality of educational resources are satisfactory overall and those in ICT are good. The school has a small central library, which is well liked and used by pupils. It is mainly serviced and run by experienced parents and this works well. Good use is also made of the local authority's loan service for books and artefacts. Some of the

reading books for the older and higher attaining pupils require updating and replenishing.

68. The available accommodation is of a satisfactory standard to deliver the planned curriculum and meet the needs of the pupils. It is clean and well maintained. Classrooms are of sufficient size for the number of pupils although in a few, storage and pupil movement presents some difficulties. Space in the library is limited. The new computer suite is very well equipped and is already proving a great asset to staff and pupils, particularly with the additional equipment such as the overhead projector for use with the PowerPoint program, a gift from the parents and friends of the school. Displays of work in classrooms and corridors are of good quality and contain significant amounts of pupils' own work, which is clearly valued and celebrated. The school grounds are rightly being reviewed in relation to added security, the reinstatement of a wildlife area and improved facilities for the children in the Foundation Stage. The hall floor is soon to be re-surfaced.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. In order to raise standards and to build on the already good quality of education in the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

Raise standards in science in the junior classes by:

- raising expectations of what pupils need to achieve, including the introduction of more challenging work for higher attaining pupils;
- ensuring that pupils' previous knowledge and experiences continue to be built on in a systematic way, including their investigative and recording skills;
- ensuring that pupils' scientific knowledge is rigorously monitored through the careful assessment and marking of what they know, understand and can do;
- improving the quality and impact of subject monitoring offered by the science co-ordinator and others;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to make their own decisions during investigative work including greater opportunity for them to plan and evaluate their own work.

(Paragraphs 4, 9, 10, 26, 31, 64, 117-125)

Improve assessment procedures by:

- developing more consistent and systematic procedures to assess pupils' work in science and all the foundation subjects. Ensure that the chosen whole-school approach enables teachers to gain a clear overview of pupils' attainment and progress in these subjects as they move through the school;
- ensuring that the assessment of pupils' work leads to meaningful learning targets that are shared carefully and regularly with the pupils themselves and are designed to meet clearly their changing individual needs;

- developing a more consistent whole-school approach to the marking of pupils' work. Ensuring that the guidance given to pupils makes it clear as to the standards expected by the teacher and what the pupils should do next to improve.

(Paragraphs 24, 30, 51-55, 58, 64, 101, 113-114, 129, 131, 135, 140, 148, 155, 161, 165)

As well as the above, the school should consider adding to its post-inspection plan, the following area for development

Review the school's existing policy towards the teaching and learning of talented and gifted pupils, ensuring that the agreed provision clearly meets their needs.

(Paragraphs 10, 24, 26, 33, 35, 63, 105, 112, 122, 126, 139)

The school is aware that all the above are areas for continuous development and has begun to take appropriate measures to ensure improvements occur. The introduction of 'Curriculum Complete' is being used, for example, to help counteract weaknesses in assessment procedures.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
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	7	25	19	0	0	0
Percentage	2	13.5	48	35.5	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	15	211
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	36
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	0

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

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

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	14	16	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	13	14
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	28	29	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (94)	97 (91)	100 (97)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	29	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (91)	100 (94)	100 (91)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	15	16	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	15	14	14
	Total	27	26	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (88)	84 (85)	84 (97)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	13
	Girls	12	14	14
	Total	23	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (73)	84 (85)	87 (85)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	206	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	4	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30.1
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	100

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.1
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	27
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	510,501
Total expenditure	508,307
Expenditure per pupil	2,118
Balance brought forward from previous year	20,723
Balance carried forward to next year	22,917

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	241
Number of questionnaires returned	175

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	25	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	25	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	36	1	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	49	35	9	1	6
The teaching is good.	70	27	2	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	41	5	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	19	3	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	19	3	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	58	31	7	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	68	25	4	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	25	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	31	7	5	3

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

70. Provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is good and is a strength of the school. For example, the teaching observed was good in nine out of ten lessons and was never less than satisfactory. This indicates an improvement since the previous inspection when the quality of teaching was judged as satisfactory. Teachers' planning is of good quality and addresses well the six areas of learning set out for young children. Both classes are organised into well-structured learning areas. The wide range of interesting activities provides a welcoming environment. Children are highly valued and their wellbeing is of paramount importance. Children with special learning needs and those children for whom English is an additional language are provided with good support and, as a result, make good progress.
71. Thirty-seven children attend the nursery on a part-time basis, and the school is in the process of admitting a few new children for an hour each session. Twenty-six children attend full time in the reception class. Children are admitted to the nursery following their third birthday and are admitted to the reception class in the September following their fourth birthday.
72. Children join the nursery from a wider locality than the school's normal intake area. At the end of their time in the nursery, the majority are admitted to the reception class and the remaining children transfer to other schools. When children join the nursery, a wide spread of ability is usually present, although overall attainment is below expectations for their age. Whilst in the nursery, children achieve well in all areas of learning, particularly personal, social and emotional development. This is due to the overall good quality of provision.
73. The school's assessment information and the analysis of the children's work since the beginning of the year, indicate that the attainment of children who enter the reception class is below average, particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. During their year in reception, the children continue to achieve well in all six areas due mainly to the quality of teaching and learning. The large majority are on course to achieve what is expected nationally in mathematics, speaking and listening, writing, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development. Attainment in children's personal development and reading is on course to be above national expectations.
74. The nursery and reception teachers plan the long- and medium-term elements of teaching and learning together. This provides good continuity in the decisions made about what is to be learned and the activities to support learning. For example, the role-play areas in both classes, a veterinary surgery and a pet shop, were carefully linked to the common theme on animals. Planning sets clear and detailed learning objectives for all children. Elements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are appropriately introduced into the reception class during the year. Assessment procedures for recording what children have learned are satisfactory. Information about the children's achievements is used effectively to help teachers plan the next steps in learning. Teachers and support staff work successfully together and this contributes well to the good achievement of the children throughout the Foundation Stage.

75. Positive links are established between the school, and parents and children settle quickly into the daily routines. Parents are provided with good opportunities to visit and find out about the school before their children are admitted. Home visits are carried out. The nursery brochure contains sufficient information for parents to find out about day-to-day procedures and outlines helpful ways in which the school and parents can work together to help their children. However, it does not provide enough information about what the children will learn in the Foundation Stage curriculum. There is also no specific prospectus for parents of children in the reception class. Meetings are offered to parents during the year to discuss their children's progress. Annual written reports for parents of children in the reception class provide clear information on what each child has achieved during the year but not enough information about the next steps in learning. Parents are given good opportunities to be involved in their children's learning, particularly through helping their children develop sound reading skills. Reception home/school reading diaries are of a very high quality offering a genuine dialogue between parents and teacher on how well their children are doing.
76. The indoor accommodation in the nursery and reception class is bright and attractive. The outdoor learning environment is adequate but bleak. It provides a good amount of space but does not offer sufficient opportunities for children to develop a wider range of knowledge and skills. Resources are of a satisfactory quality. A washing machine and dryer are installed but there is no refrigerator and, as a result, milk for afternoon children is stored in crates throughout the day in a warm room. This is unsatisfactory and should be avoided.

Personal, social and emotional development

77. By the end of the reception year, most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area and many will exceed them. Standards are higher than seen in the majority of schools.
78. Teaching in this area of learning is very good. Adults are effective role models and provide many opportunities for children to learn about themselves, relate to others positively and develop independence as learners. The children come into school happily and are eager to learn. Routines are clear and this results in a secure environment where behaviour is good and positive relationships flourish. Most children are confident and quickly settle in to activities in the nursery or their lessons in the reception class.
79. Many good opportunities are provided for children to talk about their own experiences and what they have learned; as a result, most are developing good listening skills. Planned activities provide good opportunities for children to learn to work on their own. As a result, most concentrate on what they are doing for a good length of time without the need for adult support. Resources are well organised so that children are able to make their own choices and most learn to put things away when they finish an activity. Most children develop a good awareness of the need to follow rules and behaviour is good. Play is relatively harmonious. In the reception class, behaviour is often very good because of the very skilful way in which the teacher motivates the children to give of their best. A very good example of how the children's personal development is encouraged to grow was observed when a 'lost and hungry' teddy was 'found' in the reception classroom. The children's imagination and concern were very evident and they wrote a class letter to the headteacher to ask for his help. Together, everyone decided that the safest place for the teddy would be in the reception class with one child declaring, 'I'll cuddle it and keep it warm by the fire'.

Communication, language and literacy

80. By the end of the reception year, the large majority of children are likely to have achieved the early learning goals in this area. The teaching is good. The majority of children in the nursery achieve well in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Standards in reading in the reception class are particularly good and are higher than seen in the majority of schools. Many children listen attentively to adults. They enjoy listening to stories and are likely to reach the expected target in this aspect of learning by the end of the reception year.
81. Many opportunities are planned and taken to promote language. Teachers and supporting adults are skilled in encouraging children to talk in a range of situations, providing good language support by commenting on what the children are doing and ensuring important words are introduced. As a result, the children achieve well in using their speaking skills both to communicate with others and to help them in thinking through their ideas. In both classes, good opportunities are provided to give children time to reflect before putting their ideas into words.
82. Children in the nursery enjoy looking at books and listen and watch attentively when an adult talks about what is in the pictures. Children in the nursery enjoy story sessions. During a book corner story activity, they listened enthralled and joined in with the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. In both the nursery and reception, children are provided with a stimulating literacy environment where early reading and writing skills are planned into many activities. This good provision results in children enjoying looking at books and listening to stories. In the reception class, the emphasis on the continued development of early reading skills results in the majority of children progressing onto the first books in the reading scheme. Most children read a range of familiar words and can identify most letters and the sounds they make.
83. Children make good progress in developing writing skills and the large majority is likely to achieve the expected standards by the end of the reception year. Children in the nursery are beginning to make marks on paper to represent writing and, by the beginning of the reception year, some are beginning to write letter shapes, string individual letters together and attempt to write their first names. The majority of reception children are beginning to write words and simple sentences independently, such as, 'Eddy went to look for his teddy'. In handwriting activities in the reception class, most children hold a pencil correctly but not enough direct adult supervision is provided to ensure that all children follow the correct handwriting rules.

Mathematical development

84. The large majority of reception children are on course to achieve the expected targets in mathematical development and make good progress overall. Teaching in this area is good and children achieve well, particularly when learning about number and shape. The children achieve well in the nursery and, by the time of transfer, the majority are on the way to reaching what is expected of children of this age. A good variety of activities are planned and these are matched well to the children's learning needs with many opportunities being taken to promote mathematical development. Children in the nursery, for example, count out loud with adults and use their skills in other work such as matching and sorting pictures and shapes.
85. Most reception children count reliably to ten and many beyond 20. The reception teacher ensures that learning is interesting and, as a result, the children respond very positively. For example, number sequencing was presented through a 'Mexican Wave' game, which not only helped the children to develop their number skills but

also reinforced the idea of taking turns and listening to others. Activities are also designed well to capture the children's imagination, such as making numbers using playdough and taking an inventory of stock in the pet shop role-play area.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

86. Teaching in this area of learning is good. By the end of the reception year, the large majority of children are likely to meet the expectations for children of their age in all aspects of this area of learning. This is because many opportunities are provided for new learning and adults focus on developing key language and its use in helping the children to talk about what they know and understand. A good example was observed in the nursery where children were playing with a range of toy water creatures and talking with the nursery nurse. Through careful questioning, the children talked through the reasons why they thought the pieces of ice in the water were getting smaller. Good opportunities were provided for the children to offer their own explanations. Each effort was greatly valued, including one child's idea that 'the ice cube was getting smaller because it was dying'. In the reception class, good opportunities are provided for the children to learn to use books to access information.
87. Children in the nursery class observed working with a parent helper, developed satisfactory mouse skills to control events on the computer screen. Children in the reception class have good opportunities to build upon the skills in the classroom by working on the computers in the ICT suite. In one lesson, the teacher made effective use of her skills in this area of learning and, as a result, the children quickly learned to click and drag the mouse to draw their own pictures on the computer screen.

Physical development

88. Teaching in physical development is good and most children are on course to achieve the expected learning goals in this area. This includes activities such as handwriting and the use of scissors that require small, precise actions. Adults supervise and monitor children well when they take part in activities such as pedalling wheeled toys around a circuit in the outdoor play area. Occasionally, opportunities are missed in the nursery to correct over robust behaviour, such as riding bikes without due attention to the welfare of other children. At other times, staff are careful to reinforce acceptable behaviour. Children in the reception classes have access to the school hall for a range of their physical activities. In one such lesson, children achieved well in the development of hand/eye co-ordination, balance and the development of throwing and catching skills.

Creative development

89. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good and, as a result, most children are likely to attain the standards expected by the end of their reception year. Carefully planned activities ensure a balance between independent learning, where children are able to make choices, and adult support to promote basic skills. For example, children in the nursery watched an adult demonstrate and then made controlled 'spotty pictures' for themselves.
90. Role-play areas are used effectively to develop social, imaginative and communication skills. Nursery children in the 'veterinary surgery' minister to the animals' needs, whilst in the reception 'pet shop', children organise the stock and count the kittens and puppies.

91. In the nursery, children are beginning to develop a repertoire of songs and many join in with simple rhymes such as 'Twinkle, Twinkle'. By the time they are in reception, they clap and play percussion instruments to different rhythms. Resources are easily accessed and provide a good choice. Children's work is valued and teachers place a good emphasis on displaying children's work that illustrates a wide range of creative experiences and techniques.

ENGLISH

92. English has been a key curriculum strength of the school for several years and inspection evidence confirms that this is still the case. Good speaking and listening skills continue to figure prominently throughout the entire curriculum. High standards in reading across the school have been sustained and many aspects of pupils' writing have progressed well, illustrating the good progress in the subject since the previous inspection. The most recent results of national tests in English (2002) show that pupils at the school performed well above average in reading and above average in writing by the end of Year 2. Pupils in this year group also do well in relation to schools in similar social settings. From below average attainment in English on entry to the school, pupils progress well in the subject and are on target to achieve above average standards by the end of the year.
93. Pupils in the junior years continue to make good progress and inspection evidence confirms that by the end of Year 6, a significant number is on course to achieve well above average standards in reading and comprehension and above average standards in writing. This trend is supported by the well above average results achieved by Year 6 pupils last year, when significant numbers reached the higher levels for their age. The above average standards across the school are a reflection, in part, of the success of the National Literacy Strategy, the good quality of teaching and learning and the daily enthusiasm and application of the pupils themselves.
94. Speaking and listening skills are good throughout the school. By Year 2, most pupils express their thoughts clearly and confidently. They listen to others and give appropriate responses to questions and reactions to the ideas of others. For example, Year 2 pupils were able to express their feelings and experiences during 'circle time', sharing their thoughts about the need not to judge people by outward appearances. Year 1 pupils are able to re-tell stories by pretending to be characters in the story itself and by answering questions from their friends about why they act as they do. Pupils continue to develop good listening skills in the junior years. The teachers give good opportunities for them to discuss their ideas and to reflect on the views of others. They are attentive to their teachers and to one another. Older pupils speak with assurance about the things that interest them. Year 4 pupils were very eager to share 'olden day' vocabulary that they had researched as homework, whilst those in Years 5 and 6 talk about their school and some of the aspects they would like to improve. Good speech is also modelled well by staff and this gives a lead to many pupils. The ethos within classrooms gives pupils the confidence and self-esteem to speak out, knowing their contributions are valued.
95. Standards in reading are well above average across the school and this is a valuable asset in the support of other subjects in the curriculum. Progress in reading is consistently good. Basic reading skills are taught well and pupils gain a secure knowledge of letter sounds, which help them to read unfamiliar words. Most read familiar words very accurately and show good recall of the content of books read previously. Understanding of the text and knowledge of the way authors create characters, are both above average. From Year 1, most pupils appear enthusiastic

about their reading in general. Pupils talk knowingly about the books they have read and understand terms such as 'title', 'author' and 'illustrator'. Higher attaining readers readily distinguish between fiction and non-fiction and know that contents and index pages can be used to locate information.

96. Junior pupils build well on these skills. Most develop a lively interest in different types of books and quickly become independent readers. Most pupils in Year 6 read chosen texts accurately and increase steadily the range of their reading. Many have the ability to infer, predict or research to a good standard. This was seen in a good lesson where pupils showed shrewd understanding of how authors handle the passing of time. Junior pupils in particular use their reading skills well across the curriculum, such as interrogating the Internet to find out about Beethoven. Reading records are maintained well and teachers encourage pupils to write critically in their reading journals about reactions and views as to what they have read.
97. Standards in pupils' writing are generally above average for pupils by the end of Years 2 and 6. By Year 2, most pupils can convey meaning clearly in simple sentences although, for some, ideas are not particularly well sustained. Sentences are sequenced logically and the use of capital letters and full stops is generally consistent and accurate. Spelling is well practised and letter formation and handwriting are increasingly legible. When writing weekend news, good descriptive vocabulary is generally used. Knowledge from reading is used well; for example when Year 2 pupils compiled an impressive list of alternatives to using the word 'said' in their written work. Some pupils would benefit from writing at even greater length using a variety of starting points. Higher attaining pupils realise that not all writing sounds the same and several make worthwhile attempts to write in different styles, including poetry.
98. By Year 6, pupils practise an increased range of writing, including narrative, factual writing and scripted dialogue. Pupils in this year group are equally at home writing about Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Nights Dream' as they are with their own descriptive poems about the fog. Although the use of ICT in English could usefully be extended, many imaginative pieces are 'wordprocessed' and illustrated using computer skills. Some pupils would benefit from more opportunities to draft and word draft their work using ICT. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 show increasing awareness of audience when writing about how to play skittles or football trivia or make up their own articles for a newspaper. By Year 6, an increasing number of pupils have a sufficiently wide vocabulary to explore and express ideas in an interesting way, particularly when writing for different purposes. Year 3 pupils showed their ability with 'story frames' when producing their own fables.
99. The National Literacy Strategy has given pupils the ideal platform in which to introduce new and exciting vocabulary into their own writing. Grammatical exercises are completed often and most pupils have the ability to use what they have learned in their own creative or factual writing. By Year 6, pupils produce a wide range of work including book reviews, plays, expressive poetry and exciting character descriptions, such as those based around 'The Silver Sword'. Spelling is generally accurate and most pupils are secure in their use of basic punctuation. A few can write lengthy stories using chapters. The work completed in books is generally neat and well presented. Good handwriting is practised systematically.
100. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. This represents further improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress overall because of the consistently good teaching in lessons and the emphasis on pupils building up a rich vein of vocabulary. The teaching of subject-specific language

is also good. The school has embraced the National Literacy Strategy well with all teachers planning and working to a common format. Throughout both key stages, lessons have a balanced structure with clear aims that are generally shared with the pupils. Basic reading and spelling skills are taught effectively, particularly in Year 2. All teachers have good subject knowledge and effective understanding of the National Literacy Strategy. Consequently, lessons are planned well. Very good relationships are established and this enables teachers to manage pupils and the time available very well. The resulting good behaviour is a significant factor in learning and progress, because most pupils work hard and do not waste time.

101. Teachers use resources well and choose from a wide range of teaching strategies that interest and motivate their pupils. Stories, drama and puppets are all used to good effect, and considerable stress is laid on developing pupils' listening and speaking skills. Although even more could be done, teachers are aware of the opportunities to teach literacy skills across a wide range of subjects such as religious education and history. The use of worksheets is not overdone and most pupils benefit from good levels of homework that consolidate and extend their learning. Teachers' marking is generally supportive and encouraging but is not used consistently well across the school, for example in indicating to pupils how they might improve their work.
102. Writing targets are not particularly well established or 'owned' by the pupils and this detracts from more rapid progress. However, most effective lessons centre on activities that are carefully selected to match the interest and abilities of different attaining pupils. The use made of assessment, particularly the results of national testing, is satisfactory. Assessment forms a satisfactory basis for record keeping and reporting to parents. Additional adult help is frequently available to younger pupils and, where this occurs, progress is generally heightened. Despite this, the school needs to think more carefully how best to use the skills of classroom assistants to ensure all pupils take part fully in lessons.
103. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress. Teachers plan work that is well matched to the pupils' abilities and their learning is usually presented in small, meaningful steps, allowing them to taste success at regular intervals. Statemented pupils make particularly good progress because of the additional support that is offered to them. Although not reflected currently in the results of national tests, the school is looking rightly at the need to raise expectations and increase the challenge given to the most able or gifted pupils.
104. The subject is well led by an experienced co-ordinator although some areas of subject management, including an overhaul of the whole-school policy, need to be improved. The co-ordinator shares with colleagues a clear commitment to improving standards and uses her subject knowledge well to help influence planning and practice. The quality of teaching and learning has been monitored in the past but not on a sufficiently regular basis to support new members of staff or to disseminate good practice more widely. A closer analysis of pupils' work, together with agreement trials as to the levels they reach, needs to be more rigorously introduced. It is intended that this will help to give an even clearer indication of strengths and weaknesses within the subject. The action taken to meet the school's targets in English is good. Resources for literacy are satisfactory overall. There is a sound range of fiction and non-fiction books in the small but popular centralised library. Parents play a significant part in the running of the library and support their children's reading well at home.

MATHEMATICS

105. The results of the most recent national tests in mathematics showed that pupils at the end of Year 2 attained standards above those expected for their age. Standards in this year group were also above average when compared to pupils from schools in similar contexts. Standards among infant pupils have improved overall since the previous inspection as teaching is well planned and provides a good match of challenge to the ability of most pupils. However, teachers do not always expect enough of higher attaining pupils and there is some under achievement. Pupils' attainment varies according to the nature of the year group year on year and inspection evidence indicates that standards are broadly average for the current Year 2. Pupils make good progress overall and achieve well set against the below average attainment of many on entry to the school.
106. The most recent national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 show attainment to be broadly in line with the standards expected for their age in all areas of mathematics when compared to all schools and schools in similar settings. In the same year, some more able pupils attained above average standards in mathematics. Since 1999, pupils' standards have followed broadly the pattern of national averages and the inspection confirms that standards remain satisfactory and in line with those expected for a majority of Year 6 pupils. Teaching for pupils aged between seven and eleven years does not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to explain and develop a range of strategies for solving problems, and standards in this area of mathematics could be higher.
107. Pupils' standards are highest in numeracy where often the most effective teaching emphasis is laid. Some teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities to develop shape, space, measure and data handling in sufficiently challenging contexts. In data handling, pupils are given opportunities to collect and represent data in various forms, but are not given sufficient opportunities to analyse and interpret graphs. Girls slightly outperform boys in mathematics at age eleven. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are given good support and make good progress across the school.
108. In Year 2, most pupils are secure when ordering numbers to 100 and can order numbers from smallest to largest. Most pupils are developing an understanding of subtraction to 20 and can add successfully a two-digit to a one-digit number. Pupils are particularly good at counting coins to 50 pence and beyond. More able pupils are beginning to gain an understanding of place value in tens and units.
109. In Year 6, most pupils attain sound standards when adding and subtracting numbers and more able pupils apply these methods to decimals. There are fewer opportunities for pupils to multiply and divide numbers and the majority of pupils have not yet become secure in this aspect of learning. However, almost all pupils are confident in multiplying and dividing by 10 or 100.
110. Throughout the school, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their skills to investigating and problem solving. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to gain an understanding that various strategies can be applied to work out the correct answer but that some are more efficient than others. The adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy however, has helped pupils to sustain satisfactory standards in their mental work.

111. The quality of teaching and learning is good in the infant years and satisfactory elsewhere. High quality teaching in Years 1 and 2 is having a positive effect on learning and is a significant factor in improving pupils' achievement. Effective teaching and learning occurs in Years 1 and 2 when group activities match closely the ability of all the pupils and where teachers show a good understanding of the appropriate challenge needed for all groups to progress at a good rate. In Year 2, the end of one lesson was used well by the teacher to assess what had been learned and not merely as an opportunity for pupils to show to others what they had been doing.
112. In Years 4, 5 and 6, teachers use question and answer sessions to effectively reinforce previous learning or to target individuals or groups of pupils who need particular support. Teaching is particularly effective in learning when a range of teaching styles and approaches are used. However, an analysis of both past and current work shows that more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. In Years 3 to 6, the pace of lessons is not always consistent. For example, in Year 5, a speaking and listening session was too prolonged and resulted in some pupils becoming restless and making less than the expected rate of progress.
113. Most lessons are planned effectively using the National Numeracy Strategy. The three-part lesson structure is soundly established and planning is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers clearly identify what is to be learned in the lesson but this is not always shared with pupils at the start of the lesson in sufficient depth for them to share the teachers' high expectations. However, targets are usually displayed for pupils in a simple way. Some teachers use a sound range of mathematical vocabulary as a routine part of their teaching strategies. Where this occurs, pupils' understanding and confidence are extended, but this practice is not consistent. The final or plenary sessions are often weaker than other parts of the lessons. These are often restricted to pupils merely showing their work rather than as a means of assessing their efforts or reinforcing aspects of learning that pupils have struggled with.
114. The analysis of pupils' work reveals that, in several classes, the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. There is little evidence, for example, of comments related to learning or the next steps for pupils to follow. Some pupils are therefore missing opportunities to become more involved in their own learning. Teachers track their own pupils' achievements satisfactorily but the whole-school approach towards assessing pupils' work in mathematics has yet to be fully evaluated and acted upon.
115. The development of numeracy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. For example, pupils use data collection and graphs to represent outcomes in science. Links with ICT are evident from displayed work but ICT is not yet incorporated into lessons as fully as it should be. The school's latest ICT systems are designed to help overcome this issue.
116. The school has made satisfactory improvement in the subject as a whole since the previous inspection. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The subject leader is recently appointed to mathematics and has yet to action fully the list of priorities she has established. As yet, there is no written and complete action plan to drive and manage the subject, but the subject leader has worked hard in a short time to build the big picture surrounding mathematics. She has already monitored some lessons and examined the detail of teachers' planning. By feeding back verbally to teachers, she has begun to be more aware of standards within mathematics throughout the school particularly those areas in need of more focused attention and improvement.

SCIENCE

117. Pupils achieve well to reach above average standards by the age of seven. This indicates good improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged as average. Greater emphasis has been placed on the areas of scientific enquiry and investigation and teachers ensure that pupils build upon what they have learnt earlier. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress in science in all classes because teachers take good account of their learning needs when planning work.
118. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards are below expectations and a significant minority, particularly higher ability pupils, do not achieve as well as they should. This represents a decline since the last inspection when standards were assessed as average. Although the majority of pupils are likely to reach the expected basic level by the end of Year 6, not enough pupils are in line to achieve above average levels. In addition, approximately one fifth of the current year group may find it very difficult to achieve the expected Level 4. Standards in the junior years are confirmed by pupils' scores achieved recently in national tests.
119. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the junior classes and are good among the infant year groups. Across the school, teachers manage pupils well and, as a result, relationships are good and the majority of pupils show good attitudes and work hard. Lessons start on time and generally proceed at a brisk pace. Good use is made of the school's science resources, particularly during investigative work.
120. The good teaching in the infant classes is characterised by the strong emphasis placed on developing pupils' own ideas. This was a very strong feature in the Year 2 lesson observed although not enough practical opportunities were provided for all groups to explore and find out for themselves. However, work over time indicates that they do particularly well in developing the skills of scientific enquiry. They learn to make reasonable predictions of what might happen in an investigation and to observe carefully and record their results. As a consequence, they are able to record sensible explanations of what they have found out and why.
121. Pupils also learn how to record their work methodically. They draw diagrams and produce charts to show what they have done and describe the process used when writing up their experiments. For example, when investigating where the warmest place in school might be, the pupils decided independently to place ice cubes in different places, recorded what they did and drew simple conclusions. The marking of pupils' work is a weakness across the school. Although good quality marking takes place in some classes, in others, pupils' work is sometimes not marked at all or is ticked without comment. As a result, pupils are not provided with enough information on how well they are doing and how they might improve their work.
122. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in the junior classes and, although there are some good features, there are also some weaknesses. Lessons are well prepared and well organised. Pupils understand clearly what is expected of them but not always what they are expected to learn. This is because teachers do not always outline the aims of the lesson or make it clear what individuals and groups are expected to achieve, according to their ability, by the end of the lesson. Appropriate emphasis is given to investigative work but not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to make their own decisions about, for example, where they might find information and how they are going to tackle an investigation. Rather too much of this

work is over-directed by teachers. Higher attaining pupils are not provided with sufficient challenge to take them further in their work. Examples of this include being given few opportunities to take account of variables, not able to draw conclusions based on their own evidence, not always using scientific language to a good level and not having the opportunity to rigorously evaluate their work.

123. Pupils' literacy skills are developed as they learn to record their work in a variety of ways. Teachers also reinforce and extend pupils' mathematical skills in measuring and recording their findings. However, not enough use is made of ICT to record the results of their findings.
124. Subject leadership is satisfactory. The co-ordinator knows the subject's strengths and weaknesses but there is no school agreed system of producing a subject action plan as a framework for future improvement. Not enough opportunities are provided for the co-ordinator to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in order to gain an overview of standards. Planning ensures that all areas of the subject are taught. Assessment procedures are, however, unsatisfactory. Although teachers keep their own records of what pupils have achieved, there is no whole-school system to provide a clear picture of how well pupils are doing across the various attainment targets in science.
125. The subject provides good opportunities for personal development through working in pairs and groups. Across all classes, pupils learn about healthy living and taking care of themselves. Sex education, drugs awareness and environmental issues are all addressed within a well-formed science curriculum.

ART AND DESIGN

126. Most pupils across the school make satisfactory progress and are on course to attain the standards expected for their age by the end of Years 2 and 6. Current standards are broadly similar to those reflected during the previous inspection and the subject has made satisfactory progress since it was last reported on. Girls and boys have similar opportunities and attain similar standards. A few gifted pupils are beginning to be identified and then supported and encouraged accordingly. Pupils with special educational needs and the few with English as an additional language make similar rates of progress to their peers.
127. The teaching and learning emphasis in Years 1 and 2 is on exploring colour and experimenting with new techniques and media. This is supported well by the teachers' own knowledge and understanding. Art and design is also used adequately to support and illustrate pupils' learning in other areas of the curriculum, particularly religious education, science and English stories. Pupils in Year 1 made wide and effective use of fabrics and papers to make up 'Joseph's Dream Coat of many colours'. They also showed satisfactory awareness of form and tone when 'taking a line for a walk' and ended up with enclosing shapes that could be coloured in. Those in Year 2 showed an increasing sense of observation when creating their own pictures from photographs depicting the school environment. During the year, most pupils show average ability in their use of paint, crayons and pastels. Pupils are encouraged to work on both a small and larger scale and this approach is effective in gaining useful experience and heightening their progress. Some use computers to experiment with designs, form and colour.
128. Pupils' techniques improve satisfactorily as they move through the junior years. Year 3 pupils completed some very attractive work on 'tufting pictures' using different

coloured fabrics and polystyrene tiles. Those in Year 4 have begun to learn about different forms of printing and produced some attractively displayed pictures using their own fingers as a printing tool. By Year 6, pupils show appropriate levels of skill and care producing art using a variety of media and starting points. Their observational and drawing skills are satisfactory overall but could be enhanced by the introduction of sketch books that would provide more opportunities for reflection and evaluating their past efforts. During one lesson, Year 6 pupils showed sound knowledge of perspective by drawing a completed picture around a centralised photograph depicting a local scene. The same year group produced some above average results using ink and charcoal line drawings to create form and depth. The finished drawings of cattle, horses and rabbits were very pleasing to both them and the observer. By Year 6, pupils are becoming increasingly aware of art forms inspired by other countries such as India and the Philippines. Art and design is also used very successfully to support history when designing frames and portraits from the Victorian age.

129. The teaching and learning of art and design are satisfactory overall although several teachers show a talent for teaching the subject with considerable imagination and flair. Lessons are planned satisfactorily and many teachers are effective in their methods, drawing on a range of approaches including good use of their own and the pupils' demonstrations. The management of pupils is good and little time is lost, making art and design lessons a relaxed yet purposeful time for learning. The teaching and learning of basic skills and techniques are well rehearsed and consolidated. Resources and additional adult help are used satisfactorily to support pupils' learning. Pupils appear genuinely interested in art and design and need little motivation to do their best and 'give things a try'. This positive approach impacts well on self-learning. However, some of the art seen was very teacher-directed and staff could usefully give older pupils in particular more opportunities to choose media, size of paper etc for themselves. The means by which pupils' work is assessed is currently unsatisfactory. There is no whole-school system for assessing and recording the standards pupils reach and using this information to set new targets for further improvement.
130. The co-ordinator for art and design is very new to her post and therefore has had little time to establish her view of standards in the subject and what priorities must now be raised. She has begun to gather photographic evidence of art across the school and this is already giving her a more accurate idea of what additional support pupils require. Resources for art and design are satisfactory overall, although more resources to illustrate the work of established artists, past and present and from different cultures, would be helpful.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

131. Standards are similar to those expected nationally at the ages of seven and eleven. The subject has improved satisfactorily since the previous inspection. The adoption of the latest national guidance means that the school provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to design, make and evaluate small projects using a wide range of materials and contexts. Most pupils clearly make satisfactory progress in their various projects. Girls and boys enjoy equal opportunities in learning and there are no significant differences in their attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory progress, particularly when additional help and support are available. Assessing and recording procedures to help monitor and extend pupils' progress and experiences have yet to be developed.

132. By the end of Year 2, pupils develop a sound understanding of the need to plan and talk about what they intend to do. When using templates to design puppets, most show sound awareness of the potential use of different fabrics to enhance the likely appearance of their finished work. Pupils have average skills when using scissors, rulers and the adhesives they are given. In discussion, most show at least some awareness of how their work can be improved. When working with a partner or within a small group, pupils show good levels of co-operation and are able to draw on each other's ideas to a satisfactory level for their age. This helps to develop their personal and social skills as well as improve their experiences of evaluation. Attitudes are usually very positive and this too enhances learning. Teachers ensure that a satisfactory range of materials is on hand for pupils to explore and use. Year 1 pupils use their knowledge to create characters such as 'William Wood' and 'Paper Pat'. The same year group experiment successfully with moving pictures.
133. From Year 3 onwards, pupils use successfully their previous knowledge and experiences to complete more complex projects. Design skills among junior pupils are still at a rudimentary stage and there is clear scope for improvement here. However, most Year 3 pupils were able to design simple gift boxes which, when completed, were hung as attractive mobiles. Pupils in the same year made some useful links with science when designing a vehicle that moves using energy stored in an elastic band. Pupils in Year 4 were fascinated with an array of torches although very few were able to give a coherent explanation as to how they worked. Some, however, were able to produce a simple annotated diagram showing the main components, rather than merely drawing a picture. Pupils in Year 4 combine imaginative art with design and technology and science by creating glass jars with 'snowstorm' interiors that work very well when inverted.
134. Some of the work done by pupils in Year 5 illustrates their growing care with design. The upper junior corridor showed good evidence of how older pupils can design their own wallpaper in the style of William Morris. Year 5 pupils also made useful links with the theme of sound in science when designing and making their own musical instruments from scrap materials. By the end of Year 6, pupils have extended their experiences to projects such as food technology, making fairground rides with moving parts and different forms of model shelters. During the inspection, they had just begun work on designing a pair of slippers and showed adequate ideas and understanding of their project.
135. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory across the school. Teachers use the available schemes, ideas and related resources well. The teaching of basic techniques is well established and these skills are taught to pupils in a systematic way, year on year. Teachers' expectations as to what pupils can achieve are particularly good in Year 2. Teachers' planning is relatively thorough but does not always indicate those planned opportunities for pupils to discuss and reflect on their work and to perhaps improve it in the future. In this context, the assessment of pupils' work is not co-ordinated enough and is unsatisfactory in relation to a firm understanding of the point pupils have reached and what needs to be given priority next. The management of the pupils is satisfactory and is well supported by classroom assistance when this is available. Most teachers are secure in their own knowledge and pass on their enthusiasms to the pupils well. This results in a good response and work ethic from the pupils themselves.
136. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory at best as the co-ordinator is very new to the post and has not, as yet, been able to monitor teaching and learning nor the

standards that pupils attain. She does, however, have a real enthusiasm for the subject and has established some clear priorities for improvements in the future. The resources for design and technology are satisfactory overall, although an increase in the components necessary to teach simple mechanics to older pupils is desirable.

GEOGRAPHY

137. Pupils' standards are currently on course to be in line with those expected for their age by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is consistent with standards outlined in the previous inspection and indicates progress in the subject as a whole has been satisfactory over time. Girls and boys attain broadly similar standards and pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make at least satisfactory progress but, where additional adult support is available, their overall progress is often better.
138. Year 1 pupils demonstrate sound knowledge of features of different houses and begin to develop knowledge of their local town, North Shields. By Year 2, pupils develop an awareness of their local environment and relate this to localities beyond their own. For example, they can identify some key towns and cities within the British Isles and know the countries which make up the United Kingdom. They understand the purpose of maps and can talk about features such as rivers and roads and know how these are represented in mapping forms. Pupils also know that to reach other countries means 'travelling abroad' and they suggest the best ways of doing this. Through this work, they achieve well in relation to developing geographical skills, knowledge and understanding.
139. By Year 6, pupils have a sound knowledge of a range of different countries and seas around the world. Pupils could talk with confidence about India, past and present. Most could also compare the lifestyles in India with those in their own home and surroundings. Pupils understand how change affects people over time and how maps and aspects of countries can change for historical and political reasons. Year 5 pupils were researching well various fact files on Greece. Pupils in Year 4 learn about the importance of maintaining their environment and how recycling can help. Most pupils have begun to develop a satisfactory awareness of their own and other environments, focusing on features and processes that bring about change. However, teaching and learning would be better supported through a more consistent, whole-school approach, particularly the need for more opportunities to develop geographical concepts. There is also the need to challenge more able pupils by inviting them to do more individual and more complex research for themselves.
140. The planning of lessons is sound and mainly focuses upon national guidance attached to specific units of work, although these are not always matched to the appropriate year group. The school is also considering adopting other schemes by way of support. The result is that there is not, at present, a clear framework to ensure that learning builds effectively upon previous learning. The assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory as there is no cohesive framework for teachers to follow. Marking, for example, does not provide pupils with enough information to enable them to be aware of their own learning and what ought to be their next planned objectives or targets.
141. The quality of teaching and learning observed in Year 1 is good. One lesson was well planned and provided carefully organised tasks that met the needs of the pupils. The teacher developed clear links with previous teaching and learning and extended the

pupils appropriately. By making maps for 'Barney Bear's weekend adventure' the pupils gained a useful understanding of mapping features related to real places.

142. In Year 4, pupils demonstrate sound learning about environmental issues. They know about the need to recycle items and show a sound understanding of a range of materials to consider. Year 5 pupils also demonstrate satisfactory learning about the water cycle. Teaching and learning in Year 6 are very good, for example when pupils compared their own lifestyle to that of people in India. The teacher used a variety of approaches and linked this learning to map-making. There were also good links with ICT and homework. The pupils responded with enthusiasm and produced some good work. However, teaching and learning at Years 3 to 6 are not consistent enough to lead to good, even rates of progress for all pupils. Although satisfactory overall, insufficient emphasis is placed upon the subject throughout the school.
143. At the present time, the leadership and management of geography are unsatisfactory. The subject leader has only recently taken up this post and has had insufficient time or training to enable her to monitor lessons, teachers' planning or pupils' work. She has identified some initial priorities to pursue but as yet does not have a clear overview of the subject and there is no written action plan to guide and manage improvement. Resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory.

HISTORY

144. Pupils' standards are on course to be average for their age by the end of Years 2 and 6. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily and make sound progress as they move through the school. Those with special educational needs and the very few with English as an additional language make similar rates of progress to their peers and this is heightened when the work set is well directed and they are supported by additional adult or pupil help. The subject has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection and pupils' standards are much the same as they were.
145. By the age of seven, pupils are beginning to develop their knowledge and understanding of the lives of people in the past; for example, by re-telling the story of local heroine Grace Darling in Year 2 and through comparing Victorian homes to the pupils' own homes in Year 1. Between Years 1 and 2, the pupils' understanding of chronology and the influence of the past on the present is beginning to develop and pupils describe with confidence some key differences between past and present.
146. The Victorian theme is taken forward into Year 6 where pupils gain a sound understanding of various aspects of Victorian life and the effect of change upon the daily lives of ordinary people. Year 4 pupils write interesting letters to demonstrate their understanding of how World War Two affected the lives of both soldiers and the people at home. In Year 3, pupils were given sound opportunities to make decisions for themselves based upon information discussed as a whole group. There was, however, little evidence that pupils had appropriate knowledge of the lives of famous men and women who lived in the past.
147. Pupils' sense of time in Years 3 to 6 is thus developing satisfactorily but learning would be supported better through a more consistent approach in all classes and through more opportunities for pupils to investigate the relevance of history on our lives today.
148. Planning is sound and mainly focuses upon the appropriate national guidance. However, planning does not always match the work intended for each year group. The

school is also considering adopting another scheme by way of additional support. There is not at present a clear enough framework to ensure that lessons build effectively upon previous learning. Some of the activities do not always challenge higher attaining pupils to learn a little more history for themselves. The assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory overall as there is no whole-school framework for teachers to follow. Marking does not always provide pupils with enough information to enable them to be aware of their own learning and what they should do next to improve.

149. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is good. Teachers plan their lessons well, building in appropriate challenges for pupils of different abilities. The teaching was lively and teachers used questioning effectively to guide pupils' thinking. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, although some planning indicates that teaching does not always provide tasks that are totally suited to pupils' differing abilities. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have been given some opportunity to develop their research skills but this and other aspects of teaching are not consistent across the school. Pupils have opportunities to identify the way in which the past is represented but there is little evidence of teachers giving pupils real opportunities to interpret historical facts.
150. The subject leader has only recently taken up this post and has had insufficient time or training to enable her to monitor lessons, teachers' planning or pupils' work. She has identified some initial priorities to pursue but as yet the subject leader does not have a clear overview of the subject and there is no written action plan to guide and manage improvement. Thus, at this present time, leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

151. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection when standards were judged as satisfactory. Standards are now higher than expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well and make good progress. This improvement is due to effective staff training, good teaching and significant improvement in the provision and organisation of computers. The setting up of an integrated ICT network has also led to greater flexibility in teaching and learning.
152. The teachers' secure subject knowledge and enthusiasm for ICT is reflected in the quality of work and the good achievement made by all pupils during lessons. Year 1 pupils already work with good levels of independence as they use the keyboard to write sentences using the capital letter, full stop and space bar on the keyboard and a mouse to click on the task bar buttons. These skills develop well and by Year 2, pupils use their keyboard and mouse skills with impressive confidence. For example, in the lesson seen, they combined clip art with text, clicked on icons and dragged images to create a finished piece of work. They know how to change the appearance of text by, for example, enlarging and changing the style of fonts. Teachers, in all of the lessons observed, ensured through their planning that pupils learned and used the correct technical language.
153. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils were building upon their navigation skills as they searched the British Museum web site for information about the Anglo-Saxons as part of their history topic. They made fast and efficient use of the mouse to click on the tool bar and to make choices from drop-down menus. By Year 6, pupils apply their skills confidently in all aspects of the subject. For example, in the lesson observed, they

worked with a multimedia program to produce good quality, creative and often humorous presentations about St Cuthbert's school. During the lesson, pupils were confident and knowledgeable as they explained the processes of creating a hyperlink and using custom animation to create images. The teacher's use of the digital projector at the start of the lesson ensured that pupils knew exactly what they had to do. Towards the end of the lesson, a class discussion session provided good opportunities for pupils to identify any problems encountered.

154. The quality of teaching is good overall. It was good or very good in 80 per cent of lessons seen and never less than satisfactory. The training programme has made a positive contribution to the development of the ICT expertise of teachers and support staff. This is evident in lessons where pupils are given good support to enable them to build upon skills learned earlier and to use technical vocabulary accurately.
155. Although teachers keep their own records of what pupils have learned, there are no whole-school assessment and recording procedures in place to provide an overall picture of how well pupils in each year group are doing. Pupils' work is stored on computer to provide a record of what has been achieved but most of this was lost last term due to a technical failure in the system. Satisfactory use is made of ICT in other subjects. For example, good skills were in evidence in Year 6 where pupils had used their wordprocessing skills creatively to write eye-catching book reviews.
156. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator has been central to the improvements in the subject. He has written a well-focused subject action plan and has a very clear understanding of where and how provision in the subject needs to be improved. The school's Internet safety policy ensures that pupils will not meet with any undesirable information or images when searching the Internet. There are good opportunities for pupils in Years 3 to 6 to extend their ICT skills through taking part in the lunchtime computer club. ICT makes a good contribution to the pupils' personal development, particularly through the opportunities provided for them to work together and in their developing use of the Internet for research purposes.

MUSIC

157. Standards are above the levels expected by the end of Year 2. This indicates an improvement since the last inspection when standards for pupils of this age were judged as in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve satisfactory standards. This is similar to the judgement made during the previous inspection. Pupils who are members of the school choir achieve good standards in singing. All pupils have equal access to music and its related activities and there are no significant differences between the standards achieved by girls and boys.
158. Pupils achieve well by the end of Year 2, including pupils who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. This was observed particularly in their ability to hear and perform specific elements of music such as the different lengths of notes. Listening skills are developing very well and during one lesson, they naturally picked up on the pulse of the music being played, even though it was not a specific part of the lesson plan. Pupils have a good knowledge of the names of percussion instruments and during the lesson made careful choices as they selected different instruments on which to play long and short sounds. The teacher's expertise and enthusiasm in the Year 2 lesson was fully reflected in the pupils' own obvious enjoyment.

159. Junior pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. In the one lesson where achievement was less than satisfactory, it was as a result of a weakness in pupil management. Generally, pupils listen carefully to pieces of music. This was particularly so in a Year 4 lesson where pupils were developing an understanding of how musical pitch changes. They were able to demonstrate this both through making the appropriate hand movements to identify high and low pitch and by playing the different notes on tuned instruments. Pupils in Year 5 recognise and understand how different sounds can be created. A good link between music and science was made in one lesson as pupils discussed different sounds created by changing the length and tension of rubber bands. Pupils in Year 6 respond positively to music. In a dance lesson led by a visiting Filipino dancer, they listened and danced to a range of different musical instruments and sounds. Although the school has a 'Composer of the Month' as part of assemblies, pupils in Year 6 have limited knowledge of the lives and work of famous composers.
160. The teaching and learning of music are satisfactory overall although some good teaching was observed in an infant class and a junior class. Where lessons are particularly successful, strengths lie in the teachers' subject knowledge and in their skills in imparting to the pupils their own knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject and this results in good gains in learning.
161. Music plays an important part in the life of the school. In assemblies, for example, music is always a feature as pupils enter the hall. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to learn a musical instrument or take part in the choir. Links with the local community through, for example, taking part in local festivals and singing in various venues, provide good opportunities for pupils to share music beyond the walls of the school and learn about their own heritage. Visiting musicians also make a good contribution to enriching pupils' awareness of a range of music, such as recitals given by a flautist and harpist and by an African drummer. The subject co-ordinator, although very new to the post, brings a great deal of musical expertise and enthusiasm to the subject together with a vision that music improves the quality of life. There is currently no agreed system in place to record pupils' musical knowledge and skills development. As a result, the school does not have a clear overview of standards in the subject nor the progress made by individuals and groups of pupils. Resources are satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

162. Standards are broadly at the level anticipated for the age of the pupils and most make satisfactory progress through the various strands that comprise the statutory requirements in the subject. The subject is fully accessed by all pupils and strongly reflects the importance given to it by the school and the open enthusiasm of the pupils. Standards in swimming, minor games, gymnastics and dance are at a similar level to those reported during the previous inspection. Some good improvements have occurred in dance and gymnastics in Years 1 and 2 where, currently, standards are above average.
163. In Year 1, the work with dance is particularly well planned and there are effective links with English. Pupils use space well to re-create themes depicting 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. They use their bodies imaginatively, creating shapes, mood and movement to a good standard for their age. In gymnastics, Year 2 pupils are adept at sequencing wide and narrow shapes and combining these with various balances on different points of their bodies. Apparatus such as climbing frames, benches and

mats are used imaginatively and pupils end their rehearsed sequences in different ways such as rolls, jumps and landings.

164. Pupils in Year 3 display average techniques when catching, throwing and passing large balls and aiming them at targets such as hoops and skittles. The same class practise some basic movements in Irish dancing. Swimming standards were noted to be broadly average in Year 5 where pupils had just embarked on the first of weekly visits to the local pool. A few higher attaining pupils can demonstrate distance swimming and more advanced diving techniques. By the end of Year 6, records show that it is comparatively rare for pupils not to be able to swim at least 25 metres. Year 5 pupils also show some good moments of stick control when coached in basic hockey skills. A strength of the overall physical education programme is dance and Year 6 pupils make very good progress when learning about Filipino dancing from a visiting specialist from that country. The lesson also gave them some invaluable insight into the traditions and costumes associated with a different culture.
165. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory elsewhere. In the infant year groups, teacher expectations are high and planning is effective. Teachers are careful to build on previous learning and experiences and make good use of available time and resources. The management of pupils is sensitive yet firm ensuring they listen well and learn from each other. During all observed lessons, teachers made effective use of pupil demonstrations and paid good attention to matters of safety including the importance of warming-up and cooling down. Staff and pupils are well dressed for activities, although it is a shame that when pupils forget their kit there appears to be little back-up system for pupils to take part. Teachers realise that pupils enjoy their physical activities and use that enthusiasm to good effect, keeping them fully active and involved. Sound attention is paid to improving technique. There is no whole-school approach towards assessment and therefore no accurate means of assessing the point pupils have reached or how best to pass on individual records of their attainment and progress.
166. This is an important subject to the life of the school because of all the various strands and opportunities it provides for pupils. The basic curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities some of which introduce new sports to the pupils, such as hockey, together with the opportunity for competitive sport. Dance is also used well to extend pupils' awareness of both the culture of the region as well as overseas cultures and traditions. The subject is under new leadership and the co-ordinator has been given little time to assess the strengths and weaknesses of overall provision. However, her immediate priorities reflect a growing awareness of the status of the subject and how pupils' needs can be met in the future. The accommodation for physical education is satisfactory although there are some problems during the winter months when particular pressure is placed on a multi-purpose hall. Resources are satisfactory overall although the pupils would benefit from more agility mats of varying size.