

# INSPECTION REPORT

**SS PETER & PAUL VA CATHOLIC PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Tyne Dock, South Shields

LEA area: South Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108717

Headteacher: Mr K Devlin

Reporting inspector: Mr J J Peacock  
25344

Dates of inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> January 2003

Inspection number: 246819

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: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Olive Street  
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South Shields

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Rev'd Fr John James

Date of previous inspection: January 1998

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25344	Mr J J Peacock	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
11368	Ms K Lee	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?
4926	Ms T Aspin	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design History Foundation Stage	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
14851	Mr G Laws	Team inspector	English Music Physical education Ethnic inclusion, including race equality Special educational needs English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This Voluntary Aided Catholic infant and junior school caters for pupils from three to eleven years of age and is about the same size as other schools nationally. There are 218 pupils on roll, 103 boys and 98 girls in seven, single-age classes and 34 children attend the nursery on a part-time basis. Only about half of the pupils live in the immediate area and the rest travel from other parts of South Shields. Although children enter the nursery with a very wide range of levels of attainment, overall it is well below average.

Just over a quarter of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above the national average. Currently the school has 23 pupils with special educational needs and this is broadly in line with the national average. However, there are more in some year groups than others. The number reduced significantly last year when many left the school. The number with a statement of special educational needs is low. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background is very low when compared to other schools with only two at the time of the inspection. Additional funding is available to help these pupils learn English, enabling them to be fully included in all lessons. The number of pupils who arrive at, or leave, the school during the school year is similar to most other schools. The school has had to cope with a period of change over the past two years as almost half of the teaching staff has been replaced and a new deputy headteacher started at the beginning of the current term.

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

This is an effective school where the experienced headteacher has succeeded in creating an ethos of partnership, respect and ambition. He is supported effectively by the governing body, which benefits from his enlightened leadership. Together they have established an oasis of calm for pupils in which they cannot fail to succeed. This reflects the aims of the school, which are to provide a warm, friendly school with a strong, caring, family atmosphere within the framework of the Catholic faith. Parents and pupils appreciate the quality of teaching and level of care and support they receive from staff. As a direct consequence of the very good relationships within school, pupils behave exceptionally well and are keen to learn. When all these factors are taken into account, along with the average costs per pupil, the school is providing good value for money.

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

- The leadership and management provided by the headteacher is a strength of the school. The governors have a strong sense of duty and support him very well.
- Children have a very good start to their education in the nursery and reception class because of the quality of teaching. It is also consistently good throughout the rest of the school.
- All pupils make good progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Standards in physical education and music are above average.
- There is a strong commitment to continuous improvement shown by all who work at the school.
- The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. As a result, pupils show a very good attitude towards their learning and behave very well.
- The level of care for individual pupils is high, helping to make the school into a good place for learning where every pupil is valued. Pupils view school as a safe and secure haven.
- Parents are extremely supportive of the school.

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

- Standards in art and design by the time pupils are ready to leave at the end of Year 6.
- Outdoor facilities for the Foundation Stage, which consists of the nursery and reception classes.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The headteacher has not only conscientiously tackled the key issues raised in the previous inspection in January 1998, but has successfully guided the school through a significant period of change. A strong team spirit is very evident as well as a strong determination to raise standards. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are keen to learn and they achieve well in relation to what they were doing before. In science, the quality of teaching, the curriculum and subject management have all been improved. Teachers now have clear guidance in all subjects and as a result, the quality of teaching is improved with a much higher incidence of good, very good and excellent lessons being seen. Good procedures for assessment have been developed and teachers use assessment information satisfactorily to guide their future planning. Pupils' attitude towards school and their behaviour, both identified as good in the previous report, have strengthened and are now very good. Overall, the level of improvement has been good. Parents' views reflect the progress made and they are very appreciative of the 'fantastic family feeling', which has been created by staff.

## 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*	C	A
mathematics	A	A	E	D
science	A	A	E	D

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The unusually high number of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6 partly accounts for the weaker performance in 2002. Comparisons with pupils' prior performance in the tests for seven-year-olds show that pupils' gains in English were well above average and satisfactory in mathematics and science. This reflects the emphasis being given to promoting linguistic skills and the effective introduction and use of the National Literacy Strategy. The school is using outside specialists to assist in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy and to raise teachers' expertise. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points score for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science since 1998 is broadly in line with the national trend, showing a steady improvement in standards. In 2002, school records show that all pupils aged eleven achieved well in relation to what they had attained previously in these core subjects, achieving the targets set for them and in some cases exceeding them. Pupils are on course to achieve the targets set for them in English and mathematics in 2003. Inspection evidence shows that standards, by Year 6, are average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils do well in physical education and music. Standards in all other subjects meet national expectations, with the exception of art and design where they are below.

The school's performance in the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds compared to all schools is also affected by the higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Compared to similar schools, pupils achieved well above average standards in reading and writing. However, their performance in mathematics was below average. Inspection evidence shows standards for this year group are in line with those expected for all subjects except physical education, where they are above expectations. Children in the Foundation Stage are set to achieve the early learning goals in all areas of their curriculum except communications, language and literacy and mathematics before they transfer to Year 1.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils like school and are very enthusiastic in almost everything they do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning. All are extremely friendly and well mannered. There have been no exclusions in the past two years.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils really care for one another. Freedom to show initiative and take on more responsibility is enhanced by the House system and purposeful atmosphere in lessons.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Most are punctual despite having to travel across town. Attendance figures are broadly in line with the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Parents at the meeting prior to the inspection and in the questionnaire were full of praise for the quality of teaching for their children. Inspection evidence supports the high opinion they have of the teaching staff and the way new teachers have quickly settled into school. Inspectors also rate highly the very good level of educational support provided by classroom support assistants and visiting specialists. Teachers make good use of their expertise. Working together effectively as a team, all members of staff help pupils to do well and achieve their full potential. The level of improvement since the previous report has been good as teaching is consistently better than satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage, teaching in all the lessons seen was very good overall, with none less than good and some excellent.

In almost half of the 51 lessons seen, teaching was graded very good or excellent. Almost all teachers produced lessons of this high standard. Good or better teaching was seen in eight out of ten lessons and in only one lesson was unsatisfactory teaching seen. This is a remarkable achievement. All the teachers show enthusiasm for their work and a strong commitment to raise standards. Teachers' close, caring and supportive relationships with their pupils mean that pupils of all abilities feel valued and always try to do their best in lessons. Targets for learning are shared with pupils and they are given lots of opportunities for independence or to take responsibility for their own learning. As a result, the quality of learning is good. Pupils show interest in their work, try hard and invariably produce neat work.

Literacy and numeracy are taught well, showing that the national strategies have been carefully and thoughtfully implemented. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are fully included in lessons and receive good support, helping them to make good progress. The few pupils with special talents are identified and care is taken to ensure that they too do as well as they can, wherever their skills lie.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met. Planning needs to be more specific about how computers could be used in all lessons. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Good links exist with the local community, Catholic church and other schools.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Individual targets are clearly defined. High quality support is available from well-trained specialist staff and the classroom support assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good, overall. The Catholic faith is central to the ethos of the school. Pupils' very good conduct is influenced by the examples set by the adults around them. Provision for cultural development is good. It could be further improved by making it more explicit in subject schemes and in teachers' lesson planning.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Effectively. The school provides a caring and secure environment for all pupils, making them feel safe and valued. Assessment procedures are good.

Parents are very appreciative and supportive of the school. This is a strength as the successful partnership considerably enhances pupils' willingness to learn.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has successfully motivated staff and created a shared sense of purpose and direction. As a result, everyone is totally committed to improving standards and the quality of education. The new deputy headteacher has settled in well and is already enhancing the work of the management team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are active, well informed and very supportive of the school. They are firmly committed to building on the school's good reputation in the area.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Detailed records are kept on pupils' and teachers' performance. New subject co-ordinators need time to prepare a full evaluation of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The finances are managed very well. Best value is sought in all expenditure.

The accommodation overall is unsatisfactory. There is no playing field or library and outdoor facilities for the nursery and reception are poor. Staffing is good with support staff making a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. Resources are satisfactory overall, but better than average in information and communication technology, mathematics and physical education.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pupils like school and make good progress.</li><li>• Behaviour is good and school helps pupils to become more mature.</li><li>• Pupils get the right amount of homework.</li><li>• Teaching is good and pupils are expected to work hard.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li><li>• Parents feel comfortable about approaching school.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The range of activities outside normal lessons.</li><li>• Information about how their children are getting on.</li><li>• The school working closer with parents.</li></ul>

There was a very good response to the inspection questionnaires with a return rate of almost 70 per cent. Inspectors agree with all the positive comments from parents. They do not agree with the small number of parents who had reservations about the three aspects above. Annual reports and opportunities to discuss progress are as good as in most schools and links with parents and their contribution to pupils' learning are also good. The range of activities outside normal lessons throughout the year is good for a school of this size and type.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Everyone at the school is totally committed to ensuring that every pupil's achievement is as high as possible. Children are assessed carefully when they start in the nursery and those with special needs are identified quickly. Staff throughout the school work very well together as a team, treating the children as individuals, each with their own particular talents, strengths and needs. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. In the previous inspection it was noted that parents appreciated the work of the school in raising attainment. All those who responded to the latest questionnaire agreed that pupils make good progress and almost every parent agreed that pupils have to work hard. Inspectors found evidence for this in the way pupils enjoyed being in school and their keenness to learn. The very good relationships which exist between pupils and their teachers and with one another creates a very good climate for learning enabling all pupils, whatever their capability, to do well.
2. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average. The very good links, which are quickly established with parents, the quality of teaching and the caring support the children receive, helps them to settle quickly into the class routines. All benefit from the detailed lesson planning which effectively covers the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum. The very good quality of teaching continues in the reception class and, as a result, most children make good progress in communication, language and literacy and in mathematics. However, because of their low starting point, a group of seven or eight children will not attain all the early learning goals in these two areas before the end of their reception year. Good progress is made in all other areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children are expected to achieve the early learning goals set for them in their knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development and in their personal and social development, before they are ready to transfer to Year 1. Children listen carefully, follow instructions and work hard. In their physical development, the lack of outdoor facilities for reception children and the underdeveloped outdoor area for the nursery limits their opportunities not only for their physical development but also the quality of learning in general. Teachers have to work hard to compensate for this weakness in provision.
3. The school's performance in the national tests for seven-year-olds varies from year to year in each subject area because of the different proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In 2000, for example, pupils achieved standards in reading that were above average, but in 2001 they were below average and last year in line with the average. Pupils' overall performance, in national terms, shows a steady rate of improvement in reading and writing except for a dip in 2001 because of the special educational needs factor. However, the performance in mathematics has been in a steady decline since 1999. This is due to a combination of staff changes, varying teacher expertise and lack of familiarity with the National Numeracy Strategy early in its introduction. In 2002, overall standards in reading and writing improved on the previous year to be in line with the national average. However, standards in mathematics remained at well below average. When the results are compared to those of similar schools, it is clear how well pupils are doing at this school. In reading and writing, pupils' results are well above average but below average in mathematics.

All pupils performed well in relation to their prior attainment. This shows that pupils are making good progress.

4. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds, standards in English, mathematics and science show a steady rate of improvement from 1998. However, the school anticipated a severe dip in 2002 and this happened in mathematics and science where results were well below average. Pupils did rather better in English where standards were in line with the average. The year group had a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum point scores for English, mathematics and science since 1998 is broadly in line with the national trend. Comparisons with pupils' prior performance in the tests for seven-year-olds show that all pupils have made substantial gains by the age of eleven, particularly in English. This reflects the emphasis being given to boosting pupils' linguistic skills and the successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. When the results are compared to similar schools, the performance was well above average in English and below the average in mathematics and science.
5. Inspection evidence, based on lesson evidence, an analysis of pupils' completed work, display in classrooms and discussions with pupils shows that attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is in line with the national average for Year 2 and Year 6. This represents a good level of improvement for pupils from when they started school to the time they are ready to leave. The very effective way the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced, and a marked improvement in the quality of teaching, is helping to ensure that standards are improving. Inspection evidence also shows that a significant level of improvement has taken place in two other subjects. The standards pupils achieve in physical education throughout and in music in Year 6 are above those normally seen. In all other subjects, with the exception of art and design, standards are in line with those expected nationally. In Years 5 and 6, standards in art and design are below expectations.
6. In English, pupils are provided with good opportunities to express themselves in class discussions. In many lessons, pupils are given lots of opportunities to collaborate, discuss and work independently. As a result, most make good progress in speaking and listening because of the support of their teachers and learning support assistants. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well by their teachers and visiting specialist teachers. Reading is valued and taught effectively, encouraging pupils to develop their technical skills well. All have good strategies to try and read unfamiliar words. Most read with understanding. The close liaison between home and school, with parents regularly hearing their children read, and the efforts of classroom support assistants with children who need additional practise, is helping to improve standards. Older pupils are provided with more demanding and challenging texts to help them to improve their skills in inferring, predicting and researching.
7. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to write in most subjects. For example, in a Year 4 science lesson, pupils record their results of investigations into heat insulation. In Year 5, they write clear explanations why night and day occurs. The daily literacy sessions successfully introduce skills that pupils can use when writing in other subjects. For example, junior pupils produce quite lengthy pieces of writing and their work covers a wide range of writing styles and topics. They make notes as they research Ancient Egyptian history in books, from a video or the Internet. The standard of their spelling is average. All pupils demonstrate a fluent joined style of handwriting when completing handwriting exercises and remember to use the same style neatly in their exercise books.

8. The formal structure of literacy sessions is having a beneficial effect on standards throughout the school. Detailed lesson planning, well chosen texts and the teachers' skills in teaching reading, supported by parents at home, helps most pupils to meet nationally expected standards. Teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to write in a wide range of contexts and styles. However, some teachers do not make effective use of computers in some of their English lessons.
9. Pupils achieve well in mathematics. This is mainly because of the clear structure of lessons which closely follows the guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy, the quality of teaching and the pupils' positive attitudes. In the best lessons, teachers matched work to pupils' capabilities, ensuring those higher attainers were fully challenged and lower attainers understood their tasks. All pupils enjoy the challenge of finding answers to number problems and most can competently explain how they worked out an answer. Pupils in the junior classes are quick to calculate the answers to number problems involving two- and three-digit numbers. By the end of Year 6, all show a good knowledge of fractions, decimals and negative numbers. Pupils collect, record and process data well, drawing graphs showing the results of science investigations or favourite foods. However, there were few examples of pupils using computers to create graphical representations after collecting data.
10. Teachers' planning in science shows a good emphasis on investigative work. By the time they are aged seven, pupils have studied electricity, magnets, sounds, light, materials and living things such as plants. Pupils in the junior classes also have good opportunities to investigate and conduct experiments independently of their teacher, for example sorting materials into man-made or natural categories or finding the best insulating material to keep an ice-pop frozen. All are well motivated and work hard in lessons to complete a copious amount of work in their books. Some examples of topics covered include monitoring how materials change when heated or cooled, plant growth, food for a healthy lifestyle, sound, light and electricity. Girls and boys of all abilities do as well as each other in science, English and mathematics.
11. Teachers' expertise in information and communication technology has improved a great deal with the increased level of resources and support of visiting specialist staff. This is having a beneficial impact on standards, which, overall, are in line with those expected throughout. During the inspection, groups of pupils in Year 6, supported by a visiting specialist, produced some work of a high standard, showing the potential for standards to increase. Pupils of all ages use the very good supply of computers in each classroom confidently and competently. Year 2 pupils load programs into the computer unaided and were familiar with the functions of the various keys. They could change font size, use capital letters and print their work. Year 6 pupils make good use of the Internet and are able to select, scan and use information to support their learning in lessons such as history and geography.
12. In design and technology, geography and history, standards are in line with those expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. In art and design, they are in line at Year 2 but below average at Year 6. This is because too many opportunities are missed for pupils to use different media when artwork is supporting learning in different subjects. Teachers tend to rely on pencils or felt tip crayons instead of good quality art materials. Standards in music are in line with expectations for Year 2 pupils but as a result of some very good teaching in Years 5 and 6, standards are above those expected. The good quality of teaching in physical education and pupils' very good attitudes towards the subject result in above average standards throughout the school in this subject.

13. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, helping to raise their confidence and self-esteem very effectively. At the meeting for parents, they were appreciative of the support given to these pupils by the school staff. The determination to help each pupil to achieve their potential means that they are well supported in classroom activities. The skilled support provided by the extremely conscientious special educational needs support assistants helps all pupils to achieve the challenging targets set for them. Teachers ensure that all pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life. As a result, by the time they are ready to leave at the end of Year 6, these pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and make very good progress towards the targets set for them.

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

14. Pupils' attitudes to their learning and their behaviour are both very good. They have improved since the previous inspection when they were reported as 'good' and are now strengths of the school. Pupils of all ages show enthusiasm for their work and their life in school, which enables them to learn effectively in class and make good progress. This is due to the good quality of teaching and supportive relationships evident throughout the school. For example, in an English lesson, Year 4 pupils were fully involved and enthusiastic because the class teacher created a sense of wonder about the magical land of Narnia. Pupils listen carefully and work with a very good level of concentration, putting much effort into their work. For instance, Year 2 pupils sing a special song to each other at registration time. They listen intently for their name and pick up the song straight away. In this way the class teacher creates a very positive start to the session. Most parents agree that their children like school and this was confirmed by Year 6 pupils who spoke of the 'friendly' school where they 'get a good education'. Most pupils attend school regularly and on time. Attendance rates are about the same as most schools.
15. Pupils behave very well in class, in assemblies and in the playground. They are very friendly and well mannered. The school's strong emphasis on promoting high expectations of pupils' behaviour and the very good provision for pupils' moral and social development are largely responsible for the high standards of behaviour seen in school. There have been no exclusions in the past two years. Parents are appreciative of, and pleased with, the high standard of behaviour. Pupils get on well with each other and with all adults in school. The House system is very good for ensuring that pupils of all ages have the chance to work together and support each other. For example, the behaviour of the youngest pupils is excellent in assembly as they sit in their House groups and are looked after by their older friends. Pupils work well with each other in class. For instance, they automatically take turns when working in pairs on the computer.
16. The personal development of pupils is very good. This starts in the nursery where consistent routines are firmly established. This allows the children to settle quickly to their learning. Older pupils can work independently in class due to the purposeful atmosphere provided by their teachers. The school council is very effective in promoting ideas of citizenship and responsibility. For example, all pupils discussed the rules for the school charter in their House groups and then the council made the final decision, ensuring that all were written in a positive way.

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

17. In the previous inspection in January 1998, inspectors judged that the quality of teaching was good, particularly in three classes and very good in the nursery. However, there were weaknesses in Year 4 and in the quality of science teaching, resulting in one in ten lessons being unsatisfactory. Many changes to the teaching staff have taken place since then and there has been a significant improvement on all fronts. Overall, the quality of teaching is still good but now, virtually all classes benefit from consistently good teaching and there was only one unsatisfactory lesson seen. In almost half of the 51 lessons seen, double the number previously, teaching was graded either very good or excellent. Lessons of this quality were seen in just about every class but most frequently in the nursery and in Year 4. Good or better teaching was seen in almost eight out of ten lessons, compared to half last time. The quality of teaching in science has greatly improved. Since the previous inspection, for example, standards in the national tests for Year 6 pupils have been well above average for three years.
18. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage, covering the nursery and reception classes is very good. During the inspection, teaching in every lesson was either good, very good or excellent. Children are given a very good start to their learning. In both classes, the experienced teachers and talented nursery nurses and learning support assistants work together most effectively to provide a lively, interesting and challenging learning environment. The caring approach gives children confidence and helps them to settle in quickly and make good progress towards the early learning goals in their personal and social development. All children make good progress and attain the early learning goals in their physical and creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. This is a good achievement, considering the well below average level of attainment and weak linguistic and numeracy skills of many children on entry to the school. Despite the best efforts of their teacher, a group of seven or eight children do not attain the early learning goals in communications, language and literacy and in mathematical development by the end of the reception year but progress overall for most children in these areas is still good.
19. Key factors in making teaching so consistently good and effective throughout the school are the way teachers work so well as a team supporting one another, their caring approach and very good knowledge of their pupils and the warmth of relationships which exist between pupils and their teachers. In this very good climate for learning, pupils show very good attitudes towards their work and behave very well in lessons. As a result, teachers are able to concentrate on making lessons interesting and give pupils much independence and responsibility for their learning. At the start of most lessons, for example, teachers share the learning objectives with pupils and, at the end, encourage pupils to discuss how well they have learnt in the lesson.
20. In the lessons where teaching was very good or excellent, teachers' energy, enthusiasm and very good subject knowledge, along with their well-planned and challenging activities, successfully motivated pupils. Pupils gained much from these lessons and the quality of learning was high. Three excellent examples of teaching were seen, one in the nursery when a visiting oral hygienist contributed to the lesson and two in Year 4. In one art and design session, pupils were so involved that they did not want to go out for a break and in an English lesson, where the learning atmosphere was described as stunning and pupils made significant progress using descriptive language to create mood and arouse tension. In the only lesson which was unsatisfactory, a teacher spent too much time supporting lower attaining pupils and, as a result, the quality of learning for other pupils suffered. Most teachers use

computers effectively to reinforce children's knowledge, research information or record the results of investigations in science.

21. The National Literacy Strategy has been carefully and thoughtfully implemented and class timetables show a good emphasis on the teaching of English. As a result, the quality of teaching in the literacy hour is good and the standards achieved by virtually all pupils in reading and writing are improving. The National Numeracy Strategy is more recent but it has been satisfactorily introduced. Teaching of mathematics in numeracy sessions is also good, throughout. Most teachers teach mental mathematics well, closely following the guidance in the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils are developing a good understanding of mathematical concepts. All, for example, confidently explain how they arrive at answers to mathematical problems. In some literacy and numeracy sessions however, insufficient use is made of computers. Some teachers do not specify in their planning, opportunities for pupils to use the satisfactory range of computer programs available to support pupils' learning. Most teachers effectively use the skills that pupils have learned in literacy and numeracy sessions when teaching other subjects. In Year 5, pupils used their writing skills in history for example, making notes on the importance of the River Nile to the Egyptians whilst watching a video, or in Year 4, entering data into a computer to make a graph on modes of transport in Kenya.
22. The quality of teaching in science is now good throughout. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to carry out scientific investigations for themselves, often working with a partner or within a small group. Learning is effective in these lessons as pupils discuss their work using the correct scientific terminology and this practical approach helps them to remember important facts. The satisfactory resource levels mean that all pupils are able to benefit from first-hand knowledge by using scientific equipment themselves. The investigation into the insulating properties of various materials was a typical example. Temperature sensors linked to a computer would have improved accuracy, but there are none in school.
23. In information and communication technology, the quality of teaching has improved from sound in the previous inspection to good throughout the school in this one. It reflects the big improvement in the level of resources and teachers' improved subject knowledge following some effective in-service training and the involvement of visiting information and communication technology specialists. Most teachers confidently use the available computers and keenly await new interactive whiteboards like the one in Year 6, in their classrooms. All teachers frequently use overhead projectors, videos and CD players to add interest and variety to their lessons.
24. Teachers' confidence varies in music lessons but, overall, teaching is good. The expertise of people with specialist knowledge in music such as the Year 6 teacher and visiting music tutors is used effectively to enrich pupils' musical experiences and ensure all classes fully cover the statutory curriculum. In Years 5 and 6, teaching is very good and, as a result, standards are above those normally seen in Year 6. The quality of teaching in physical education is also good throughout the school. All pupils enjoy taking part in lessons and their positive attitudes and the good range of activities in lessons and outside normal lesson time help to raise standards to above national expectations for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6.
25. The quality of teaching in all other subjects, except art and design, is satisfactory. In Years 5 and 6, standards in art and design are below those expected but as few lessons were seen, no secure judgement on the overall quality of teaching can be made. It is clear that in different year groups, the quality of teaching varies

considerably. In an excellent lesson in Year 4, for example, efficient use of time was made when the teacher linked together history, art and design, design and technology and science extremely well when pupils were studying the different styles of chairs. In a less effective lesson, the activity was undemanding, allowing little scope for the pupils to use their imagination.

26. The quality of learning reflects the quality of teaching to be found in each section of the school. All teachers work hard to establish a calm working atmosphere and promote effective learning. Classroom support staff are normally used extremely well to support individuals or small groups of pupils in lessons. When used effectively, their contribution is instrumental in raising standards. The school regularly arranges training sessions to improve the effectiveness of support staff. Most teachers have developed very good strategies to maintain class discipline and ensure that pupils maintain their level of concentration. This ensures that all pupils, whatever their ability, are fully included in class activities. In most classes, for example, pupils are given strict time limits to finish tasks and are rewarded with frequent praise. Pupils obviously enjoy the calm, orderly atmosphere in lessons and behave very well, showing a very good attitude towards their learning. Most concentrate fully and are keen to do well for their teachers and themselves.
27. The class teachers know who the very able or talented pupils are in their class and usually make special provision for them in lessons. It is a firm part of the school's ethos to ensure that every pupil is valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. Parents, at the meeting prior to the inspection, had no criticisms to make about very able pupils being suitably challenged or being given interesting work. Teachers are well prepared for their lessons and plan additional work for the most able of their pupils when they have finished common tasks set for all. This helps to maintain most pupils' interest and level of concentration. Teachers support the very few pupils who speak English as an additional language well, taking care to ensure that they have understood instructions and supporting them closely as they work in class. The school also provides additional specialist support of a high quality for these pupils. One pupil, for example, was given individual help to get to know the story of Aladdin prior to the school trip to see the pantomime in Newcastle.
28. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Specialist teachers and classroom support assistants make a significant contribution to the learning of the pupils they support, whether in small groups or in withdrawal groups. Most use their initiative well to ensure pupils participate in the lessons. In most lessons, for example, the classroom support assistants work alongside pupils making sure that they understand questions and can answer them. Teachers know the specific individual targets for pupils as they help to prepare their individual education plans. Most teachers include these targets in their lesson plans, helping pupils' progress towards achieving them.
29. Parents, in their responses to the questionnaire sent out prior to the inspection, were happy with the amount of homework their children are expected to do. Inspectors judged the amount and frequency of homework to be in line with that normally seen in other primary schools. The school's policy statement gives clear guidance to teachers and parents on homework. Teachers are generally making satisfactory use of homework as part of their commitment to raise standards. As a result, homework effectively supports pupils' learning.

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

30. The curriculum for all pupils and young children meets statutory requirements. For children in the Foundation Stage, the curriculum is well planned to cover all the required areas of learning. A strong emphasis is rightly placed on the development of language and communication skills and personal and social skills throughout the Foundation Stage. This prepares children very well for the next stage of learning in Year 1. In both classes, other than in facilities for outdoor activities, the curriculum is very good. Despite every effort by both the reception and nursery teacher to compensate for the lack of outdoor activity, provision is restricted, as there is no suitable secure outdoor area for reception children and a poor quality area for nursery children. In both classes there is a good balance between activities that are carefully guided by adults and those children choose for themselves. There are good transition procedures to help children settle into the nursery, to move from nursery to reception and from reception to Year 1.
31. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 covers all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, which is inspected separately. There is a good balance between the times allocated specifically to each subject. Planning has improved since the previous inspection. The most recent National Curriculum guidance is being followed in all subjects, often supported by additional published materials. Suitable policies are in place. Weekly and daily planning is good and teachers make it clear what they expect pupils and young children to learn during any lesson. Some work needs to be done to establish secure links between subjects so that best use is made of time.
32. The school has clear policies for the education for the misuse of drugs and sex education. External expertise is used effectively to support the learning of older pupils in these two areas. Legal requirements are met to consult parents over sensitive issues. The development of personal, social and health education and citizenship is inherent in all school activities, including those in nursery and reception classes, and this provision is very good. A more formal curriculum is being developed as well, although this is in its early stages.
33. The National Literacy Strategy is securely established and basic skills are taught well. However, in some classes, insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to develop and reinforce their writing skills in subjects other than English. Although subject specific vocabulary is often identified in planning, it is not always developed and used enough. The National Numeracy Strategy has been satisfactorily established, although different approaches to planning are being tried out to make sure that achievement in mathematics matches that in English in all year groups. There is clear evidence of improvement this year. Numeracy skills are used satisfactorily in other subjects. For example, much of the development of data handling occurs in science. Overall, satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology in other subjects and skills are well taught, particularly by visiting specialists who work with small groups of pupils. Year 6 pupils, for example were being helped to add sound to their topic presentations on the class computers.
34. The school is committed to involving pupils in all activities. It tries to provide for the needs of all pupils and to take into account their background and any personal difficulties they may have. This is very strongly evident in the way the nursery staff endeavour to help new children settle into well-established routines and become part of 'our class'. Much is done to help those with behavioural difficulties manage their own problems and pupils with English as an additional language are well supported. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with identified

weaknesses in aspects of English and mathematics is good. Although there have been problems managing timetables, care is taken to ensure that the same pupils do not consistently miss the same subjects when they are withdrawn from lessons for extra help in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs have good individual learning plans that are regularly reviewed and work and support is provided to help pupils meet their targets.

35. Visits and visitors to the school are used well to broaden pupils' experiences, particularly in history. For example pupils visit a local reconstruction of part of a Roman fort and an interactive Victorian museum. There is good provision for extra-curricular activity for a school of this size although some parents disagree. Older pupils all have the opportunity to attend a residential centre and take part in a variety of adventurous activities. Many perform at music and drama festivals alongside pupils from other local schools. Very good links are maintained with the local Roman Catholic secondary school, thus making good use of specialist facilities and expertise. Overall, good links are maintained with other local educational establishments. Frequent and good quality links are forged in the community for the benefit of the pupils. For example, during the inspection, a dental hygienist came to school to talk to the parents of nursery children about dental care and diet. This was followed by a lively and well-illustrated story demonstrating the need to clean teeth to the children themselves.
36. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good and reflects the Christian ethos of the school. Daily acts of worship meet statutory requirements and provide a good opportunity to celebrate achievement. Pupils are regularly required to reflect on matters that are relevant in their own lives. For example, the headteacher led House groups from the junior classes in sharing prayers for people in difficulty. They were identified by the pupils themselves. The school's mission statement is 'We are one in the Spirit, We are one in the Lord, and they will know we are Christians by our love'. Pupils interpret 'love' very widely and show immense compassion for one another and those with different beliefs. One pupil writes, 'I never stop listening to the advice of my family. They have led me through difficult times and I have a lot of respect for them.' Many pupils exhibited high levels of mutual respect throughout this inspection. With the good quality of teaching, there are many moments when a sense of wonder is created in lessons. Pupils' responses are clearly valued. In the best lessons, teachers provide opportunities for reflection, as in Year 3 when pupils contemplated the moral of 'The Greedy Fox'.
37. The nursery and reception classes provide secure and stimulating places for learning where children are safe, secure and happy and all are valued. In the nursery they quickly learn to take turns, to listen to instructions, and to tidy up ready for the next session. They are very respectful during prayer times. Children are taught to say 'please' and 'thank you' when they have their morning drinks. Reception children extend their awareness of good manners and responsibility towards each other and living creatures. They understand, for example, that the class budgerigar needs to fly each day to be happy and take great care to make sure that it is safe.
38. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. There is a widespread concentration on reward rather than punishment. In all their relationships, pupils show consideration for others and a willingness to listen to both sides of an argument. Class discussions help pupils to confront dilemmas and to organise their thinking. For example, House groups considered the impact that their New Year resolutions may have on others as well as themselves. Older pupils helped younger ones to tease out

elements that were important and those that were frivolous. The staff consistently promote considerate behaviour.

39. The very good provision for their social development helps all pupils to recognise the needs of others. The personal and social education programme is well structured to highlight the key values and principles embodied in a harmonious community. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils discussed the choices available to them when making decisions and the influences that will be brought to bear on them throughout their lives. Teachers provide many opportunities for working in small and large groups and are excellent role models. The hall displays about different faiths are testament to the school's commitment to teaching pupils to recognise and respect social and religious differences.
40. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of their own culture. Artists, poets and writers visit the school. Groups of pupils participate in local dance, music and drama festivals. There are visits to museums and local places of interest. During the inspection pupils in the infant classes attended a version of 'Aladdin' at the Theatre Royal in Newcastle. The school actively promotes equal opportunities, although the multicultural nature of society is not fully explored in curriculum planning.

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

41. This is a school where all the pupils are valued and cared for very well. The caring ethos identified in the previous inspection has been further improved upon. Parents are very happy with this aspect of the school's work. For instance, parents at the pre-inspection meeting spoke of the 'fantastic family feeling' in school. Pupils too are very aware of the school's care and attention. Year 6 pupils feel that school is 'a safe area' where 'you never get left out and everyone has a part to play'. The school promotes the welfare of its pupils very well. There are good procedures for ensuring the health and safety of pupils and for child protection. The school is kept very clean and well looked after by the caretaker and his staff. This is noticed and appreciated by the pupils.
42. A strong aspect of the school's care is the headteacher's and staff's very good knowledge of all pupils and their backgrounds. The very effective House system ensures that pupils are well known to both their class teacher and their House teacher. The House teacher sees the progress that pupils make in their personal development as they grow and develop through the school. This enables staff to give their pupils good support and guidance. Pupils are pleased to say that 'you always get help in class if you're stuck'. All staff have very good relationships with pupils and act as very good role models. There is very good use of praise and encouragement to boost pupils' confidence and self-esteem; for example, the display of photographs of the 'Stars of the Week' in the entrance hall for all to see.
43. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for combating bullying which have resulted in the very good behaviour seen in school. Pupils are confident that 'there is hardly any bullying and it's always quickly sorted out'. For instance, pupils know to use the school council suggestion box to report any worries and the pupil 'councillors' act promptly to deal with the problem. All adults promote a calm purposeful working atmosphere in the classroom where all pupils can learn and make progress.

44. There is good monitoring of attendance, which represents a significant improvement from the previous inspection. Registration now meets statutory requirements and, as the registers are now kept on computer, information is quickly on hand to pick up any concerns. The school promotes good attendance well by awarding certificates regularly for full attendance.
45. The school recognises that assessment is a key area in promoting higher standards of attainment. A great deal of thought and effort has been directed into this sphere. Comprehensive strategies are being developed to ensure that assessment information will increasingly influence what happens in the classroom.
46. The current co-ordinator has produced voluminous detailed analysis from a range of sources. The school now has a wealth of information to identify pupil progress in English, mathematics and science. Examples of pupils' work are examined twice a year after which individual targets are set for each pupil. This is a major step forward since the previous inspection. Portfolios of work show what is expected at each National Curriculum level. The school now has a data-rich profile to help teachers plan lessons more effectively. Assessments in foundation subjects are less rigorous. Teachers mark pupils' work punctiliously. Their evaluations often show pupils how to improve although precise targets do not yet automatically emerge from this process.
47. Identification of pupils with special educational needs is thorough. Individual plans are detailed and informative. Appropriate targets are set and regular review ensures the careful monitoring of progress.

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

48. The school is promoting a good partnership with parents. Most parents are very supportive of the school, which effectively embraces the Roman Catholic faith and promotes a caring, family atmosphere. They feel that the teaching is good, that the school expects their children to work hard and that pupils of all abilities make good progress. The inspection team agree with all these positive views expressed by parents. A few parents are not happy with the range of extra-curricular activities in school. Inspectors disagree with those parents and judge the range of opportunities for pupils to take part in activities outside normal lessons to be good for a school of this size. Throughout the school year there is a good range of activities which include Football in the Community, basketball and a well-attended choir. In addition, pupils often have the opportunity to participate in local festival events, sporting competitions and to enjoy visits to the theatre or places of interest.
49. An overwhelming majority of parents in the questionnaires sent out prior to the inspection agree that they would feel comfortable about approaching the school if they had concerns. A few do not feel the school works closely with them whilst an equally small number do not feel well informed of their children's progress. Inspectors cannot support the views of these parents. Overall, the school provides a good level of information for parents. There are regular meetings for parents to discuss their children's progress when the school takes care to organise appointments for parents' convenience. Most parents attend these meetings and also take the opportunity to talk informally to teachers at the end of the school day. Parents agree that the headteacher and class teachers always make time to talk to them. The school also seeks the views of parents in surveys and acts on the results. This all helps to promote the good partnership between home and school. Parents receive regular letters about school events and also the curriculum, giving details of what pupils will be studying each term and how parents can help. The nursery, for example, provides

a very useful information display in the entrance area for parents. The annual reports on pupils' progress are written in a clear way, which helps to give parents a good picture of their children's progress, especially in English, mathematics and science. There are also useful comments on pupils' personal development.

50. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning and wholeheartedly support school activities. This high level of interest in their children's education and their involvement help to create the right climate for learning and this in turn encourages pupils to always do their best. As a result, all pupils make good progress. Parents, for example, often attend assemblies and support the school's fundraising events. They regularly listen to their children read at home and many make worthwhile comments in the reading diary which help to raise standards. Parents of the children in the nursery borrow books from the nursery library daily and parents of older children are supportive of the homework set by class teachers. Those parents whose children have special educational needs are fully involved in their children's learning and in helping them to make good progress.

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

51. The headteacher provides very good leadership. He has created an ethos of partnership, ambition and respect. Delegation is used wisely. Teachers are valued as professionals and governors are respected for their voluntary contributions. All adults associated with the school have a common goal – the improvement of standards and the development of well-rounded young people who can make a positive contribution to society.
52. The subject leaders take their responsibilities very seriously. Without exception, they work assiduously to promote the highest possible standards in their subject areas. They look carefully at the ways in which pupils learn and adapt their plans accordingly. The school's monitoring procedure has identified areas of weakness, and particular efforts are made to improve the least effective teaching styles.
53. The governing body benefits from enlightened leadership of the headteacher. The work of the governors is organised effectively. All have specific areas of responsibility, which they approach with a sense of duty. Relationships between the governors and the headteacher are securely based on trust and mutual respect. Governors are fully committed to a rolling programme of training and development.
54. The leadership of special educational needs is currently being reconsidered. The temporary incumbent has 'held the fort' admirably. The strong management networks within the school have helped to ensure a good quality of provision throughout this transitional period. The link governor remains vitally concerned in this aspect of the school's work.
55. All staff are involved in regular meetings for which agendas and minutes are published. There is a planned focus and appropriate emphasis on teaching and learning in these meetings. This decision-making process informs the professional development needs of all staff. Mentoring of new, and newly qualified, staff is a strong feature. Newly appointed staff soon feel 'at home' in the family atmosphere created in the staff room and the school. This is a community in which all participants are valued.
56. The annual school improvement plan is produced following a thorough process of consultation and evaluation. An appropriate focus on raising standards is at the heart

of the priorities identified. Additionally, the school never forgets that it is dealing with children, whose needs are individual, diverse and often complex.

57. The headteacher manages all aspects of the budget effectively. In this, he is ably supported by the office manager, who maintains meticulous records of all transactions. Both are grateful to the local education authority for their advice and support. Computer software is used efficiently and all necessary back-up systems are in place. The latest official audit indicated 'widespread evidence of good practice'.
58. The school actively seeks additional funding and makes good use of specific grants to improve pupils' learning. Prudent approaches to finance have enabled the school to erect a security fence to protect both property and individuals.
59. The school is well staffed to meet the needs of all pupils. Support staff work closely with class teachers and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The quality and range of resources are appropriate for most subjects. Resources in the nursery and reception class are good, helping to give children a very good start to their education. Those for physical education, mathematics and information and communication technology are also good. As a result, standards in physical education throughout the school are better than those normally seen. Pupils have good access to computers and standards in mathematics are improving.
60. Overall, the accommodation is unsatisfactory. Although there is no library and therefore little opportunity for pupils to gain skills such as researching information for themselves, the school has lots of books in each classroom and so they are readily accessible to pupils. The building is well maintained but space is limited, especially outdoors. The playground is small with little room for games or sports and there is no playing field. The most serious problem is the poor provision for outdoor play for the nursery and reception class. There is no secure outdoor area for the reception class children and that for the nursery is underdeveloped. Teachers in these two classes are unable to take advantage of the outdoor space to promote children's physical development or other aspects of the curriculum that the freedom of a stimulating outdoor area could give.
61. When all the above factors are taken into account, along with the quality of teaching and learning and the progress pupils make, the school is providing good value for money.

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

62. Parents at their meeting prior to the inspection were very positive in their praise for the school describing the 'fantastic family feeling' and appreciating the 'all round' education offered to their children. Pupils, during the inspection, spoke of the 'friendly' school where they 'get a good education'. Inspectors endorse these views. Over the past ten years, the experienced headteacher has successfully established the school's reputation in the area. Many aspects, such as the level of care, provision for pupils' personal development and pupils' attitudes and behaviour have become recognised strengths. In order to continue to improve the quality of education, the headteacher, governors and staff need to:
  - (1) raise the standards in art and design by the end of Year 6 by planning carefully to use all the opportunities offered in other subjects for pupils to use good quality art materials and so reinforce their skills using different media;

(Paragraphs 5, 25, 96-99)

- (2) create suitable outdoor facilities for children in the nursery and reception classes to broaden the range of opportunities available in all the areas of learning.  
(Paragraphs 2, 30, 60, 63, 70)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	51
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	20	17	10	1	0	0
Percentage	6	39	33	20	2	0	0

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

### 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)	17	201
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	44

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	23

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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	15	15	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	13	13	12
	Total	26	27	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (71)	90 (74)	87 (87)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	13
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	27	26	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (68)	87 (87)	87 (87)
	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	21	11	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	14	18
	Girls	7	6	9
	Total	24	20	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (93)	63 (89)	84 (93)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	14	16
	Girls	7	7	9
	Total	24	21	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (96)	66 (93)	78 (96)
	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	170	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	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	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	2	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)	9.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.4
Average class size	28.7

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

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	99

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.5

*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)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	512,507
Total expenditure	498,973
Expenditure per pupil	2,160
Balance brought forward from previous year	13,534
Balance carried forward to next year	28,885

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	230
Number of questionnaires returned	160

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	23	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	69	24	5	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	69	29	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	49	33	9	2	7
The teaching is good.	72	23	4	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	30	14	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	14	4	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	26	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	54	31	12	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	64	25	5	3	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	28	4	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	25	19	11	11

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

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

63. The quality of education for children in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception) is a strength of the school. It is very good with the exception of provision for outdoor activity. Since the previous inspection provision has been maintained in the nursery and improved in the reception. However, the quality of the curriculum in both classes is hindered because there is no secure outdoor activity area for reception children, and the area for nursery children is inadequate other than for use in dry summer weather. The school is aware of this need. Action has been taken to try to get suitable support for improving the facilities, although at the time of the inspection there were no concrete plans in place for this.
64. At the time of the inspection there were 34 part-time children in the nursery and 29 full-time children in the reception class. Children enter the nursery in the September or January following their third birthday and attend for half-day sessions. They move up to reception class in the September following their fourth birthday. Observation and preliminary testing indicate that there is a wide spread of attainment on entry to the nursery, but overall standards are well below average, particularly in communication, language and literacy skills, in knowledge and understanding of the world and often in hand/eye co-ordination. Many children enter with immature language development and limited vocabulary that, despite good attention to this, are still apparent in the reception class. It is clear that attainment on entry varies considerably from year group to year group, making it difficult to compare national test results in Years 2 and 6 from one year to the next.
65. The latest national guidance for this key stage is well understood by all staff. Teaching in all the required areas is very good in both nursery and reception. Two thirds of teaching was very good, the rest was good and one excellent session was provided by a visiting community hygienist. The classroom assistants, including one who works voluntarily, provide high quality support. The differing needs of children in both classes are well met by an appropriate mixture of adult led and guided activities. Nearly all aspects of learning are included in each session, even though there may be a specific literacy or numeracy focus. For example, in a whole-class discussion and story time focusing on personal development using a reversible glove puppet, the teacher managed to introduce new vocabulary, encourage pupils to express their opinions, count, discuss the weather and many other aspects relating to knowledge of the world. Because the session covered such a wide range of learning time was very well used. All children, despite their different starting points, and including those with English as an additional language, make very good progress in all areas of learning.

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

66. Routines are very well established in the nursery. New children have role models from which to learn and quickly settle down. Teachers and classroom assistants know the children and their needs very well and quickly support those that have minor upsets normally encountered at this age. The very good relationships with parents, actively promoted by all the nursery staff, is largely responsible for the very successful induction of children into the nursery. Children quickly learn to relate to each other and adults and begin to manage their own clothing and hygiene. By the time they reach reception they cope very well dressing and undressing for physical education lessons

and to go out to play. Nursery children learn about the lives of others and their work in the school or the community, for example the emergency services and dentists, and the school secretary. In reception their experience is broadened further. They show their developing maturity in whole-school assemblies where they listen attentively and join in when they can. All children are on course to meet the targets for the early learning goals by the time they leave reception, although they still find it difficult to concentrate for extended amounts of time when not engaged in an activity supported directly by a member of staff.

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

67. In both the nursery and reception classes, all staff rightly place a very strong emphasis on this aspect of learning. Frequent conversations between children and adults increases the range of words they use and the skill in using them. Children in the nursery are introduced to books, rhymes and songs and listen attentively to stories. They are introduced to some letter sounds and learn to recognise their own names written on cards. In the reception they pass the very early stages of writing and almost all children write some words accurately and unaided in response to questions. Those with higher attainment write legible sentences, although letter formation is irregular and words are not always spelt correctly. Those with the highest attainment read simple text well and with understanding, while even those with the lowest attainment know that words have meaning and 'tell' their own stories from books using pictures to guide them. Although some children will exceed the national early learning goals expected level by the time they leave reception, a higher proportion will not fully attain these goals despite the very good progress in learning made in the Foundation Stage.

### **Mathematical development**

68. Many opportunities are provided in both classes for mathematical development. Nursery children learn about capacity in sand and water activities and measure in cookery and frequently count, for example, the candles on their birthday cakes. They also match shapes and fit things together. In the reception class, short, very well focused, teacher-led sessions help pupils improve counting skills. In one very good whole-class session the teacher used a wide range of resources from counting sticks to shells to help pupils understand the value of the number 12. Pupils recognise numbers to ten although those with lower attainment do not always count objects reliably. Those with higher attainment are beginning to add numbers together. Despite very good progress in learning, and although many will achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave reception, a high proportion will not, so that standards are below those nationally expected.

### **Knowledge of the world**

69. Every opportunity is taken to extend children's awareness of the world about them. In both classes role-play areas such as the Queen of Hearts kitchen generate much talk and interest. The visit from the dental hygienist, and the equipment left behind for children to experiment with, caused much excitement and a lot of time was spent brushing a large model of teeth with a giant toothbrush. Small world equipment, such as a castle and characters, and many different animals generate much learning. In the reception class, children enjoy feeling different materials such as wet and dry spaghetti and foam. Technical skills are developed in the nursery when children design and make their own model road system. Activities, such as making toast, increase children's awareness in reception. All children use computers and tape

recorders with increasing confidence. This equipment is used particularly well to support learning in literacy and numeracy in the reception class. Most pupils will achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception class.

### **Physical development**

70. In the nursery, there are many opportunities for children to develop physical skills. They learn to use a mouse to move a cursor on the computer and by the time they are in the reception class, control it well. Painting, drawing, cutting and sticking activities develop hand dexterity, and children become increasingly adept at fitting different pieces together of a wide range of good quality construction apparatus. They play different indoor games that involve jumping and balancing to develop co-ordination. In the reception class children extend their ability to control smaller items such as paintbrushes, pencils and scissors. In art and design, they carefully and safely manipulated special hot wax spoons to create patterns for their batik work. They further develop balance and co-ordination skills in very well taught gymnastics and games lessons, and in some activities achieve standards above those expected for their age. They are encouraged to participate in safely managed adventurous activities such as climbing. However, the lack of secure or usable outdoor areas limits the range of experiences that can be provided in both classes. In spite of this, most children will meet the early learning goals for this area of learning by the end of the reception year.

### **Creative development**

71. Creative development is very good in both classes. Nursery children look carefully at trees in winter, paint a tree without leaves and experiment with techniques like bubble painting. They are given many opportunities to use different materials to create models and pictures. In the reception class children learn interesting techniques such as batik work. Activities are often linked to the development of knowledge of the world. In batik work children looked at wax in different stages, and linked to the bubble painting nursery children learnt about waterproof materials. In both classes, the children sing songs, listen to music and create their own using instruments. Most children in the reception class will achieve the early learning goals by the end of the year.

### **ENGLISH**

72. Standards are in line with national averages at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This matches the judgements made at the time of the previous inspection, although standards have fluctuated since then. Results in 2002 compare very favourably with those achieved by schools that cater for pupils with similar backgrounds. They also indicate well above average progress during the last four years at the school. The school's determination to provide a solid base of language skills is producing noteworthy results. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because their work is pitched at the right level of difficulty. They also benefit from the skilled help they receive from teaching assistants in class and from specialist support teachers when they are withdrawn to work individually or in a small group.
73. Teachers work hard to improve the standard of speaking and listening in all lessons. The importance of these skills is fully recognised throughout the school. Pupils in Year 1, for example, are encouraged to describe to the rest of the class what they have been doing during the lesson. All teachers plan discussions in pairs and small groups so that pupils learn to speak clearly and succinctly. The need to listen carefully

is stressed constantly. This pays off, because pupils listen attentively in their literacy lessons, not only to their teacher, but also to their classmates. The teachers are good role models. They always show pupils that they value their contributions. In a good Year 6 lesson, the teacher and pupils worked in partnership to explore characterisation and the structure of the plot in the story 'The Long Walk'.

74. Standards in reading match expectations in all year groups. Younger pupils have a good knowledge of the sounds that letters make. Progress in Year 1 is steady. In Year 2 it is much more rapid as pupils begin to tackle new words and texts with confidence. Parents are actively encouraged to support reading. Records show that many do listen to their children regularly. This is helping to improve standards. Following constant attention to detail throughout the juniors, most pupils in Year 6 can read expressively. They enjoy reading, and complete extensive reviews after finishing a book. The regular exposure to reading comprehensions is providing pupils with a thorough grounding in interpretation of text. The school does not have a central library. This accounts for the pupils' tentative approach to finding information from books. Reference books are accessible in all of the teaching areas and a good range of fiction is available in all classrooms. Pupils with special educational needs receive extra support and are making good progress towards the targets specified in their individual education plans.
75. Standards in writing match national averages at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is a considerable achievement, since many pupils enter the school with well below average skills in language. All teachers place considerable emphasis on fundamental skills. Handwriting is practised regularly. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of pupils do not maintain the same quality in their free writing that they show in their practice exercises. Punctuation is constantly reinforced. In Year 2, pupils understand the need for capital letters and full stops. Question marks are used accurately. The best pupils combine sentences effectively. Letter formation by some pupils with special educational needs still requires attention. Parts of speech are taught effectively. In Year 3, pupils are able to identify adjectives, nouns, verb and adverbs. Spelling is a priority in all classes. Teachers recognise the difficulties faced by many pupils, who, for example, confuse the spelling of words such as 'right'. Four variations were evident in one class!
76. There are some good examples of extended writing. A higher attaining pupil in Year 2, for example, heightened the tension by the use of terse sentences and phrases: 'I went into the sitting room. Nothing there. Crash! This time it was in the dining room. I saw a shadow. It was a burglar.' Older pupils have produced interesting biographical accounts of family members. News reports of Howard Wilkinson's first match at Sunderland are punchy. Pupils with some learning difficulties, nevertheless, make good use of speech marks in reconstructions of 'The Owl Service'. However, opportunities to explore and manipulate language occur too infrequently. This is recognised by the subject leader as a major need. Already, the newly appointed teacher in Year 5 has put in place a strong structure to develop creative writing with a positive approach to drafting and redrafting. Some pupils in Year 6 use words like 'apprehensive' and phrases such as 'my stomach churned' but these are isolated examples. There are opportunities to experiment with different styles, for example retelling a scene from Macbeth and writing letters. Nevertheless, few pupils are aware of the need to write for different audiences or are able to capture the mood surrounding an event.
77. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers share ideas willingly and the newly qualified teacher has received substantial support during her first year of teaching. In classes

taught by established teachers, relationships with pupils are strong. The very positive atmosphere means that learning – and pupils’ needs – are always paramount. Planning and resource preparation are thorough and classroom management skills are of a high order. In an excellent lesson in Year 4, pupils were enthused throughout. The class teacher held the pupils in thrall. Questioning was subtle, the use of descriptive language continually stressed and research skills constantly reinforced. At the end of the lesson pupils declared that they wanted to miss playtime because ‘they did not want to stem the flow of creativity’ – as their teacher described their immersion in their work. All teachers mark written work thoroughly and provide useful advice in their comments.

78. Teachers make appropriate use of literacy in all parts of the curriculum. For example, a ‘booster’ group worked on a comprehension about the Egyptians. Newspaper reports about life in Victorian times provide a sound framework for language usage. Older pupils have also written stories for children in the nursery. In most subjects, key words are targeted.
79. The subject leader manages provision effectively. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented successfully. A range of authors such as Alan Temperley and Sam Goodwin have visited the school. There are good links with the drama workshops at the Theatre Royal and Playhouse in Newcastle. The school has initiated spellathon and readathon days. Library staff at Boldon Lane and South Shields library have organised literacy days for pupils. The concentration on improving standards reported in the previous inspection has been maintained. Strong teamwork has sustained this momentum. This will ensure that an increased range of writing activities will be implemented efficiently.

## **MATHEMATICS**

80. Standards of attainment in Year 2 are securely at the level expected nationally. In national tests in 2002, standards were well below average at the end of Year 2, below those of similar schools and much lower than standards in reading and writing. In 1999 the results from national tests indicated that standards were well above the national average, then test results declined for three years. Pupils in Year 2 are now making very good progress in their learning due to the current very good quality of teaching of mathematics in this class.
81. Standards of attainment are at the level expected in Year 6. In the national tests in 2002 standards were well below average, but this was an exceptional year group that contained a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Analysis of prior attainment suggests that pupils made satisfactory progress in learning in mathematics and achieved the levels expected based on previous tests in earlier years. However, standards in mathematics in national tests have been frequently lower than in English. The school has recognised this and is making good use of external advice and support to improve the teachers' use of the National Numeracy Strategy. In the previous inspection standards were judged similar to the national average in both Year 2 and Year 6. Throughout the school, although there are variations in year groups, there are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls.
82. In Year 2, about three quarters of pupils have satisfactory skills in mental mathematics, though a quarter need support in questions such as rounding numbers to 15. In written numerical work, it is clear that pupils understand what they are doing. In both number and work with shape and space, almost all pupils attain standards

similar to those expected. They use their skills effectively to solve problems and clearly enjoy their lessons. Few pupils have standards of attainment above those expected for their age.

83. In Year 6, those with average and above average attainment in their class know their multiplication tables well and respond very quickly to simple mental arithmetic questions. Those with lower attainment have strategies to calculate mentally and just take longer to work out answers. All pupils have a secure foundation of methods of written calculation and a good understanding of topics such as probability. Data-handling skills are developed appropriately and used effectively to support science. Work in some aspects of shape and space is above the level expected, for example work with co-ordinates, but in all aspects of mathematics, including problem solving, almost all pupils are working at the level expected for their age.
84. Teaching is good. In about a third of lessons it is very good. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen in mathematics during the inspection. Practical resources are well organised and used effectively to help pupils learn. Pupils know what is expected of them in the classroom and behaviour is very good. This means that little time is wasted. For example when pupils need hand-held whiteboards to use when sitting on the carpet, they are collected or distributed quickly and without any fuss. In all lessons mental and oral activities are sharply focused and used well to speed up pupils' ability to recall facts rapidly. In most of the lessons seen tasks were well matched to the level of attainment of different groups of pupils. However, in several classes, tasks are too easy for those with higher attainment and too difficult for those with lower attainment. In the unsatisfactory lesson, the class teacher supported those with the lowest attainment during the main activity, but those with the next lowest level of attainment were unable to cope with the set work and, therefore, made unsatisfactory gains in their learning.
85. Most teachers use published lesson plans that identify targets for learning. These are useful in helping teachers to structure lessons. Where teaching is most effective these plans are used flexibly and adapted to match the individuality of the class. This was particularly evident in Year 4. In this lesson, the teacher also targeted questions carefully to allow pupils with all levels of attainment to take part in whole-class teaching. She expected explanations from pupils for their responses, thus developing their speaking skills. In another very effective lesson the teacher had very secure mathematical knowledge and understanding and this meant that the small steps of learning were very carefully developed. In this lesson pupils were learning to round numbers to the nearest ten. An illustration using pupils as drivers of cars that had run out of petrol and needing to get to the nearest garage was carefully developed so that all pupils understood the principle of rounding. Key vocabulary is identified on lesson plans but not always developed or even used in lessons and in some books key spellings are not corrected sufficiently. On occasions a few teachers use, and allow pupils to use, vocabulary that is mathematically incorrect. They do not recognise when pupils write out their mathematics incorrectly. This shows a weakness in the teacher's understanding of mathematics, making it difficult to help pupils to improve. Most teachers use the final section of each lesson appropriately to reinforce what has been covered and assess what they have achieved before moving on to the next stage of learning.
86. Pupils with special educational needs in mathematics are given valuable additional lessons. These lessons improve their confidence and their skills. Pupils enjoy them so they maintain their concentration for long periods. In these sessions the quality of teaching is good, and very good for older pupils. Information and communication

technology is used well in these additional classes to reinforce basic skills. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are very well supported in lessons.

87. Assessment and record keeping are good. The effective subject leader, together with an external adviser, is ensuring that specific weaknesses in teaching and planning and in mathematical topics are identified in order to raise standards. This is supported by a clearly focused action plan. Provision for mathematics has improved very recently and is now good.

## SCIENCE

88. In the previous inspection, the standards attained by both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils were in line with those expected. However, several aspects in the teaching of science required improving. Co-ordination of the subject, teachers' expertise, the topic cycle and the quality of investigative work were all included in the key issue in order to help raise standards. The school responded very well and standards in Year 6 for the three years from, and including, 1999 to 2001, were well above average. In 2002, standards dipped to well below average, but this was anticipated because of the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the year group. Inspection evidence shows standards, when compared to those expected nationally, are in line for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Considering the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in each year group, this reflects the quality of provision in the subject. It was evident from an analysis of completed work that more opportunities are being provided for pupils to investigate and conduct experiments. The only apparent area for development is the lack of resources in information and communication technology so that pupils can use computers to gather data such as temperatures.
89. The present Year 2 class is well on course to improve upon the performance of last year's pupils when teacher assessments showed that the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2 or above was below average. Only three per cent achieved the higher Level 3 which was well below average. During the inspection, the very good behaviour in lessons involving pupils of all ages was a strong feature responsible for the improved standards, along with the good support for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs provided by classroom support assistants and teachers.
90. Standards for Year 6 pupils have also improved from last year's dip. However, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is a limiting factor in the school's performance compared to all schools. Although 85 per cent of pupils achieved the required level or above, fewer pupils in this lower attaining year group of pupils managed to achieve the higher Level 5; 22 per cent compared to 38 per cent nationally and this was the main reason for the weaker overall performance. Tracking individual pupils' performance shows that every pupil made good progress throughout the junior classes. This is mostly due to the impact of the consistently good quality of teaching. Pupils generally make good progress throughout the school.
91. Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to understand the principles of scientific investigation as they classify materials, sorting them into natural or man-made. Pupils who speak English as an additional language have difficulty with the terms but are fully included and supported in the sorting process. Classmates willingly help them. They know how to label parts of a plant, or describe the dangers of electricity or harmful substances. Younger pupils can describe the sounds from different musical instruments, classify animals and conduct plant-growing experiments. They record their results using diagrams and pictures to describe how plants grow and what they should eat to have

a healthy diet. The good use of a theme to connect various areas of the curriculum helps pupils to understand why learning about science is important. By the time they are seven, pupils know the properties of materials found around the home, describe forces and know how to keep healthy.

92. Pupils in Year 6 show a very mature attitude towards science. This is due to the very good quality of teaching and the exciting way science is taught. Pupils wanted the teacher to add lots of bicarbonate of soda to the vinegar, for example, when they were recapping previous learning. The challenging questions posed by their teacher about reversible or irreversible change enabled all to show a good knowledge of scientific procedures and the correct scientific terms to use. All could explain the different parts of plants and their functions, give explanations why certain animals were most suited to their habitat and appreciate the need for hygiene and a healthy lifestyle. Further evidence of pupils' interest and enthusiasm, sparked by very good teaching, was seen during the lesson in Year 4, where pupils were conducting a scientific enquiry into the insulation properties of different materials. One group decided to add two elastic bands to the unwrapped ice-pop to make it the same as the wrapped ones, showing a good understanding of fair testing. Their skills in predicting the results and suggestions about the outcomes were recorded in detail. The teacher supported pupils carefully, especially those with special educational needs. In Year 5, pupils showed a good understanding of why night and day happens when the teacher used a torch on a globe in the darkened hall. This, and other lessons seen in the junior classes, demonstrates the interesting and effective way science is being taught.
93. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers invariably prepare their lessons well, making good use of the resources to give pupils first-hand experiences whenever possible. The organisation in these lessons and management of pupils is very good. Pupils are quite simply too interested, too busy and too engrossed in lessons to think about wasting time. Good use is made of computers to support pupils' learning. However, the school does not have sufficient sensors, which can be linked to computers to measure temperature differences. All teachers insist on pupils using scientific vocabulary and most set challenging questions for pupils, encouraging them to find out the answers for themselves. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills well, recording their findings and taking measurements.
94. Teachers ensure that pupils fully understand how to conduct a scientific experiment and make any testing accurate. This provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop their independence and organisational skills by working in groups to investigate, record results and reach conclusions. Good support is always readily available for pupils with special educational needs. This ensures that all are fully included in lessons and the rate of learning and progress by all these pupils is also good. The marking of pupils' work by teachers is thorough. An analysis of pupils' books indicates that pupils cover all aspects of the science curriculum, meeting statutory requirements. Good procedures exist to assess pupils' learning at the end of each teaching unit and the results are used well to identify areas which need further development. A small improvement would be to use this information more effectively to match some worksheets to the ability of individual pupils.
95. Management of the subject is good. The subject leader has a good overview of what is being taught throughout the school through monitoring teachers' planning and monitoring lessons in order to evaluate the quality of teaching. The results of annual tests are analysed in depth to identify any gaps in pupils' learning. It was through this monitoring that weaknesses in investigative techniques have been noted and staff are

responding by raising the emphasis on this aspect. Resources for the subject are satisfactory.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

96. Standards of attainment in art and design are at the level expected nationally in Year 2 but below in Year 6. This is because too many opportunities are missed for pupils to use different media regularly throughout the school. The pupils' work that is displayed, which supports other subjects, is too often completed using felt tips, coloured pencils and HB pencils instead of good quality art materials. This means that, although some teachers provide good quality experiences, and are able to stimulate pupils' imagination, by the time the pupils reach Year 6, their artistic skills are below those expected. In the previous inspection, standards in art and design were judged to be similar to those expected nationally throughout the school.
97. In Year 2, pupils make a good attempt to draw self-portraits using those created by famous artists such as Van Gogh as a stimulus. They show a good sense of proportion and use the space on the paper well. In Year 6, pupils use an extremely well-chosen range of stimuli organised by the teacher to help them produce a sequence of action pictures and create masks. Pupils with different specific needs achieve equally as well as others in their class.
98. Insufficient lessons were seen to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. Neither could a judgement be based on previous work, as there have been several changes in staff. It is clear that in different year groups, the quality of teaching varies considerably. In an excellent lesson in Year 4, for example, efficient use of time was made when the teacher linked together history, art and design, design and technology and science extremely well when pupils were studying the different styles of chairs. Every opportunity was taken to develop vocabulary, to get pupils to think about the materials used for the chairs, the design, their fitness for purpose and to develop their reasoning in response to the teachers' questions. Pupils with all levels of prior attainment developed their observational skills well drawing a chair. They showed satisfactory techniques in the use of charcoal and their ability to evaluate their own and each other's work carefully. In the least effective lesson the activity was undemanding, allowing little scope for the pupils to use their imagination.
99. There are sufficient resources in the school to ensure that the curriculum can be covered, but there is some room for improvement. For example, some paintbrushes are old, worn and hard and inappropriate for the age of pupils. The most recent national guidance and support materials are being used to identify and plan specific art and design activities, and older pupils have clearly worked with different media during their time in school. However, more needs to be done to improve and plan for incidental experiences so that skills and techniques are reinforced and pupils use these skills creatively. In past years, good use has been made of local artists to introduce specialist techniques to older pupils such as stained glass work and woodcarving. Although information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to support art and design, for example in creating repeating patterns, insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to use skills such as photography linked to the use of the computer.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

100. Standards in design and technology are in line with those normally expected in Years 2 and 6. As only one lesson was seen, this judgement is based on a scrutiny of pupils' completed work, teachers planning and the skills pupils demonstrated in other lessons such as art and design and information and communication technology. It was evident from teachers' planning and examples of completed work that pupils' skills and knowledge of essential techniques are developed satisfactorily. The previous inspection reported that planning and discussing designs and evaluating their success were unsatisfactory elements. No coherent scheme of work existed in 1998 and so the development of skills was not systematic. Development of the subject is currently hampered by the lack of a subject leader, caused by the many changes of staff. The headteacher is doing a satisfactory job in fulfilling the role of subject leader at present and with the full support of staff, has managed to effectively put right the identified weaknesses.
101. Pupils in Year 2 make puppets they have designed, construct wheeled vehicles and try different methods of attaching the wheels to an axle. All complete unfinished pictures and make repeated patterns with designs they have created on the computer. They choose from a suitable range of materials provided by teachers. For example, they build, using a range of construction kits and discuss their models enthusiastically. Joining skills are used in art and design when pupils use corrugated card to simulate snakeskin or design a frame for their self-portraits in the style of Van Gogh. In the only designated design and technology lesson seen in Year 3, pupils designed a photograph frame for a particular person, trying to match the style to the recipient. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, were fully focused and most managed to prepare a card cutout complete with hinged back before the end of the lesson.
102. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils' designs are very detailed. The headwear designs they created to wear as they performed the poem, 'The Jabberwock', for example, were very imaginative. Most have the necessary skills to join different materials. In the project to design and make a shelter, pupils produced well-annotated designs and used their knowledge of structures from science to strengthen corners or the roof. They also tested the waterproof capabilities of the materials they intended to use and evaluated in detail the finished shelter. Pupils often use computers to present their work in a well-illustrated design and technology exercise book. Design skills were much in evidence as Year 6 pupils worked with a specialist from the Educational Business Partnership to add sound effects to topic projects produced on the screen in preparation for a presentation to the rest of the class.
103. The overall quality of teaching and learning in design and technology, taking into account the standards being achieved, the quality of teachers' planning and the creative effort of pupils of all ages, appear to be at least satisfactory. In the lesson seen in Year 3, pupils' enthusiasm and interest in the task of designing a picture frame was clear. Some volunteered to search at home for examples of different styles to be used as examples. Design sheets also routinely provided pupils with good opportunities to discuss and evaluate each stage, showing previous criticisms over this aspect have been corrected. Literacy and numeracy skills are often used as pupils describe materials and procedures and calculate measurements. Pupils in Year 2, for example write step-by-step instructions on how to make bread.
104. The lack of a subject leader with recognised expertise in the subject has meant that the busy headteacher has had to try and manage the subject along with all his other responsibilities. In spite of this, there has been recent systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching and the curriculum through teachers' planning is monitored to

ensure pupils continue to build progressively on their skills and knowledge. The clear scheme of work ensures that specific skills and knowledge, such as different methods of joining materials, how to use tools safely and correctly or to undertake detailed evaluations with a view to making further improvements, are developed systematically. Individual projects in particular classes are well developed and the time allocated for the subject is satisfactory. The assessment of pupils' progress is completed annually and reported to parents in end-of-year reports.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

105. Standards are in line with national expectations for pupils in Year 6, with all pupils making satisfactory progress throughout the junior department of the school. Teachers alternate history and geography and history was the subject in focus for some classes. Consequently, few lessons were seen and inspectors' judgements are based on an analysis of past work as well as evidence from lessons. The position was the same for infant classes where only one lesson was seen. Standards at the end of Year 2 were judged to be in line with those expected. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection in January 1998, but the energetic subject leader has brought about improvements such as a clear scheme of work for the whole school and procedures for assessing pupils' progress. These are now good rather than unsatisfactory as in the previous inspection. As a result, no unsatisfactory teaching was seen in geography and pupils' attitudes towards the subject have improved as they are given appropriate and interesting work.
106. The subject is taught in the infant classes through a range of topics, which include using maps, photographs and visits around the local area. The topics are planned in detail and develop geographical skills on a continual basis. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to record the route they use to get from home to school, name local features and recognise different styles of houses. They are aware of compass directions and can locate key features of the area on a local map. In the only lesson seen in Year 2, pupils demonstrated a sound knowledge of the countries of the British Isles and could locate important cities. Good use was made of literacy and computing skills as pupils read sentences associated with the weather and moved the weather symbols on the screen to the correct location. However, little evidence was found of computers being used in geography lessons in the scrutiny of pupils' work.
107. The subject is taught in Years 3 to 6 in blocks of time alternating with history so more work was seen for some year groups than others. The analysis of completed work shows that statutory requirements for the curriculum are met. There was much evidence available from Year 5, but less from Years 3, 4 and 6. The examination of pupils' work reveals that good links are made with other subjects during geography lessons. In Year 5, for example, the topic about bread showed good links with history, design and technology and science as pupils gathered information on different types of bread around the world and designed healthy sandwiches. The Internet was used well to gather information. The topic on Egypt had obvious links with history. Year 4 pupils used their mathematical and computing skills effectively in their lesson comparing transport in Kenya and the UK to record data from a video and complete a graph. In Year 3, pupils used their observational skills from art and design as they attempted to draw a bird's-eye view using a very good collection of aerial photographs. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in lessons and most complete tasks to a satisfactory standard. All pupils make good use of the skills they have learnt in literacy to present their work neatly. By the time pupils are in Year 6, they are confident in using their research skills to locate information about the major rivers of the world from a variety of sources, including the Internet, reference

books, maps and atlases. All demonstrated a satisfactory knowledge of river systems and were able to use the correct terminology to describe features such as a delta, tributary and river source. Overall, pupils in the junior classes make satisfactory use of computers in geography lessons.

108. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. In the few lessons seen, teachers had a very good rapport with pupils and used praise effectively to raise pupils' self-esteem. As in most of the lessons seen during the inspection, pupils respond exceptionally well to their teachers, behaving very well in class and showing a very good attitude towards their work. All concentrate well and show a genuine interest in lessons. To add interest, teachers use a good variety of sources such as videos, books, maps and photographs in lessons. A strong aspect of the teaching was the teachers' good questioning technique. Questions to ensure that pupils have to think before responding and the insistence on explanations for answers successfully engaged pupils and extended their knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs were expected to add to the class discussion. Any pupil finding it difficult to understand was supported well by the class teacher. Clear learning objectives and careful preparation of resources ensured that pupils' interest and involvement were maintained. In a very good lesson in Year 4, for example, the challenging and interesting task successfully motivated all pupils. All were given much responsibility for their own learning and praise from the teacher was used effectively to reward effort and maintain concentration.
109. Subject leadership is good as it is in the capable hands of an experienced and extremely conscientious teacher. A detailed scheme of work, based on the latest national guidance clearly supports teachers' planning and helps to ensure satisfactory coverage of the curriculum. Procedures exist to monitor teachers' planning and the standard of pupils' work throughout the school. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good and the information gained is used in a satisfactory way to plan future work. In some classes, this information could be used better to match tasks more closely to individual pupils' capabilities. The headteacher and subject leader regularly observe the quality of teaching in the subject, helping and advising colleagues to identify strengths and weaknesses. Resources for the subject are satisfactory. The school makes good use of the local area to teach geographical skills.

## **HISTORY**

110. By Year 2, standards are typical of those expected nationally and by Year 6, pupils' knowledge and understanding of history are also similar to those expected nationally. However, pupils do not express this knowledge well in writing. Standards were also judged to be similar to those expected nationally in the previous inspection. Pupils retain much information because of the first-hand experiences teachers provide, such as the visits to an interactive museum. Due to the timetable arrangements during the week of inspection, only one lesson was seen. Judgements about standards are therefore based on discussions with pupils, the subject leader and a scrutiny of work of current and previous years. No judgement was possible on the overall quality of teaching.
111. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good grasp of the concepts of past and present and compare objects from the past, such as toys, with those they are familiar with today. They understand that objects from the past tell them about people's lives. They know about the lives of some famous characters, such as Guy Fawkes, and that his actions had an impact on history. In Year 6, pupils have a secure understanding of

major events going back in time and talk about different eras in history with confidence. They understand how to use different sources of information to tell them about these eras, for example the census and the Internet.

112. In the one lesson seen, teaching was very good. The lesson was very well managed and organised, making the best use of time. A variety of stimulating activities was provided to maintain pupils' interest and make them curious about life in ancient Egypt. Plenty of opportunity was offered to pupils to work together to develop communication and social skills. Pupils with all levels of attainment made equally good progress in their learning and good use was made of information and communication technology in the form of a video. Lesson planning is generally good.
113. Subject management is satisfactory. Books and other resources are readily available. These are seen all around the school, and help pupils remember what they have learnt. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. The recently appointed subject leader is checking provision and planning and has good vision for the development of the subject.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

114. Although standards were in line with expectations, the previous inspection was critical of provision in information and communication technology, identifying the lack of a planned scheme of work leading to no systematic development of skills, unsatisfactory procedures for assessment and a weakness in using computers to support learning in all subjects. Since then, the school has had many staff changes to manage with four teachers leaving in the past two years. The headteacher has stepped in to act as subject leader and, with the full support and co-operation of all staff, he has successfully brought about much improvement. Resources have been transformed from adequate to good, with an above average number of computers per pupil and one well-used electronic whiteboard has recently been installed in Year 6. These improvements, along with a new scheme of work and the support of specialist outside help means that pupils are using computers more effectively to support their learning in most lessons. As a result, overall standards in Year 2 and in Year 6 are in line with national expectations. The attainment of some pupils in Year 6, supported by a computer specialist, is above average and Year 4 pupils achieve well thanks to the enthusiasm and expertise of their teacher.
115. The standards in Year 2 reflect the satisfactory amount of work completed by pupils over the course of the previous school year. Most pupils can wordprocess their name, write lists and change the size of letters. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that the amount of recorded work is in line with that normally seen and computers are being used to support learning in most subjects. In design and technology, for example, pupils write instructions on how to make crispy cakes and bread and design decorative borders for their stories in English. Most pupils competently save and retrieve work.
116. Evidence from lessons in Years 4, 5 and 6 shows that standards are rising and that pupils in these year groups are achieving well. This is mainly due to the expertise of the teachers in these classes and the good use of the class computers to support learning. The school decided to have three computers in each classroom, rather than develop a designated computer room. It means that new skills are usually taught to groups, taking extra time, but computers are more accessible to pupils on an everyday basis. A significant improvement since the previous inspection is the use pupils make of the Internet. Pupils' progress has been enhanced by a skilled

technician, who has networked all the school computer systems, standardised software and introduced safeguards to protect settings. Keeping all the computers in good working order and training teachers means that pupils can make full and effective use of modern technology in their lessons.

117. Overall, standards are in line with those expected. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, pupils collected data about different means of transport in India from watching a video and used class computers to produce a graphical representation of this information. They were reminded of previous work in mathematics when they produced graphs on favourite sweets, colours, planets or cartoon characters. Learning was made more effective because of the teacher's enthusiasm and assertion that 'graphs are great'. Pupils in Year 5 demonstrate that they have a sound knowledge of technical vocabulary as they learn how to create databases. By the time pupils are in Year 6, they show confidence when using computers or the new interactive whiteboard. Independently, groups evaluate an Internet homepage or with the support of a visiting specialist, add sound to their chosen topic presentations. All pupils maintain high levels of concentration during lessons and share resources very sensibly. It is remarkable how well pupils in all classes work together, often independently of their teacher. All show a keen interest in using modern technology.
118. The overall quality of teaching is good. Most teachers use computers well to support work in other subjects. This could be further improved if all teachers identified specific ways computers could be used to enhance pupils' learning in their planning for all subjects. At present, some plan more than others depending on their own confidence and skill and as a result, opportunities are missed in some lessons to make full and effective use of class computers. There are some good examples of pupils using computers to wordprocess and present graphs, as well as using the Internet to support their historical study of life in Tudor times. Overall though, such examples are too infrequent. Teachers have started to assess pupils' work in information and communication technology and the information is used satisfactorily to ensure there is a steady progression of skills from year to year.
119. Work in information and communication technology effectively supports pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils enjoy working on computers, sharing the equipment in a friendly and sociable manner. They clearly understand and support the strict rules that govern Internet use in the school. The use of the Internet effectively introduces pupils to other cultures.
120. The subject is presently led competently by the headteacher who demonstrates a satisfactory level of knowledge and expertise. He has tackled the identified weaknesses in provision and has introduced a determined action plan to continually improve resources and develop teachers' subject knowledge. The quality of provision in information and communication technology is on an upward curve. Resources are good and future targets include the provision of more interactive whiteboards and an audit of the programs available to support learning in each subject.

## **MUSIC**

121. In Year 2, standards match national expectations. By the end of Year 6, they are above average as pupils benefit from specialised teaching. This is an improvement on attainment recorded in the previous inspection.
122. Throughout Years 1 and 2, non-specialist teachers are appreciative of the new course that has been introduced. This enables them to provide sound foundations, which

prepare the pupils well for future studies. Singing is well supported by visiting musicians. Most pupils can name a good range of percussion instruments and in Year 2, singing in unison is tuneful. Pupils have a simple understanding of dynamics and rhythm.

123. In Years 5 and 6, singing is of a good quality. Pupils are aware of the need for breath control and pay attention to phrasing. Both teachers in these classes are accomplished musicians and share their knowledge and love of music with their pupils. In Year 6, for example, the teacher began a lesson with a haunting rendition of 'Danny Boy' on the flute. This led to a very focused listening phase with well-chosen pieces ranging from classical to tribal. In their work on composition, pupils enthusiastically explore sounds to create 'mood' such as anger or calmness.
124. The overall quality of teaching is good, and is very good in the last two years at school. Planning and preparation is thorough. Teachers compensate for the scarcity of tuned percussion by devising imaginative scenarios in which pupils can succeed. Class management is geared to developing partnerships with pupils as they explore the world of sounds, words and rhythms. Pupils really enjoy their music lessons.
125. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject leader has revitalised musical provision in the school. Music is now a very well managed subject. Overall, the level of resources is satisfactory. New schemes of work have been introduced. Demonstration lessons have been particularly beneficial to less confident teachers. The school choir meets regularly and attracts over 40 pupils – both boys and girls. During rehearsals, singing was of very good quality. The school has participated in local music festivals and pupils often sing in church. Carols were performed outdoors for shoppers at Christmas. Peripatetic teachers introduce brass instruments to interested pupils.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

126. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement on standards attained at the time of the previous inspection. This stems from the very good grounding that pupils receive in the reception class, where adventure and control are carefully woven into lessons.
127. In Year 2, pupils build on the use of space that is fostered in their first year. They also benefit considerably from visiting specialists. During the inspection, for example, a tennis coach sponsored by the Cliff Richard Foundation helped pupils to develop significant skill levels. In both Year 1 and Year 2, good use is made of pupil demonstration. There is also a considerable contribution to literacy skills as pupils carefully analyse one another's performance.
128. A full range of activities is followed in the next four years in the junior classes. Dance is a major strength. Pupils in Year 4 responded imaginatively to the theme tune from the Pink Panther. The sequences created showed poise and sometimes panache. This quality of movement is also demonstrated by older pupils, many of whom participate in local dance festivals. Pupils in Year 3 interpreted 'The Rainbow Fish' in a project for the 'Celebrating Learning' initiative.
129. The school compensates admirably for the lack of a playing field. Many pupils practise their basketball skills during play and lunchtimes and look forward to their training sessions with Newcastle Eagles. The weekly visits of representatives from Sunderland AFC are keenly anticipated. Links with St Wilfrids RC comprehensive

school are particularly strong, and specialists often visit SS Peter and Paul to coach pupils in a range of sports. In Years 5 and 6, outdoor education is fully covered in a five-day residential visit to Thurston in the Lake District. Almost all pupils can swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school, having experienced lessons in every year of their education.

130. Teaching is of a good quality. All teachers plan carefully and are keen to try out new ideas. Class management is good and lessons are relaxed yet purposeful. All lessons start with a warm-up and finish with a cool down, and teachers make a point of highlighting the benefit of exercise and its effects on the body. Pupils' attitudes are very positive. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, take their lessons seriously and enjoy them. All dress appropriately.
131. The subject is very well led by a teacher with specialist knowledge. She shares her expertise and has been of particular help to non-specialists and new entrants to the profession. She has ensured that both boys and girls are involved in all aspects of the course. The excellent apparatus in the hall is fully utilised and pupils are reminded constantly of the need for safe practice