

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST OSWALD'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND
(CONTROLLED) INFANT AND NURSERY
SCHOOL**

Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114228

Headteacher: Mrs K Linsley

Reporting inspector: Dr Richard Perkin
14591

Dates of inspection: 16th – 17th June 2003

Inspection number: 247437

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and nursery
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms S Pitts
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Oswald's is a Church of England controlled infant and nursery school set in the centre of Durham close to the University. It is smaller than average with 99 full-time equivalent pupils, including 45 children who attend mornings or afternoons in the nursery. There are 47 boys and 52 girls. While the majority of pupils are of white British heritage, there were 16 different nationalities at the school at the time of the inspection, representing six different faith groups. The numbers change during the year as new pupils join the school. A high proportion of pupils do not have English as their first language and around 7 per cent of these are at an early stage of learning English; a number of pupils join the school speaking no English at all. The main languages spoken include Chinese, German, Russian and Finnish. A below average proportion of pupils qualify for free school meals. Twenty-four pupils are on the school's special educational needs register, which is slightly above average. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs, which is below average. The range of special needs includes moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties, physical disability and autism. There are 14 pupils with speech or communication difficulties, eight of them in the nursery. Few of the pupils live nearby. Most travel by car from other parts of the city, from outlying villages or from Sunderland. Many parents are from academic or professional backgrounds. Because the school is close to the University, children join the school or leave it during the year. Children's standards of attainment when they start nursery cover a wide range but overall are as expected for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an outstanding school where pupils' standards of attainment and personal development are very high. Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school and pupils of all levels of ability and need make very good progress. Leadership and management are excellent and fully committed to further improvement. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils attain very high standards in English, mathematics and science, as a result of very good teaching;
- Pupils who have special educational needs, those identified as more able and talented and those for whom English is an additional language make very good progress, as a result of the excellent provision for their needs;
- Excellent relationships and personal development, very positive attitudes to learning and high standards of behaviour result from excellent provision for pupils' personal development;
- The headteacher, key staff and governors lead the school with sustained excellence to promote a shared Christian ethos and continuous improvement;
- An excellent partnership with parents means that they have a strong impact on their children's learning.

What could be improved

There are no significant areas for improvement.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the last inspection in January 1998 has been very good, much due to the excellent leadership and management now in place. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved considerably and the quality of teaching and learning has also improved. Provision for the pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are much stronger and consequently they make much better progress. Links with the church have been significantly strengthened and the provision for pupils' personal development is now excellent. The school now gives very good rather than sound value for money.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
reading	A*	A*	A*	A*	Very high A* Well above average A above average B average C below average D Well below average E
writing	A*	A*	A*	A*	
mathematics	A*	A*	A*	A*	

Pupils' performance in the national tests and assessments in 2002 was in the top 5 per cent both nationally and when compared to schools with a similar intake, in reading, writing, mathematics and science. All pupils reached the nationally expected level in all subjects and the proportion reaching the better than average level was very high. Standards for pupils presently in Year 2 reflect the same very high standards in English, mathematics and science and, in reading and writing, a larger proportion are reaching higher levels. The comparative attainment of boys and girls varies from subject to subject, as it has done over the last few years, but overall, there is no significant pattern of difference in their attainment. The school surpassed its very ambitious targets in 2002 and is on track to surpass its even more challenging targets for 2003. Trends over time are steady at a very high level in all three subjects and show a marked improvement since 1998. Pupils with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and those identified as more able and talented make very good progress. Children start school in the nursery with standards broadly at expected levels for their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and, by the time they leave the reception class, most are on target to surpass the early learning goals in all the areas of learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and enjoy their lessons while working very hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons, at playtime and around the school. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Relationships throughout the school are of very high quality and pupils take great care of each other, particularly of those who find it hard to understand English. Pupils are extremely mature and responsible and work with great independence. There are very high levels of racial harmony.
Attendance	Very good. Levels of attendance are well above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are of high quality throughout the school. In over half the lessons seen, teaching was very good or excellent and no teaching was less than good. There are particular strengths in the reception class and in the teaching of English, mathematics and science throughout the school. Teachers show highly developed knowledge and understanding, particularly in teaching literacy and numeracy. The very good and systematic teaching of basic skills ensures that pupils of all abilities make rapid gains in acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils work extremely hard and show great interest and independence, as a result of the teachers' very high expectations of them. This means that all make high rates of progress, including those identified as more able and talented. Teachers are skilled at adapting their plans, as a result of the assessments they make within lessons. Their highly effective class management, based on excellent relationships, leads to very good behaviour and high levels of concentration. Lessons move at a rapid pace so that pupils work extremely hard and learn very well. Pupils who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language benefit greatly from the expert help they receive from well trained classroom assistants, who work most effectively as part of the teaching team. Extra support from a visiting specialist benefits the learning of pupils with English as an additional language.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements well. It is greatly enriched by the excellent relationships that the school has with the local community and particularly with the church, and by a varied and stimulating programme of visits and visitors. The school is highly effective in ensuring that all pupils, whatever their needs, are fully included in its life and activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent. The needs of these pupils are identified very early and strong support provided within school and from outside agencies when appropriate.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Excellent. The needs of these pupils are assessed as soon as they start school so that teachers quickly identify their needs, which are extremely well met by teachers, support staff and the visiting specialist teacher.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Excellent. The school's strongly Christian ethos promotes racial harmony and respect for other beliefs and values extremely well. Very high quality acts of collective worship promote pupils' capacity to reflect on life and its moral dilemmas and there are many chances to celebrate the world of nature and human differences. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility. The school celebrates its rich cultural diversity very well and also ensures that pupils learn about their local culture.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Excellent. This is an extremely caring school which has the welfare of its pupils very much at heart.

Parents have a very high opinion of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. Outstanding leadership from the headteacher has developed a shared vision for the school that involves constant rigorous self-evaluation and an extremely strong commitment to further improvement from the whole staff. Very effective management systems enable staff to play a

	central part in developing their areas of responsibility in key areas such as special educational needs, key subjects and the Foundation Stage.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. An excellent governing body, extremely energetically and capably led, plays a full and appropriate part in setting the school's ethos and direction, and in supporting its drive to maintain pupils' very high academic and personal standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. Stringent monitoring of pupils' performance leads to the setting of increasingly challenging targets for the school, for subjects and for individual pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. Excellent financial planning is closely related to the school's priorities and ensures that it obtains the best possible value from its spending and policy decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school; • They work hard, behave well and become mature and responsible; • Teaching and leadership and management are good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount and timing of homework; • The information they receive about their children's progress

The inspection strongly confirms the parents' positive views. Inspectors judge that homework arrangements are good and benefit pupils' learning, particularly in reading. They also judge that the information parents receive about their children's progress is very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils attain very high standards in English, mathematics and science as a result of very good teaching.

1. Teachers have high expectations and teach the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) systematically from the start. When children arrive in nursery, they meet a stimulating classroom. Interesting activities are geared towards helping them develop their language and counting skills whilst playing in the sand or water, or creating castles or cars with the construction materials. The teachers, the nursery nurse and the other adults they meet are very good at prompting them to explain what they are doing so that their spoken language develops from a sometimes below average level. The school has identified that a considerable number of children begin nursery with speech and communication difficulties and have placed nine of the children on the special educational needs register as a result. The targeted attention that they receive is bringing on their skills well.
2. The exciting role play corner plays an important part in helping children improve their speaking and listening skills – if you do not listen carefully for the instruction to put on your seat belt before the pilot takes the brake off, you could well be in trouble! Themes such as the holiday theme running during the inspection provide many opportunities for children to communicate with each other and the adults are adept at intervening to promote more elaborate language. The ticket office manager, of course, also had to ‘write’ the details of the journey on a piece of paper for the customer. The staff plan for the systematic teaching of counting and number recognition skills in addition to the informal opportunities they provide. These one to one sessions are characterised by the encouraging way in which the teacher or nursery nurse enables the children to show what they know while having fun and enjoying learning more.
3. The teaching in the reception class builds on the firm basis established in the nursery. Here the children experience often excellent teaching that stimulates their interest extremely well through the provision of exciting materials. For example, after reading a Big Book about bugs with the class as part of the topic on minibeasts, the teacher opened the front of the class wormery. The children were intrigued to see the paths the worms had made and responded to the teacher’s question about how the worms had made those tracks with imagination and a confident use of words: ‘They slided their way along’, said one girl and a boy added, ‘They ate their way along.’ Other children provided words like ‘slide’, ‘crawl’ and ‘wiggle.’ The interest generated by this session was further exploited by the variety of activities and learning resources available for the children in the classroom. They could look at a butterfly emerging from its chrysalis or experiment with the teacher to see whether the worms brought from the garden would be more comfortable on wet paper or dry, thus beginning to learn the skills of scientific investigation.
4. Children’s knowledge of sounds and letters is promoted most effectively through the use of games that they thoroughly enjoy. When the children say which word they think is the odd one out, the teacher always asks them why, thus developing their speaking skills as well. The teacher is very skilled at targeting questions to particular pupils so that their learning is developed without knocking their confidence. Consequently, children with very little English are enabled to participate in ways that they can cope with while higher attainers are challenged to think and use more

complex language. In one to one sessions during the day, the teacher works with individuals on, for example, their handwriting skills, carefully assessing the next step for each child. The classroom helper works particularly effectively with the children who are at an early stage of learning English or who have particular difficulties in their learning, ensuring that they make progress at similar rates to the rest of the class. During a session where children developed their early computer skills, their literacy skills grew as well when they provided a running commentary as the teacher typed in some text. 'You need finger spaces to separate the words', they pointed out. 'You need a capital letter for 'the', said another child.

5. As a result of such excellent teaching and learning in the reception class, children begin Year 1 with above average levels of skill in literacy and numeracy. They are already starting to understand how scientists and computer operators work. They have developed very positive attitudes to learning and have learned to concentrate well and work together. In their English, mathematics and science lessons in Years 1 and 2, they build on these skills tremendously well to achieve the very high standards they reach by the time they leave the school. The teachers' high expectations continue to ensure that pupils work to their best. Their very effective use of the structure of the literacy and numeracy strategies and their confident subject knowledge mean that lessons progress at a rapid pace. Because of the highly effective systems for assessing pupils' learning and the way in which teachers use assessment information in their planning, teachers are also able to provide help where it is most needed so that the slower learners are not left behind and the more able and talented pupils are suitably challenged and not left marking time with nothing to do. Pupils arriving at the school during Years 1 and 2 are assessed as soon as they arrive so that teachers can match work to their stage of development; consequently, they settle quickly into school and make appropriate progress.
6. The mental mathematics sessions at the beginning of numeracy lessons move at a lively pace and teachers are very good at pitching questions to individuals so as to draw them out. They insist that pupils explain how they reached their answers, thus developing language expertise alongside numeracy skills. The teachers are skilled at pointing out speedier ways of reaching an answer – 'Put the big number first', for example, when adding a double digit number to a single digit. Consequently, pupils have a very wide range of strategies for adding and subtracting mentally – so much so, in fact, that, when asked to add a number of lengths together to measure the distance of a walk to school, several pupils chose to do it in their head rather than writing it down. Pupils of all abilities are encouraged to work independently and tasks are geared towards enabling them to do so while still providing challenge and development.
7. In group work, pupils work at tasks that are very well designed to bring on their skills. Whole class sessions that introduce the topic are invariably clear and interesting, so that, when independent work is set, the pupils feel confident in settling to work quickly and without fuss. Teachers have very well developed class management skills, based on excellent relationships, that ensure very good levels of behaviour and attention. Even in lessons with a potential for disruption, such as a science lesson in which pupils had to investigate whether people with the largest feet also had the largest hand span, the noise was contained and productive, and learning of high quality took place. In an excellent mathematics lesson in Year 2, the deployment of the very good classroom assistant to work with the lower attainers meant that the teacher could focus on another group of pupils who were just breaking through into using minutes to understand duration. The more able pupils, very well motivated, worked at a series of challenging tasks that brought their learning along at an

appropriate pace. They worked independently and showing great responsibility and maturity.

8. Pupils' skills in all aspects of English are developed systematically as they move up the school. The school's analysis of its national test results is exemplary and is used to identify areas for improvement within already very well developed learning. One of the aspects the school has identified as being less effective relates to the pupils' listening skills. Most are confident speakers and teachers are very skilled at encouraging pupils to use language more precisely and to use technical terms where appropriate in different subjects. However, some pupils, mainly lower attainers, still find it hard to listen accurately to instructions. Teachers use a variety of techniques to address this and are beginning to have some success.
9. The skills of reading are developed in a variety of ways. Pupils are encouraged to enjoy books and reading and they choose books to take home every night to read for pleasure. As soon as they arrive in the classroom, it is automatic to fetch their reading book and settle to read immediately. Pupils clearly enjoy reading and many are extremely capable. One boy, for example, maturely discussed the pros and cons of the film of 'Lord of the Rings', suggesting that the book was the real experience, the one that mattered, but the film was all right for those who needed the pictures. Challenging reading targets are set for each individual and these lead the higher attainers in particular to develop advanced reading skills. For example, pupils have to give reasons why certain things happen in a story or non-fiction text and justify their reasons, using the text. Pupils learn a variety of skills for tackling unfamiliar words and use the context well to develop their understanding. They have well developed information gathering skills and produced their own index and glossary for a non-fiction book on danger at sea that lacked both: 'Other children using this book will be able to use your index and glossary to help them find information', the teacher pointed out as additional motivation.
10. The skills of spelling, punctuation and handwriting are very well taught as teachers constantly reinforce the rules of spelling and grammar. Both teachers in Years 1 and 2 are exceptionally good at making teaching points as they go along, consistently reinforcing good practice. Pupils' writing consequently shows very good levels of spelling and punctuation, with higher attainers already having developed a style of their own where they use good sentence structure, a variety of joining words and a range of clauses. For example, a girl wrote in her news book, 'While R and H played football, I played skipping.' Pupils have many opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and audiences, learning, for example, of the need to use complete sentences for their answers to comprehension questions and the correct use of speech marks in writing stories that include dialogue. Writing targets are stringent and individualised, being based on perceptive assessment.
11. The success of the teaching and learning is based on the fact that the teachers know their pupils' needs extremely well and gear the work to challenge them all at their own particular level. Consequently, a much greater proportion than usual attain the higher level in the national tests in both reading and writing as well as in mathematics and science. Equally important, all pupils comfortably achieve the expected level for their age in all these subjects. None of the pupils who had special educational needs and none for whom English was an additional language failed to achieve the nationally expected level for 7-year-olds either last year or in the present Year 2.

Pupils who have special educational needs, those identified as more able and talented and those for whom English is an additional language make very good progress as a result of the excellent provision for their needs.

12. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has developed excellent systems that ensure that pupils who have been identified are given the best possible means to achieve to their full potential. When children begin in the nursery, their needs are assessed and evaluated carefully by the teachers and the nursery nurse. As soon as there is the slightest cause for concern, the special educational needs co-ordinator is consulted and a learning programme designed to meet the particular areas for development for that child. In the present groups, there are several children who have difficulty in communicating either with the adults or with their peers. Other children have different needs, such as an inability to concentrate for very long. Every adult working in the class, whether teacher, nursery nurse or volunteer, is fully briefed about the requirements of each child and how they are being met. Consequently, a child who finds it hard to behave and pay attention will meet a consistent approach to which he can respond and keep up to his tasks for longer periods of time. This level of individual attention is seen in all classes. Teachers plan with the pupils' individual educational plans in mind and are all skilled at asking questions that relate to the child's particular targets. The individual educational plans are invariably of high quality, with learning targets shown as small steps that are achievable and not too daunting for the pupil. Personal development targets sit alongside more academic targets so that the pupils' attitudes develop along with their learning. Pupils are involved in developing their own individual plans so that they are clear about what is expected. As soon as their targets are met, they are removed from the special educational needs register or moved to a level that demands less rigorous attention from staff. Parents are involved in their children's learning plans and in the regular reviews of their progress and are consulted when outside agencies are brought in. Extremely careful records and assessments are kept in a format that makes it easy to administer efficiently.
13. Highly skilled and trained classroom assistants play a very important part in the progress that these pupils make. They often provide sensitive individual attention, as seen when they helped pupils with physical difficulties do their exercises. They also sit near particular pupils in whole class sessions to chivvy them, which ensures that they play a full part in the lesson.
14. At other times, usually in group work in literacy or numeracy, the classroom assistants continue to help these pupils but usually alongside other slower learners. Here, they provide valuable support for the teacher, allowing her to work with other groups safe in the knowledge that the group with the classroom assistant will be making progress at a similar rate to the rest of the class.
15. The same excellent qualities apply to the provision for pupils who arrive at the school with little or no English. The school does not always receive much warning of the arrival of these pupils, who come at different times during the year when their parents arrive at the University; for example, to start a postgraduate course. At the time of the inspection, there were 16 nationalities represented in the school almost all with a mother tongue other than English. Within three weeks of the inspection, three children joined the school, one in each year group apart from nursery, and none spoke any English at all. Teachers and support staff are not at all fazed by this situation. They quickly evaluate the personal skills and the language capability of each child and ensure that they are supported in their first experiences of being in the school. Classroom assistants are very skilled at supporting these pupils and have received appropriate training to help them.

16. Other pupils in the school are extremely helpful because they are used to welcoming new children to the school, looking after them and helping them to settle and learn the most important English words quickly. The pupils' caring approach was seen when a group of older boys playing football in the playground realised that a new boy in reception wanted to join in their game. They immediately gently passed him the ball so that he could have a kick, and periodically made certain that he was brought in with a pass, without allowing him to get caught up dangerously in the cut and thrust of the game. Where there are older pupils who speak the same language but are more fluent in English, they are involved in helping the newcomer as well. For example, in Year 1, a pupil with no English but a great deal of skill in mathematics was placed with the higher attainers so that she could develop her learning in mathematics with the help of her cousin whose English was more developed.
17. In addition to the assessments made by the teachers, an expert from the local education authority visits soon after the pupil's arrival at school. She does her own assessment of the pupils' needs and discusses appropriate programmes with the class teachers. All pupils who need them have individual language plans that, if they are also identified as having special educational needs or as being more able or talented, relate closely to their individual educational plans. This teacher spends half a day a week at the school, undertaking one-to-one sessions with those pupils who are at the earliest stages of learning English and providing teachers with advice and support when necessary.
18. The progress of each different category of pupil is monitored extremely effectively so that the school is very well aware of the progress made by each individual as well as by the group as a whole. Very detailed analyses are made of the performance in the national tests of pupils with special educational needs, of pupils who are more able and talented and of pupils for whom English is an additional language. This enables the progress of these pupils to continue after the tests right up to the time they leave to go on to junior school. All groups make very good progress and, for some individuals, progress is excellent.

Excellent relationships and personal development, very positive attitudes to learning and high standards of behaviour result from excellent provision for pupils' personal development.

19. The school assesses and monitors the personal and social development of the pupils very effectively through its programme of personal and social education. Pupils' personal development is treated equally as important as their academic development; indeed, the school rightly perceives that each depends heavily on the other.
20. Christian values permeate all aspects of the school's life and work. They are reflected in the excellent relationships seen in the school. Adults set a strong example through the respect and sensitivity they show, through the team work that characterises everyday life in the classrooms and through their high expectations of themselves and others. Teachers and other staff work extremely hard to ensure that all pupils are fully included and achieve their full potential and, at the same time, are happy in school. There is excellent provision for pupils' spiritual development. Acts of collective worship fully and actively involve the pupils in singing, prayer and reflection of high quality. Prayer times before lunch and at the end of the school day help pupils to be thankful for their food and to reflect on the events of the day. Pupils learn to appreciate and enjoy the world of nature from the start of their time in school and take joy in watching a butterfly emerge from its chrysalis, for example, or gasp in anticipation as an earthworm is uncovered. They experience the fun of learning

through the games they play in mathematics sessions or in learning to recognise sounds and letters. They also learn to celebrate human differences and to understand how unique each person is as they learn about the customs and beliefs of their classmates or realise in science that some children's feet are bigger than others.

21. Pupils' moral development is very effective. The teachers' high expectations include pupils' behaviour. Lessons consistently show highly skilled class management where pupils are made very clear about what is acceptable and what is not. Teachers and other adults show great understanding, sympathy and tolerance for individual circumstances but are very firm when they need to be so that lessons are invariably orderly and positive learning experiences. The thinking behind school and class rules is clearly understood by the pupils because they are involved in their creation and consequently there is very little unacceptable behaviour. What there is, is dealt with quickly and very effectively. Parents feel that behaviour in school is very good and they say they are pleased to accompany the children on visits because they are so well behaved. Pupils experience stories in lessons and assemblies that encourage them to consider moral issues, and situations that arise in school are discussed in the light of right and wrong. The school takes advantage of the very broad racial mix of its pupils to encourage values of tolerance, understanding and respect for all races, cultures and religions. It promotes racial harmony extremely well. Parents and other visitors of many nationalities lead assemblies or speak in lessons about their customs and religious beliefs so that pupils begin to understand the diversity of life in Britain today. The success of the school's efforts is shown in the very caring way in which the pupils respond to each other, particularly to those who arrive at school with little or no English.
22. There is excellent provision for pupils' social development. The school's prayer tree, where pupils place the names of people they are concerned about, ensures that all pupils are aware of the needs of other pupils. Pupils are led to extend this awareness to the wider world through their efforts at collecting for charities such as Red Nose Day and the local hospice. From the time that children start in nursery, they are encouraged to play independently and take the lead in, for instance, piloting the aeroplane in the role play area. Pupils are encouraged to work together in pairs and small groups throughout the school. For example, more able pupils worked together on mathematics problems, listening to each other's views and discussing possible solutions with tolerance and respect. Older pupils spontaneously act out situations showing the right and wrong ways of going about things in assemblies. The nursery children are prepared for the time when they move to reception by visiting regularly for short periods of time to get used to the slightly different ways of working in reception. Pupils are given progressively more chances to take on responsibilities as they get older. Reception children proudly hold doors open when the class goes upstairs for physical education. Older pupils prepare the library for the infant session there on Fridays and act as group leaders in class activities. All pupils in the reception class and Years 1 and 2 take a turn at being part of the School Council. This meets with the headteacher every Friday and the pupils discuss what they like about the school and what they would like to see improved. Their views are taken seriously by the school's management and form part of the annual school review.
23. There is very good provision for pupils' cultural development. This includes the celebration of the school's ethnic and cultural diversity as well as developing pupils' understanding of the local culture through history and geography lessons. Religious education lessons include opportunities for adults of different faiths to share their beliefs and also help to develop the relationship with the local church that is so well cemented in the acts of collective worship. Pupils visit the local church and learn

about significant aspects of the building and their importance both culturally and religiously. They study St Cuthbert and combine history and religious education in linking his life with the local area. They visit the Durham Heritage Centre and the Cathedral. Art and music have a high profile in the school and provide opportunities for pupils to experience art and music from around the world, as, for example, when Year 2 pupils tracked the experiences of an Inuit fisherman in a song. The programme of visits and visitors that so enriches the curriculum also helps to promote pupils' cultural development. The magic lantern art shows presented by an expert help pupils to understand and appreciate the works of great artists and visiting theatre groups introduce them to the world of the theatre.

The headteacher, key staff and governors lead the school with sustained excellence to promote a shared Christian ethos and continuous improvement.

24. The excellent leadership of the headteacher has helped to develop a culture of rigorous self-evaluation and improvement throughout the school. This is reflected in increasingly high academic standards and in the very good progress made since the last inspection from a strong base. In spite of the consistently outstanding test results, the school's analyses show a complete lack of complacency from all subject and aspect leaders. Detailed areas of improvement are sought out even in the strongest subjects and imaginative and practical strategies devised to address the identified needs. For example, even with standards in English being in the top five per cent nationally, the school is not satisfied with some aspects of reading by higher attainers and identifies strategies to remedy the situation. It monitors the effect of these actions very thoroughly and adjusts them according to need.
25. Academic excellence is pursued very much in the context of strong Christian beliefs and attitudes. The headteacher has worked very hard to develop further the already positive relationship with the local church and this is now reflected in the nature and quality of the acts of collective worship and the people who lead them. She has also introduced the Prayer Tree to raise pupils' awareness of need and to show how prayer can help. The happy and harmonious atmosphere that pervades the school results from the staff's vision that learning should be enjoyable but that all should work and achieve to their full potential. The school's aims, which were developed jointly by staff and governors, are consistently reflected in its life and work.
26. The small number of teachers means that each teacher has more than one subject or other leadership responsibility. More experienced members of staff carry a heavier load which they manage very well. The teacher who is designated as second in charge combines that role extremely well with an oversight of the curriculum and responsibility for special educational needs, mathematics and physical education. In the most important areas, such as English, mathematics, the Foundation Stage and special education needs, leadership is excellent. Less experienced teachers are very well supported through training and through the team spirit that underpins the life of the school so that their leadership skills are being developed well. All subjects benefit from strong leadership over time. The school is fully committed to further improvement and has an excellent capacity to succeed.
27. Leadership and management are extremely well supported by an excellent governing body. Under very high quality leadership, the governors operate through a highly efficient committee system that enables governors' broad range of expertise to be fully used for the benefit of the school. Regular fortnightly meetings between the headteacher and the chair of governors ensure that governors are informed about issues and developments. The governors' knowledge and understanding of the school are enhanced by the number of individual governors who visit the school in a

variety of capacities. Governors have observed lessons in literacy, geography, history and art and design, monitored provision for and work with pupils with special educational needs, trained midday supervisors, helped in the nursery and reception classes and monitored the information and communication technology development plan. Another governor leads a weekly act of collective worship. The governing body plays a full part in the school's development planning and is informed by the thorough evaluation of the school's performance in national tests by the curriculum committee.

28. The governors' finance committee ensures that financial planning is of a very high quality and that it takes very good account of the principles of best value. Spending decisions are concerned with the need to maintain standards and are based on the school's evaluation of its performance. Consequently, the school has ensured a prudent carry forward in order to ensure staffing levels.

An excellent partnership with parents means that they have a strong impact on their children's learning.

29. Parents have an extremely high opinion of the school's quality and worth. There is a very strong and effective partnership between parents and the school. Parents are able to play a central part in the school's life and development because they are consulted regularly and are encouraged to help their children's learning both at home and in school. Individual parents are encouraged to help in school and on educational visits and many respond well to these opportunities. When they help in school, they are fully briefed and accepted as part of the classroom team. Parents were actively involved in developing the excellent resource known as The Early Years Garden and are looking forward to working on another garden for the older children. The Friends group raise substantial funds for the school and are at present committed to funding the new ICT suite and the refurbishment of the library.
30. Although a small number of parents have concerns about the homework arrangements, most parents appreciate the amount of homework set and the realistic expectations of the teachers. Parents are informed about what their children will be studying so that they can help with pictures or artefacts and they find staff very approachable. In spite of the concerns of a few parents, information about the school and about the pupils' progress is of a high quality. Consequently, parents are able to continue to play an important role in the learning of their children.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

There are no significant areas for improvement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

There are no key issues to address; the school has identified details for further improvement on which they are already taking action.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	7	9	0	0	0	0
Percentage	16	37	47	0	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23	76
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	9	14

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	18

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	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.7
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	12	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	23	23	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	23	23	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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	40	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	5	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	1	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	2	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	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	6	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 – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	66

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	24
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	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
	£
Total income	280813
Total expenditure	248900
Expenditure per pupil	2582
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	31912

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	118
Number of questionnaires returned	45

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	22	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	69	27	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	73	27	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	60	11	11	2	16
The teaching is good.	82	16	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	29	11	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	18	0	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	80	16	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	67	22	7	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	71	29	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	80	18	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	60	33	4	0	2

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