

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST BEDE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC (VOLUNTARY  
AIDED) FIRST SCHOOL**

Bedlington

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122308

Headteacher: Mr M White

Reporting inspector: Mrs M Warburton  
22522

Dates of inspection: 27<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> January 2003

Inspection number: 248341

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ridge Terrace Bedlington Northumberland
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Brannigan
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
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30954	Brian Ashcroft	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Physical education Educational inclusion English as an additional language	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Quality and range of opportunities for learning
17907	Michael Bowers	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Information and communication technology	Leadership and management

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>1</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved?	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>5</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>20</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. Bede's Roman Catholic First School is situated in the small town of Bedlington in Northumberland. It is about the same size as other primary schools, with 181 pupils aged three to nine on roll. In most classes there are more boys than girls, except in the nursery and Year 2 where the reverse is true. The school draws pupils from a wide area of the town, including thirteen who are from a travellers' community. Most of the pupils in the school are of white British heritage. Pupils' attainment on entry to the nursery is broadly average, although the full range is represented. The percentage of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average at 10 per cent, and the percentage that have special educational needs is around average. The percentage with a statement of special educational need is below average. Most of the pupils with special educational needs have learning, speech or language difficulties. The school aims reflect the Catholic ethos and focus on gospel values, developing relationships and respecting individuality.

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

This is a good school where pupils often attain standards that are above average for their age in a range of areas of the curriculum. Children get a very good start in the nursery and good teaching throughout the school enables pupils to make good progress and to achieve well. There are very high levels of care and concern for all pupils, including those from the travellers' community. The good leadership provided by the headteacher, supported by a very effective governing body, is moving the school forward and ensures a focus on continuing, steady improvement. Given the use it makes of the resources available and the very careful financial planning, the school provides good value for money.

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

- Attains standards that are above average in English, mathematics and history throughout the school and in science in Key Stage 2;
- Good leadership ensures that the school continues to improve;
- Children get a very good start in the nursery;
- The teaching is consistently good, enabling pupils to make good progress;
- There are very high levels of care and concern for all pupils;
- There is good provision for pupils from the travellers' community.

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

- Standards in science in Key Stage 1;
- Better assessment in some subjects would enable teachers to have a better overview of pupils' progress and plan work that builds more effectively on what they can do;
- The accommodation available in the nursery and for the delivery of the information and communication technology curriculum.

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

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

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection in February 1998. Standards achieved are better than they were then. Teaching is now much better, with almost two thirds of lessons being good, very good or excellent and no unsatisfactory lessons observed. The issue in the previous report, relating to the quality of teaching in the reception class and Year 1, has been resolved. There are now appropriately high levels of challenge provided for higher attaining pupils, and handwriting and presentation, judged to be in need of improvement in the last report, are now much better. The marking of pupils' work is now good.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

Inspection evidence shows that currently standards are above expectation for age in Year 2 and Year 4 in reading, writing, mathematics and history, and that pupils' achievement is good. Standards are above average in science in Year 4 but could be higher in Year 2. Standards in the national tests are adversely affected by the number of pupils who have long periods away from the school, some of whom are absent at the time of the tests or do not take them because there have been substantial gaps in their learning. When this is taken into account standards achieved are much better. Over the past three years, standards have gradually improved following a decline in 2000. The school has set appropriately challenging targets for improvement.

Children get off to a good start in the nursery and throughout the Foundation Stage they make good progress, most achieving the early learning goals by the time they are six. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress. The progress made by higher attainers is good but could be better in science in Key Stage 1. Traveller children make good progress because of the good support they receive. Boys and girls do equally well. Across the curriculum the standards achieved are never below average. In some subjects they could be higher if assessment was more secure and used more effectively to identify the next steps in learning.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school and respond positively to their lessons and to other activities available to them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well both in lessons and around the school, resulting in a calm, orderly environment.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils co-operate well together, are happy to take on responsibilities and are helpful and mutually supportive.
Attendance	Satisfactory overall. Although below the national average, most pupils attend regularly, but statistics are adversely affected by the high number of travellers' children who remain on the school's roll when they are away for extended periods of time.

Pupils' attitudes and values are good overall and reflect the Christian values that the school promotes.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	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.*

Teaching is consistently good throughout the school. It is often very good in the nursery where the needs of young children are clearly understood and addressed. In English and mathematics, teaching is good and the basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught well. Teachers manage the pupils well and relationships are good. Pupils who have special educational needs are given good support and are challenged at the right level. Higher attaining pupils are suitably challenged, except in Key Stage 1 science where there is insufficient focus on investigational work at higher levels. The teaching of travellers' children is good and their needs are sensitively met through good support and tasks at an appropriate level. Teachers have clear intended learning outcomes that are shared with pupils at the start of each lesson, referred to throughout the lesson so that pupils' remain focused on what they have to learn, and re-visited at the end to see if they have been successful. Lessons are well planned and prepared and classroom assistants make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils respond well to the good teaching and their learning is good. They become confident learners who try hard to do well, showing interest and enthusiasm in most lessons.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum has been adapted to ensure that pupils make good progress. Themes and topics are used effectively to make learning relevant. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The curriculum is adjusted to ensure that individual needs are met. Good use is made of individual programmes to develop literacy and numeracy skills.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good. Pupils gain a good awareness of their own and others' talents, skills and heritage. The school has rules that encourage pupils to work and play together. Pupils have a good awareness of right and wrong. The school works very well to promote racial harmony.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. All pupils are well known as individuals and are provided with good support. There are good procedures in place for checking on pupils' progress in English and mathematics, but these could be better in other subjects.

The school has developed a good partnership with parents who are very supportive and appreciative of the provision made for their children. Good use is made of visits and visitors to the school to bring the curriculum to life. The school is a caring environment and procedures for ensuring pupils' safety and welfare are very good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the	Good. The headteacher provides good leadership and has worked hard to raise standards, balance the budget and delegate responsibility to key

headteacher and other key staff	staff who are now increasingly involved in checking on standards and advising other teachers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors have a high level of commitment to the school. They have a good understanding of what is happening in school and fulfil all their statutory duties.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher and staff carefully analyse the results of assessments, track pupils' progress and compare the schools' performance with both national and local data. Effective action is taken when a weakness is noted and this has led to an improvement in standards.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school uses staffing resources well to provide extra support in classes. Money is carefully allocated and spent prudently.

The school has sufficient staff and resources to meet its requirements. Accommodation is unsatisfactory because some of the classrooms are too small for practical work, there is insufficient space for computers and the nursery accommodation is unsuitable for the needs of young children. The headteacher and Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school carefully applies the principles of best value.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school;</li> <li>• The teaching is good;</li> <li>• They feel that the school is approachable;</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard and do their best;</li> <li>• Their children make good progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework given;</li> <li>• The information they get about how their children are getting on;</li> <li>• The range of activities provided outside of lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by most parents. The amount of homework given is judged to be appropriate and supports pupils' learning well. The information given to parents is of good quality. The range of activities provided outside of lessons is judged to be satisfactory, although the team acknowledges that most of these are only available for the older pupils.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In the 2002 national tests taken by pupils in Year 2, standards were above average in reading and mathematics, and average in writing when compared to all schools nationally and to similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was average in reading, writing and science. In writing it was below the national average when compared to similar schools and the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was well below average. Inspection evidence shows that currently standards are above average in Year 2 and Year 4 in reading, writing and mathematics. This is better than at the time of the last inspection when standards were judged to be average. Over the past three years standards in the Year 2 national tests have steadily improved following a decline in 2000. Test results are adversely affected by the high number of traveller pupils who often have long periods away from the school, some of whom are either absent at the time of the tests or are unable to take them because of the gaps in their knowledge and understanding. When this is taken into account, standards represent much better achievement than at first sight.
2. When pupils enter Year 1 their attainment overall is in line with that expected for their age. Throughout Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4 they make good progress in English and mathematics, and their achievement is good. Pupils who have special educational needs and those from the travellers' community make good progress throughout the school because of the good support they receive.
3. In speaking and listening, standards are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils make good progress because of the emphasis on developing their speaking and listening skills. Standards in reading are more variable but overall are above average. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 read accurately and show good understanding of what they have read. By the end of Key Stage 1 they can read confidently and with expression. Greater fluency develops in Year 3 but pupils' progress in Year 4 is sometimes hampered because the books they are reading are too difficult for them so they do not always fully understand what they have read. In writing, pupils attain above average standards. In Year 2, pupils can write for a range of purposes and many pupils write at length using a joined script. By Year 4, most pupils can plan their work effectively and use a good range of descriptive language. The highest attaining pupils can use paragraphs, similes, metaphors and adjectives to make their writing more interesting.
4. Pupils in Key Stage 1 develop a good knowledge of basic number, and by Year 2 can accurately apply their skills to money calculations. By the age of nine they have a good understanding of number processes and place value, can draw and interpret information from charts and graphs and can work with co-ordinates. In science, they make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 where standards are average, but do better in Key Stage 2 where challenging investigations capture their interest. Pupils in Year 2 have a satisfactory knowledge of scientific facts, but few achieve more highly than the expected levels, or carry out more advanced investigations. By the end of Year 4, they have made good progress and their knowledge and understanding in science are good. They have good skills in carrying out investigations although they do not always record these systematically.
5. In history, standards are above average at the ages of seven and nine, because good curriculum provision and good teaching enable pupils to develop enthusiasm for the

subject and make good progress. In all other subjects, standards are typical of most schools and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. There is little difference between the overall attainment of boys and girls. Although standards are average in information and communication technology (ICT) pupils' progress could be enhanced if there was more space for computers so that they could practise their skills. In swimming pupils achieve good standards with over half of the nine-year-olds able to swim the distance expected by the age of eleven.

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

6. Pupils enjoy being at school and they respond positively to the activities available to them. Almost without exception, parents and pupils say that pupils like school and it is clear from the way in which they arrive in the morning that, from the youngest children upwards, they feel comfortable and well settled. Most show interest in what their teachers have to say, set about tasks with a will and take care with their work. There is good uptake for extra-curricular activities and more than half of the pupils in Years 3 and 4 have extra music tuition. In the best lessons, pupils work hard and sustain their concentration well but in some others where tasks might be less exciting it is sometimes necessary for the teacher to keep reminding them to return to the task in hand. Children in the nursery are very self-motivated, choosing which activity they wish to work at, focussing well on it when working independently or with an adult and trying hard to improve their skills.
7. Pupils also behave well, both in and out of lessons, with the result that the school operates as a calm and orderly environment for learning. They move around the buildings very quietly and sensibly, automatically holding doors open and filing without fuss into their places at lunchtime. A few pupils, mostly but not exclusively boys, do not yet have sufficient self-discipline to behave well all the time and they sometimes can seek adult attention by being restless, wriggling or making silly comments. The majority, however, especially by Year 4, behave maturely and understand the requirements for contributing to a happy community. There has been no need to exclude a pupil in recent years, which is an improvement on the time of the previous inspection.
8. Good relationships, both among pupils and between pupils and adults, are much in evidence throughout the school. The parents and pupils spoken with consider that there is no bullying and one parent praised the fact that, in her family's experience, there is no element of racism either. Traveller children slip easily back into their old relationships when they return from elsewhere and those of different abilities mix well with each other. In lessons pupils collaborate well when, for instance, completing a pie chart using ICT or looking at and discussing photographs of toys from different periods. Pupils are happy to take on responsibilities, such as operating the CD player or reading out prayers in assembly, and they are helpful towards each other when, for example, their neighbour is having difficulty reading a phrase or thinking of an answer. The playgrounds are quite cramped but pupils take reasonable care with each other and no pupils were observed being left out of playground games.
9. Levels of attendance at school are satisfactory. Most pupils attend regularly and punctually but the overall statistics are below those achieved nationally because of the high levels of recorded absence of traveller children. Some of these pupils are absent for as many as fourteen consecutive weeks but remain on the school's roll unless registered formally at another school during that time. When these pupils are living in Bedlington, they attend as well as other pupils.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

10. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. In almost two thirds of the lessons observed teaching was at least good, and in over a quarter it was very good or excellent. There were no unsatisfactory lessons seen during the inspection. This represents an improvement since the last inspection.
11. In the Foundation Stage teaching is consistently good, and is often very good in the nursery. Careful planning between the nursery and reception teachers ensures that children make good progress in their learning. In Key Stage 1 the quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good. In Key Stage 2 it is good, with some very good and excellent teaching in Year 4.
12. Throughout the school teaching is good in English and mathematics. The basic skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing and number are taught well using the national strategies. There is a clear focus on developing pupils' language skills which is evident in the way that teachers provide pupils with many opportunities to talk in pairs and groups, question them effectively and use appropriate subject specific vocabulary, providing good role models. This is effective in developing good speaking and listening skills. There is often a clear focus on providing pupils with opportunities to practise and improve their writing skills in the context of other subjects, for example when writing accounts of events from the past in history. Reading skills are developed through a systematic approach, but occasionally books are not well matched to pupils' levels of attainment and this can slow their progress. Numeracy skills are taught well with an emphasis on developing pupils' mental agility and their understanding of calculation.
13. Teaching in science is good in Years 3 and 4 and satisfactory in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 there are high expectations of what pupils will achieve, and they respond well to these, making good progress in their learning. In Key Stage 1 the teaching of scientific facts is satisfactory, but pupils are not challenged to achieve higher levels of knowledge, or given opportunities to carry out more advanced investigations. In history teaching is good because teachers have good subject knowledge and are very enthusiastic. Pupils respond very well to this enthusiasm and make good progress in their learning. In all other subjects, teaching and learning are satisfactory and pupils make steady progress in acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding.
14. Lessons are almost invariably well planned and prepared with clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils at the beginning and revisited at the end so that progress can be judged and any areas of difficulty identified. Tasks often build well on prior learning, especially in English, mathematics and history, and this enables pupils to make good progress. Questioning is used effectively to check pupils' understanding and to challenge them to think more deeply. Lessons are well structured and good use is made of time. Resources are well prepared and often motivate the pupils, for example old and new photographs of Bedlington provided in a Year 4 history lesson generated a great deal of interest.
15. Classroom assistants are effectively deployed and make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. They give good support to individuals and groups of pupils, providing challenge and maintaining their interest and concentration. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs, and those from the travellers' community is good because of the support they are given and the clear focus on identifying and meeting individual needs through specific programmes and activities. For example, pupils in

Year 2 were given good support when using an ICT programme that helped them to develop their reading and spelling skills.

16. Overall pupils are challenged well in most lessons and expectations are appropriately high for all groups throughout the school. Occasionally, however, there is insufficient challenge to ensure that those pupils who are able, achieve higher standards. This is true in science in Key Stage 1, where planned work does not include challenging activities for higher attaining pupils and there are too few opportunities for them to investigate and find things out for themselves. In a Year 2 English lesson, expectations of pupils' writing were also too low and most could have written at greater length had it been expected of them.
17. Assessment is good in English and mathematics and is usually used effectively to plan for pupils' progress. However it is in need of further development in science, art, design and technology, geography, history, ICT and music, so that a better overview of pupils' progress from year to year can be maintained. Marking is used well to help pupils know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. The management of pupils is usually good but occasionally it is inappropriate in the reception class and in Year 1 when expectations of pupils' concentration span and application are sometimes unrealistic for pupils of that age. However, relationships are good and make a positive contribution to the progress that pupils make. Praise and encouragement are used well to motivate pupils and to build their self-esteem.
18. Teachers' subject knowledge is good overall but there are some weaknesses in music in Key Stage 2 that have been recognised by the school. The best lessons are characterised by high levels of teacher enthusiasm, very good subject knowledge and excellent relationships, and this combination generates high levels of interest and motivation from pupils, enabling them to make good, and occasionally very good or excellent, progress in their learning.

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

19. The school meets statutory requirements and teaches all the subjects of the national curriculum. The overall quality and range of the curriculum is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The yearly and termly planning is good and in most subjects ensures that the curriculum is covered in a way that is relevant to all pupils. However occasionally groups of pupils could be challenged further if assessments allowed teachers to plan in the full knowledge of what had already been achieved. The curriculum is broad and balanced and considerable thought has been devoted to ensure that adequate time is given to all subjects.
20. The school has adopted the nationally recommended schemes of work and these have been adapted to meet the needs of the pupils and to relate more closely to their experiences. Teachers have good guidance on what is to be taught each term and how this may be done. A good feature is the planned inclusion of visits; for example, pupils in Year 4 have visited the Beamish Museum as part of their work in history. Visitors and special events in school are used well to enrich the curriculum, for example the visit of an African drummer made a very positive contribution to music, geography and pupils' cultural awareness.
21. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. The school uses the early learning goals and the national guidelines for children in the Foundation Stage. The 'stepping stones' are used effectively to plan for pupils' progress in small stages.

22. The school has rightly concentrated its' efforts on improving curriculum quality in English and mathematics. The introduction of the national literacy and numeracy strategies has been a key factor in the raising of standards. The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills are good. In English, skills are taught progressively and are practised and developed in other subjects of the curriculum. In numeracy basic number skills are introduced systematically throughout the school and pupils are developing a good understanding of number.
23. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The curriculum for these pupils is adjusted and adapted to ensure that individual needs are met. Good use is made of individual programmes to improve literacy and numeracy skills, including some that use information and communication technology. Individual support is planned to follow up and reinforce class work so that every opportunity for pupils to make progress is utilised.
24. The provision that the school makes for travellers' children is good. Currently there are thirteen children at the school and they are included well into the classes. Most have individual educational targets that are reviewed each half term. Specialist support is provided by a member of the Northumberland Traveller Education Service for the equivalent of three days each week. This, combined with the support from all other adults in school, ensures that the pupils receive a range of experiences to meet their particular needs.
25. The school has a satisfactory range of additional learning opportunities for pupils through its programme of extra-curricular activities. The information and communication technology club and football coaching for pupils in Key Stage 2 make a good contribution to the their learning. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 1 to benefit from any of the activities.
26. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and this has improved since the last inspection. Circle time and class meetings provide pupils with opportunities to discuss and reflect on feelings and emotions. Sex and drugs education are taught with help from outside agencies such as the school nurse and the police. Healthy eating is reinforced by the school meals menus and by opportunities for the pupils to buy fruit at break times. The school is working very effectively towards the Healthy Schools Award.
27. The school's good links with the local community make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. There are very strong links with the Parish Church and Mass is celebrated at the beginning and end of the school year, as well as at other feast days, for pupils and other members of the Parish community. Monies raised through school fund raising events are sometimes used to help local charities and the Harvest Festival celebrations ensure that members of the local community receive gifts at this time. A range of trips from school ensures that pupils build up a good understanding of the locality and use the facilities well to extend their knowledge. Children from school attend the local Day Centre to perform carols at Christmas. All these links help to teach pupils about the importance of service to their community.
28. The school has a good relationship with partner institutions. The valuable links with the local middle school ensure that pupils transfer to the school without fuss. The good liaison programme means that the pupils generally settle in well to their new school. The school takes work experience students from the local secondary school and provides work placements for trainee teachers and support assistants.

29. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This good quality provision has a positive impact on their attitudes to learning and helps them make the most of their time in school. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection.
30. Provision for spiritual development is good. The daily act of worship makes a strong contribution. Opportunities to respond to music and times for reflection that are provided make these suitably reverent times. All pupils are made to feel part of the school community and everyone is valued. Pupils' achievements are celebrated. Opportunities are planned as part of class meetings and lessons to consider how they feel about things, for example the rules concerning lunchtimes as part of the Healthy Schools Project and also what makes them feel happy or sad. Teachers ensure that in most lessons pupils reflect on their own learning and how they may improve and achieve more.
31. The provision for moral development is good. The school places a high priority on good behaviour. Suitable policies are in place for behaviour, anti-bullying and anti-racism. Pupils in some classes consider and create their own class rules. There are good relationships between staff and pupils. All teachers know their children well and are able to direct them firmly along the correct path. Pupils are taught to treat the school environment and equipment with respect and they respond positively to this.
32. The provision for social development is good. Staff often encourage pupils to work together in pairs or small groups and they are very good at this. A good example was seen in a lesson in Year 2, when groups of pupils were counting out shapes in boxes after they had estimated the number in each box. The pupils quickly arranged who would count, who would record the number and who would arrange them in groups. Opportunities are given for pupils to meet representatives of the local community such as the Fire Service. Opportunities are also provided to appreciate the value of fund raising for worthy causes, such as 'Operation Christmas Child'.
33. The provision for pupils' cultural development, including multicultural, is good. They are offered a good variety of opportunities to learn about their own cultural heritage through visits around the area and by studying the locality. Pupils see performances of music and drama and a local sculptor has been in school working with Year 3. Pupils study and compare features of the Hindu, Muslim, Jewish and Christian faiths. Pupils have prepared an African meal as part of their project on Africa and have listened to an African drum performance. The travelling community is also celebrated by the displays of books and photographs which depict their lifestyle.

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

34. The school provides very good quality care for its pupils. Staff know each child and family well as individuals and use this knowledge to offer them effective support. Child protection procedures are very good with clear guidance, training for all staff and any relevant information being kept in a suitably confidential manner. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are also very good with good governor involvement, appropriate risk assessments and good day-to-day practice, for instance in physical education and design and technology lessons. There is good supervision at break and lunch times and the new midday supervisors, who are sixth form students from the neighbouring high school, have had appropriate training. Any accidents or first aid treatment given are carefully recorded. Pupils are well prepared for their transfer to middle school and parents say that their older children have settled well.

35. Pupils' attendance is closely monitored and swift action taken when necessary. There is a well-known procedure for requesting term-time holidays and it is made quite clear that taking children away from school is not approved of. Registration is conducted in a businesslike manner and the headteacher analyses the absence of individuals and different groups of pupils then acts on his findings. The procedures to eliminate bullying and similar oppressive behaviour are also very good, with all staff regularly reiterating and acting out the messages of inclusiveness and tolerance that are at the heart of the school's ethos. The school has devoted much time and energy to developing its behaviour policy and strategies, including the 'Four Golden Rules' and individual classroom rules decided on by pupils. These are entirely appropriate and staff have received training on the use of positive behaviour techniques, but they are not all consistent in their application of these on a day-to-day basis. There are suitable arrangements to monitor and support the behaviour of those who find self-discipline difficult.
36. There are very good links with many neighbourhood private providers of pre-school education. Parents and children are invited to meetings and to attend a session prior to the children starting school. There are very good arrangements for introducing individual children enabling them to settle quickly and confidently into school life.
37. The procedures for assessing, monitoring and supporting pupils' academic work and personal development are satisfactory. A new policy has been developed for this academic year and the school uses standardised tests to establish the attainment of children during their first few weeks in nursery and their subsequent progress, particularly in English and mathematics. Staff use data to compare St Bede's pupils' attainment with that of others of similar age nationally and to set school targets for classes to work towards. Using an electronic system, they record individuals' results and progress in English and mathematics on a regular basis. Teachers use the assessment information to prepare work of different grades of difficulty for groups of pupils particularly in English and mathematics.
38. Once children are settled into the nursery, the school regularly checks their individual progress against both the national and the local authority recognised stages of development in each of the six areas of learning. This method of monitoring continues throughout the reception year, which is an improvement on the time of the previous inspection. The teachers of these young children use the information well to provide them with suitable work, for example offering sufficiently challenging activities for a child in nursery who can read. Higher up the school, the good recording of results in English and mathematics, together with the recording of targets for improvement in pupils' work books, means that teachers plan suitable work for pupils and pupils know what they need to concentrate on. However, in other areas, including the core subject of science, pupils' work is only assessed when they have completed a topic and there is no analysis of individuals' particular strengths and areas for development. The school is currently developing assessment procedures for geography and history but in subjects such as music, art and physical education, assessment is not fully developed. Teachers do not yet regularly identify work for particular individuals who may have a particular flair, or need extra support, in all subjects. Pupils' personal development is monitored informally by class teachers and, because of their good knowledge of them as individuals, they provide good support to help them grow in maturity.
39. Procedures for assessing the progress of pupils who have special educational needs are good. Their needs are identified by teachers and they are provided with suitable

individual education plans that are reviewed at least termly. Precise targets are set and specific programmes used to provide appropriate support.

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

40. Parents and carers see the school in a very positive light and support it well. They particularly appreciate the accessibility of staff and are content that the teaching is of good quality, their children are expected to work hard and, therefore, they make good progress. All those spoken with during the inspection had only good words for the school, some of them comparing it very favourably with others that their children had experienced. The aspects of provision causing concern to a number of parents are extra-curricular activities and homework. The school provides a satisfactory range of after-school clubs for older pupils. The amount of homework pupils are expected to do is good and supports their learning well.
41. The school provides good quality information for parents, with regular newsletters and very good termly curriculum sheets for each year group in which staff outline what the pupils will be studying and also give hints on how parents can help their children at home. Parents respond well to these, helping with homework and listening to their children reading. They are also very helpful in the way that they inform staff of any upsets at home which might impinge on their child's work and behaviour at school. The Friends of St Bede's organise regular fundraising and social events, the proceeds of which go towards, for instance, extra resources or ensuring that the pupils have a good Christmas party. Parents attend class assemblies in good numbers, and also meetings with teachers to discuss their children's progress or to find out more about the standardised national tests at the end of Year 2. There are a good number of volunteer helpers in school. Pupils' progress reports contain detailed information including targets for improvement, particularly about English and mathematics, but do not make it entirely clear whether an individual's work is above, average or below the standard expected for his or her age.
42. Overall, the partnership developed between the school and parents has a very positive impact on its work. Each side is open with the other and pupils can see that their parents and their teachers have similar expectations of them and will work together in harmony in order to help them make the most of their time at St Bede's.

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

43. The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher is dedicated to the school and provides quiet, calm and strong leadership. He has established a clear vision for improvements to the accommodation to ensure that there is a greater range of teaching spaces to alleviate the lack of classroom space and facilities for the provision of ICT. The deputy head gives effective help to the Head Teacher in the day-to-day management of the school. Much work has been successfully completed to balance the budget and identify a small surplus. The Head Teacher has provided a clear sense of direction to the school and has worked hard to develop trusting relationships, good communication and a measured approach to improvement, seen for example in his leadership of the Healthy Schools Project.
44. Good work by subject co-ordinators makes a positive contribution to standards in most subjects. Co-ordinators play an important role in updating planning guidelines. They analyse planning in their subject and review pupils' work. Most co-ordinators have a clear view of standards in their subjects and offer good advice to other teachers, but assessment is under-developed in some subjects. The co-ordinators



for English, mathematics and science are timetabled to observe teaching in their subjects. Management of the Foundation Stage is developing well and good planning now identifies general themes and progressions of skills, which is raising standards in the reception class.

45. The leadership and management of special educational needs are good. The headteacher and special needs co-ordinator work effectively together to provide clear direction and support. Well-organised systems and programmes ensure that individual needs are met.
46. The contribution made by the governing body is good. Through its committee structure the governors fulfil their legal requirements. Governors are very proud of the school and have played an important part in the current decision to apply for funding to re-organise the accommodation, build two new classrooms, install a computer suite and re-locate the nursery alongside the reception class. Governors are well informed about the school's strengths and areas for development. Since the previous inspection they have attended numerous training sessions. Various curriculum governors have established close links with subject co-ordinators. School visits are regularly made by pairs of governors focussing on agreed aspects of school life. The Head Teacher and Chair of Governors meet officially on a monthly basis to discuss progress on the school improvement plan. Initiatives such as these have created a feeling of mutual trust and respect between the staff and the governing body, which work to the benefit of the pupils.
47. Previous concerns included the need to raise the standards of the higher attainers. The important task of analysing the previous year's national test results by the deputy head has led to more appropriate work being given to these pupils, ensuring that they now achieve higher levels.
48. The school plan for improvement is a well-structured document, which provides clear objectives to lead the school forward. The Head Teacher leads the staff and Governors very effectively in analysing and evaluating areas of school life in order to set priorities for development. Subject co-ordinators are fully included in the planning processes as they feed their action plans into the school development plan. This makes it a very useful working document. Current priorities are correct for the school and include action plans to continue to raise standards in English, mathematics and science, further provision for information and communication technology through the provision of a computer suite, and improvements to the building.
49. The overall management of the budget is good. Spending is closely linked to the school's improvement plan. Financial grants are used appropriately, for instance extra monies provided for children with special educational needs are used to employ extra staff who have made a good impact on standards. Recent adjustments to the budget produced a surplus of about £12,000. This was used to write off the deficit of £6,000 to leave a budget surplus of one per cent. Monitoring of spending is very good and the minor recommendations of the most recent audit have been implemented. Although the budget headings are not computerised, the school's administrative staff are efficient in checking spending on a daily basis and in providing general information about the overall financial situation on computer print outs.
50. The school is effectively staffed with teachers who provide a good balance between experience and expertise. Teachers are supported by a satisfactory number of classroom assistants who work well in partnership with them. They often provide unobtrusive support for individual pupils giving them confidence to complete their

work and take part in class discussions. However, not all classes benefit from the presence of a classroom assistant. This makes it difficult for teachers with large classes to support specific pupils.

51. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are effective and training is closely linked to the needs of the school. Procedures for performance management are in place and systems for the induction of new staff into the school are effective, ensuring that they quickly become aware of practice and procedures.
52. Whilst the accommodation has enough classrooms and teaching areas to meet the needs of the pupils on roll, there are some unsatisfactory features. Many classrooms are small in area, making it difficult to plan practical work because of the large class sizes. Arrangements for information and communication technology are unsatisfactory because only one computer can be set up in each classroom due to the restrictions of space and of the electricity supply points. This restricts pupils' use of computers. The nursery accommodation is unsatisfactory. It is located in an old mobile classroom where it is difficult to supervise the range of activities because of the shape of the room. This accommodation is situated away from the reception class, making communication, sharing of resources and movement of children difficult. The combined hall, gymnasium and dining room is accessed by a covered walkway, which is not enclosed to form a corridor. This results in inconvenience when pupils have to move around during inclement weather. The whole accommodation, both interior and exterior, is in need of re-decoration and cloakroom areas are cramped.
53. The quality and range of learning resources is satisfactory overall. They are good in English and mathematics and the Foundation Stage with a good range of resources and reading books. Although pupils benefit from the use of computers, class resources are often situated in corridors and are below the recommended level in spite of the school replacing old with new in recent years. The lack of a computer suite, where an interactive white board could be situated, results in teachers having to use the classroom computers to introduce new skills. This leads to a bottleneck when they are required in other subjects where pupils could practise their skills. The library is too small to enable more than ten pupils to use it at one time. Although it is well stocked overall, some old books need to be replaced. Other resources are generally accessible and used well in lessons.
54. Many strengths in the leadership and management of the school ensure that its' mission statement is reflected in all aspects of daily life. Pupils learn to grow together in a happy and caring school. They are taught how to be friendly, share, grow in their faith and respect each other.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. In order to sustain the good improvement made since the last inspection the headteacher, staff and governors should work together to:

(a) Raise the standards achieved in science by pupils in Key Stage 1 by:

- raising expectations of what pupils can achieve;
- ensuring that opportunities are planned for pupils to work at higher levels;
- providing pupils with more opportunities for investigational work.

(paragraphs 4, 13, 16, 92, 95)

(b) Improve assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics by:

- introducing systems to check pupils' progress or implementing them where already planned
- using the information to plan work for groups or individuals that takes account of what they can or can not already do, especially for pupils who show particular ability or who have experienced difficulties.

(paragraphs 17, 19, 38, 44, 99, 103, 108, 113, 117, 125, 130, 136)

**and, as funding allows:**

(c) Secure improvements to the accommodation so that better provision can be made for information and communication technology and the foundation stage.

(paragraphs 5, 43, 52, 53, 123, 124)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	33
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	7	12	12	0	0	0
Percentage	6	21	35	36	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 three percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23	181
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		17

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	22

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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*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	18	13	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	15	16
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	27	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87(100)	84 (88)	87 (97)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	17	17
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	27	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (97)	90 (97)	90 (97)
	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
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

No of pupils on roll
142
0
2
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
1
3
0
0
10
0

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	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 – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.5
Average class size	31.6

### **Education support staff: Y[ ] – Y[ ]**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	93

### **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	30
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11

*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	1

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Financial information**

Financial year	2001-2
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	£
Total income	358319
Total expenditure	364946
Expenditure per pupil	2039
Balance brought forward from previous year	11980
Balance carried forward to next year	5353



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	227
Number of questionnaires returned	52

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	31	0	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	44	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	40	0	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	46	8	0	12
The teaching is good.	62	38	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	52	13	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	25	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	33	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	38	54	8	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	58	40	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	40	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	37	17	4	19

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

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

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

56. Children join the nursery when they are three years old, attending on a part time basis either mornings or afternoons. Currently a maximum of 26 children attend each session.
57. Standards of attainment on entry to the nursery vary from year to year but overall are typical of children of this age, although a significant minority has difficulties with language and communication. Most children begin to work on the first 'stepping stone'. However, because of the carefully planned progress of work and the very good teaching, children in the nursery make very good gains in confidence and attainment, and many of the children currently in the nursery are beginning to work towards the third 'stepping stone'.
58. Overall, children achieve well in the reception class as the teacher consolidates and builds on the very good start they have made during their time in the nursery. Most are on course to achieve the expected standards known as the Early Learning Goals by the time they are six. Higher attaining children have been identified and are suitably challenged. Achievement and progress in the reception class is good in reading, writing and number work and knowledge and understanding of the world because there is a strong emphasis on these areas and they are taught well. Very good progress is made in personal and social development because the nursery sees this area of learning as a key factor in children developing confidence, independence and self-esteem. Fewer children made good progress in physical and creative development because there is less emphasis on these areas.
59. Through careful planning and accurate assessments, the school makes good provision overall for children identified as having special educational needs and, consequently, they make good progress.
60. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the Foundation Stage is good overall. It is often very good in the nursery. The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy together with other mathematical skills is good and the careful planning between the nursery and reception teachers ensures that children progress well as they move through the Foundation Stage. Teachers use visits and walks around the school and church well to promote children's knowledge of the world around them. The classroom assistants are fully integrated into the teams and provide very good quality help particularly for the children with special educational needs and others who need assistance. Parent volunteers show a very good understanding of how the nursery works and contribute effectively to the teaching and learning environment. Relationships between staff and children are very good. Children are managed well using praise and encouragement. This promotes their self-esteem and helps them to become confident learners. Throughout the Foundation Stage, there exists an appropriate balance between children's choice activities, where adults are able to intervene, and adult directed activities. Occasionally in the reception class, too much time is spent on whole class explanations when children can begin to lose interest and become restless. Staff make accurate assessments, which are consistently recorded. This information is used effectively to plan further work for specific groups of children.

61. There has been good improvement in the Foundation Stage since the previous report. The staff from the nursery and reception classes work more closely together and there is greater continuity between the two classes. Consequently the older children, particularly the higher attainers, make good progress overall and build successfully on their good start in the nursery.

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

62. Children come to school showing high levels of curiosity and interest. Routines are well established and the children in the nursery soon get used to choosing an activity. For instance they quickly set up the train layout and run rolling stock around the tracks, making sure that the toys do not collide. In the reception class, children quickly sit on the carpet and respond enthusiastically to the teacher's 'thought for the day' and involve themselves in the adding and subtracting game that is part of the registration procedures. A few find it difficult to share or take turns when adults are not immediately available to keep a watchful eye on their activities. Children in the nursery routinely accept responsibility for tidying up once they have completed an activity because they are aware of the class rules. Teaching is very good in the nursery and good in the reception class. The nursery staff have made good provision for role play so that small groups of children in the nursery take their break in the 'café'. Teachers encourage children to develop their independence by having high expectations of them. Consequently they are able to organise their food without the assistance of an adult and wash their hands before they begin to eat. Almost all the children are able to dress themselves in aprons before they involve themselves in artwork or water play, only requiring the minimum amount of assistance from adults. This very high level of independence is the successful outcome of the introductory personal, social and emotional development programme that is delivered at the beginning of the school year.
63. In the reception class, almost all the children show good concentration spans and are able to persevere to complete demanding tasks, although some become restless when expected to listen to long explanations. Almost all children are sensible and confident. They are keen to learn and work co-operatively in groups, not talking over or interrupting each other. They enjoy their work and relish experimenting with practical activities.
64. Throughout the Foundation Stage, praise is used well to motivate children and good story telling provides opportunities for them to explore their feelings.

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

65. Children enjoy listening to stories, which are told skilfully by adults. They communicate using simple vocabulary with adults and with each other in both the reception 'DIY Store' and the nursery 'Igloo'. Nearly all are interested in books and handle them respectfully, turning the pages correctly and commenting briefly on the pictures. Most children in the nursery know that print conveys meaning and higher attaining children are beginning to read simple texts, labels and notices. In reception, the higher attaining children are reading confidently with above average levels of accuracy. They can talk about the story and are making good progress. Lower attaining children read using picture clues and their memory of the words. Most children write their names and are beginning to organise simple sentences. The more advanced children write strings of sentences. One child, imagining that she was Goldilocks, wrote a letter of apology to the Three Bears for eating their porridge. In the reception class, there is good planning to ensure that children of all abilities have

challenging tasks. Children are involved in emergent writing, showing clear development of letter shapes. They are developing spelling skills by recognising sound patterns and creating lists of words with similar patterns. Teaching in this area is good and teachers have created a learning environment that includes many opportunities for children to read, talk and write, including writing titles for their art work, the introduction of new vocabulary and rhyming words. Good use is made of computer software to help children practise their reading and spelling skills.

66. Very good opportunities are organised in the nursery for children to talk to each other and to adults about what they are doing and what they think. When children play with equipment, such as a doll's house or the wet sand, or visit the 'Igloo' role-play area they are involved in 'imaginative talk'. They practise their vocabulary, communicating with themselves or other children to create events and adventures. Children sing rhyming songs and practise handwriting skills by tracing letters in the sand, following patterns. They engage in mark making and practise emergent writing, and adults often intervene effectively to praise them when they form letters accurately.
67. Occasionally a child needs further help and support to ensure that crayons and pencils are held correctly. More advanced children confidently form sentences by choosing words from a 'word bank' to make increasingly complex sentences. Very good planning ensures that the role-play areas are changed regularly to help children broaden their vocabulary. Children take on the role of shopkeeper, receptionist and travel agent and write out lists, instructions and order forms. However, greater use needs to be made of the writing corner to help children practise their skills independently.

### **Mathematical development**

68. Children throughout the Foundation Stage join in number songs and rhymes with great enthusiasm. Most children in the nursery recognise numbers to 6, form the digits accurately and understand their value. More advanced children are working with numbers to 9. Children, including those with special educational needs, recognise pairs of numbers when they are working on the computer. Other children accurately organise plastic animal shapes into sets according to colour and size. They systematically organise repeating patterns of these shapes according to their colour and shape. The reception class children accurately count backwards and forwards and the more advanced understand the ideas of 'more than' and 'less than'. They accurately compare the weights of different toys, carefully estimating before they check, by using a balance scale sensibly. The more advanced children are making good progress and are beginning to work with numbers up to 20. Teaching and learning are good throughout the Foundation Stage. The national guidelines are used well to prepare exciting activities for the children. The quality of teacher explanations is usually good with clear mathematical vocabulary introduced. Occasionally the reception class explanations are too long to fully retain children's attention. Teachers have appropriate expectations of what their children can do and in the nursery very good planning enables children to apply mathematical ideas to their tasks. For instance, in the 'Igloo' role play area children were sorting and classifying clothes into those for use outdoors and those to be worn inside. Teachers use praise well and children are eager to be involved in tasks that increase their mathematical skills and knowledge.

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

69. All of the children are enthusiastic and curious about the world around them. They enjoy their walks around the school to experience the changing weather patterns, which they systematically record on weather charts. There are very good links with the development of a sense of history as they recall the weather last week and compare it with their current observations. Very good teaching in this area of learning is reflected in the planning for language and science skills to be taught together. For example, a group of children listened to the story of a polar bear and re-enacted the story using the water tray. They collected some snow and placed snow samples in containers of cold and warm water to check their prediction about what made ice melt. They decided to use polystyrene to represent the ice floes because it 'doesn't sink'. There was a sense of wonder and the highest levels of interest were observed as the children worked well together to dramatise this story. Children confidently use computers with growing accuracy, practising their skills in many areas of learning.
70. Children work with computers well in the reception class. They use the mouse to click on icons to activate the software in order to read the words on a 'speaking page' and to animate the illustrations. Their concept of history builds on the very good beginning in the nursery when they examine how their homes have changed. They examine items such as a modern carpet cleaner and compare it with the old carpet beater. They explore these changes in their dance when they create and compare the movements of these machines. Children are taught to cherish their neighbourhood and their studies are supported well by various fieldwork trips around the locality and the local church. These visits give the children good first hand experiences and engage their interest and excitement.

## **Physical development**

71. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children have good skills with pencils, crayons and small tools, which are generally held correctly. Children work with a good range of jigsaw puzzles, construction toys and malleable materials like clay and dough with enjoyment and skill. They work well together, handling tiny jointing pieces of construction kits very capably. The reception children have good body control and confidently learn how to hop skip and jump with good control and how to use new equipment. They quickly respond to the teacher's clear explanations and make good progress to improve their ball control, and their sending and receiving skills. Teaching in this area of learning is good overall. Occasionally however adults over-respond to children's excitement and the pace of the lesson falls away whilst some over complex rules are explained. This slows the progress that the children make. The school has an outside play area where children have good opportunities to extend their co-ordination through pedalling vehicles and climbing and skipping, but there are fewer opportunities for them to develop such skills during inclement weather.

## **Creative development**

72. Opportunities to take part in role-play are imaginative. The school has good resources to stimulate children's interest and to link with current classroom themes. Children enjoy playing in the nursery 'Igloo' and the reception 'DIY Store'. Here they take on different jobs like preparing for a journey in the cold regions of the world or the 'store manager' demonstrating how the battery driven tools work to a prospective 'customer'. Children enter fully into the activities with enthusiasm. Teaching and learning are good. In the nursery children have very good opportunities to choose from a wide range of tools and equipment. They are taught techniques such as paint

mixing, where adults question them carefully about how they managed to create a particular colour shade. They confidently apply paint to paper to create lines, patterns and portraits. During the inspection, a group of children carefully mixed paint and chose thin paintbrushes to copy the form of a tulip. This was a very good example of their ability to observe the flowers and mix paint to capture the quality, shade and texture of their shape and colour. Good teaching in the reception class enables pupils to continue their study of the textures of everyday materials by using them as printing tools. Adults demonstrate the skills of dipping the materials into paint, then carefully placing the materials onto pieces of paper and gently pressing them to create a print sample. Children safely and carefully use a good range of materials such as bubble wrap, sponge and corrugated card to create aesthetic patterns by carefully changing the colours of the paint. During this successful lesson, children quickly developed their creative skills to such a degree that they required a larger source of paper and more time to consolidate their work.

## ENGLISH

73. In the 2002 national tests taken by pupils in Year 2, standards in reading were above the average achieved by all schools nationally and by similar schools. In writing the standards attained were average. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 3 was average in reading but was below average in writing when compared to all and similar schools. Over the past five years standards have fluctuated in both reading and writing with a dip in 2000, but have improved steadily since then. Standards achieved in the tests are frequently adversely affected by the higher than usual number of traveller's children in the school, who have either had long periods of absence, or who are not present for the tests. This was true in the 2002 tests when three pupils in the cohort were affected. When this is taken into account the percentage of pupils achieving the expected levels in both reading and writing is well above average.
74. Inspection evidence shows that standards are above expectation for age at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. When pupils enter Year 1 standards are around average, although a significant minority of pupils achieves more highly. Throughout Key Stage 1 pupils' achievement is good. Pupils continue to make good progress, especially in Year 4, so that by the time they leave the school at the age of nine, many are achieving levels that are above or well above those expected for their age. Pupils who have special educational needs, and those from the traveller community make good progress because of the good support they receive. At the time of the last inspection attainment was judged to be average with a significant number of pupils achieving more highly by the age of nine. Since then standards have improved because of the greater number of pupils who achieve beyond the expected levels throughout the school.
75. In speaking and listening, pupils' attainment is higher than expectation for age at the end of Year 2 and Year 4, even though when they enter the school a significant minority has poor communication skills. Pupils make good progress because of the emphasis placed on developing their speaking and listening skills. In circle time and in other lessons pupils are provided with opportunities to talk to each other and to adults, to listen to stories and to participate in discussions. Younger pupils can talk about stories they have read and can impersonate the characters in a story, such as in a Year 1 lesson, where pupils made up dialogue to go with the story of The Fox and The Stork. Pupils in Year 2 can talk about the traditional tales they know. In Year 3, pupils were able to clearly explain their ideas for a sequel to a story and listened well to the ideas of others, using their suggestions in their own work. In this lesson pupils were able to present their ideas in a more formal way, using a 'hot seat' approach to

interview characters from a story. By Year 4 pupils can clearly explain their thoughts, ideas and feelings, for example when discussing poetry they have read.

76. Standards in reading are variable throughout the school, but overall are above expectation for age. Pupils in Year 1 read accurately, showing good understanding of what they have read and can use the text and the pictures to talk about the story. They can use their knowledge of letter sounds to sound out unfamiliar words. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 can read confidently with expression. Those of lower attainment are able to use skills taught in the literacy hour to help them, such as reading ahead to make sense of a passage, or using the pictures to give them clues. Pupils in Year 3 can read fluently and with expression. The higher attainers can identify their favourite authors such as Roald Dahl and Dick King-Smith, and can say why they like them. They know how books are organised and the purposes of a contents page, a glossary or an index. Pupils in Year 4 have good knowledge of different authors and have read a good range of books. However, although they can attempt to read difficult words and their knowledge of punctuation and structure is sound, many do not read as fluently as they might because the books they have chosen are too difficult for them. Consequently they do not always fully understand or follow the stories they read.
77. In writing pupils attain standards that are above expectation for age. Almost all pupils in Year 1 can spell simple three letter words correctly, and the higher attainers can spell longer words such as 'black', 'clown' and 'glove'. They know that a story has a beginning, a middle and an end, and the more able are beginning to structure their writing in this way, some with the support of a story map. By the time they are in Year 2 higher attaining pupils can write using correct sentence construction and punctuation, use adjectives for effect when writing descriptive passages and use a joined script. They can write for a range of purposes, such as instructions on how to make a paper hat, or descriptions of story settings. They can spell words of two syllables such as 'balloon' or 'walking'. Lower attaining pupils in Year 2 are beginning to use adjectives and to make reasonable attempts to spell correctly. Pupils in Year 3 can write a story with a clear structure, punctuating sentences correctly. By Year 4 most pupils can plan their work, making notes and producing a first draft to work on. They make good use of a range of adjectives, and structure their work well. The highest attainers are able to use paragraphs effectively, use a fluent, joined handwriting style and use similes and metaphors to make their writing more interesting. In an excellent Year 4 lesson pupils made very good use of their knowledge of language and structure to write poems about animals. Pupils of all abilities made very good attempts to create images with words, writing lines such as 'teeth like razor sharp jagged spears'.
78. Teaching in English is good in both key stages. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives that are shared with the pupils and re-visited at the end of the lesson to check on what has been learned. Tasks build well on prior learning to ensure that pupils make progress in a systematic way. Very good use is made of classroom assistants to support specific groups of pupils. In a Year 2 lesson for example the classroom assistant worked effectively with individual pupils of lower prior attainment, helping them to use a computer programme to improve their reading and writing skills. In a Year 4 lesson an assistant was very effectively deployed to challenge and encourage higher attaining pupils to use adventurous language in their poetry writing. Traveller pupils are supported well and are provided with appropriate work to help them make progress. Occasionally tasks are not as well matched and this slows down the learning. This was the case in a Year 2 lesson when expectations of pupils' independent writing were too low, resulting in a slower pace in

learning. In most lessons, however, clear explanations, well prepared resources and good relationships contribute to the good learning that takes place. In an excellent Year 4 lesson the teacher's subject knowledge and enthusiasm inspired the pupils to work enthusiastically when writing poems. Overall pupils respond well to their English lessons, working hard and co-operating well in groups or in pairs.

79. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has carefully reviewed standards and provision by analysing available data, looking at pupils' work and observing and supporting the teaching. This means that priorities for development have been established, resource needs identified and staff development planned and received. Although writing has been identified as an area for development there is a greater focus on developing pupils' reading skills in Key Stage 1, at the expense of time available for writing. More time spent on developing writing skills would enable pupils to make even better progress. This has been recognised by the school and plans are in place for continued development.
80. The literacy strategy is firmly embedded within the school and is used effectively to ensure that pupils have a daily lesson that focuses on developing their skills. Opportunities for pupils to use these skills in extended writing tasks are provided outside the literacy hour and this is having a positive impact on standards, particularly in Key Stage 2. Assessment in English is secure with a termly writing assessment carried out which is used to set targets and to re-group pupils. Marking is used well to inform pupils of what they need to do to improve. The subject provides good opportunities to work with parents. The library is open on two afternoons at the end of the school day so that children can select books with their parents, and parents also support by listening to their children read at home. English makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and cultural development. Books and poems from other cultures are explored, and the use of traditional tales from home and abroad encourages pupils to think about morals and values.

## **MATHEMATICS**

81. Since the last inspection, standards in mathematics have improved. In the most recent tests taken in 2002 standards at the end of Year 2 were above the national average and above those for similar schools. When the pupils leave the school at the age of nine, they are achieving above average standards in all areas of mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that these standards are likely to continue and the targets set for 2003 will be met. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls throughout the school.
82. The school's successful implementation of the national numeracy strategy and the subsequent professional development for staff has had a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. The subject leader co-ordinates the subject very well. She is effective and has worked well to improve the standards. She has monitored the teaching to see where improvements could be made. Results of tests are carefully analysed to see where pupils could achieve better. Another reason for the improvement in standards is that higher attaining pupils are given work that is at the correct level for them. This was an area for development identified in the last inspection. The school has rightly concentrated its efforts to remedy this on planning challenging tasks for higher attaining pupils to complete. A good example was seen in a Year 4 lesson when the higher attaining groups had to use their knowledge of fractions of a kilogram to solve word problems.



83. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in developing their number skills in relation to their prior attainment. This is because teachers plan work at the right level for them and they are given good support from the classroom assistants. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 2, the classroom assistant ensured that a traveller child took an active part in the lesson by encouraging him to write his number accurately on his whiteboard. Such questions as 'Which is the biggest number?' and 'What can we do next?' helped the child to consolidate addition facts. His self-esteem was raised by the praise and encouragement he received.
84. Pupils in Key Stage 1 develop a good knowledge of basic number. They learn to add and subtract numbers to 20 mentally and begin to try out different ways of calculating such as counting on or breaking numbers into tens and units to make the addition simpler. By Year 2, pupils accurately apply their number skills to money calculations. By the age of nine, the majority of pupils have a good understanding of number processes and place value. They cope well when multiplying and dividing by 10 and 100 and use different methods of calculation when solving problems. They can draw and interpret information from charts and graphs and work with co-ordinates.
85. Numeracy processes are taught well throughout the school. The mental arithmetic part at the beginning of the lesson is used well and provides a good focus for counting, using number multiples and refining pupils' mental agility in handling number. When pupils use whiteboards to record their answers, as was the case in a Year 3 lesson, their level of engagement is high. Pupils are taught a wide range of calculation strategies and are encouraged to explain how they have worked out their answers. Responses such as, 'I split the tens and units up before I began to add the number' show that the pupils understand what they are doing. They enjoy responding to teachers' questions which say, 'Can you do it another way?'
86. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. This is because of the good or very good teaching they receive, particularly in Years 2, 3 and 4. All teachers plan lessons carefully and make use of varied activities to keep the pupils interested and move the learning on. The tasks are generally well matched to the different abilities of the pupils. In a very good lesson in Year 2, pupils made good strides in understanding estimation because of the very good examples given by the teacher. Many pupils quickly grasped the concept and worked conscientiously and quietly throughout the lesson, estimating and recording their answers. With good support being given by the teacher and classroom assistant, pupils worked in groups to count the actual objects in the containers and worked out how close their estimates had been to the actual number. This practical task made the learning relevant for all pupils.
87. Another strength of the teaching is the way in which the things that are meant to be learned during the lessons are discussed with the pupils at the beginning. The success criteria are constantly referred to as the pupils are learning. The plenary sessions at the end of the lessons are used effectively to assess and review what the pupils have learned.
88. In most classes teachers manage the pupils well and pupils respond by working hard and behaving well. They enjoy mathematics and this makes them willing learners. Occasionally when younger pupils have been sitting on the carpet for too long they become restless and there is an over use of different strategies to maintain good behaviour.
89. All the areas of the mathematics curriculum are taught and opportunities are given for the pupils to extend their mathematical knowledge whilst using their mathematics in

different situations. In science, for example, the pupils arrange information in charts and graphs. Information and communication technology is used appropriately in some lessons as pupils use programs to help them develop their mathematical skills. Resources for the subject are good and teachers use them well to support the learning.

## SCIENCE

90. Standards attained by pupils in Year 2 are average and overall achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 4 make good progress overall and achieve standards that are above the levels expected for their age. Standards have improved in Year 4 since the previous inspection when they were judged to be average. This has been brought about by improvements in the subject documentation that give better guidance to planning, better resources, incorporation of investigations into the programmes of work and the very high quality of teaching in the Year 4 class. Higher attaining pupils are being challenged to work at the more advanced levels.
91. The teacher assessments in Year 2 were generally in line with the national standards for both the average and the higher levels in 2002. There was below average attainment at the national level in the study of 'Life Processes' and 'Materials and their Properties'. In other programmes of study, for example 'Experiment and Investigation' and 'Physical Processes', pupils achieved the national level. A contrasting pattern of results was achieved at the higher level. Attainment in the study of 'Materials and their Properties' was above the national level. It was well above in the study of 'Life Processes and Living Things', and pupils' attainment in the study of 'Physical Processes' was very high when compared with the national figures. In 'Experiments and Investigations' standards were in line with the expected levels. These variations are because there is a lack of balance in the planning for science in Key Stage 1 and teachers' assessments are not systematically guided by clear documentation about the scientific knowledge and understanding required to achieve a level of attainment.
92. Pupils in Year 2 have a satisfactory knowledge of scientific facts. They study the effects of bending and stretching materials to change their shape. However they do not identify those materials that return to their original shape, for example elastic and rubber, when the force is no longer applied to them. They complete tables of results but the teaching does not challenge the more advanced pupils. Pupils understand that certain appliances such as ovens and televisions are powered by mains electricity whilst other devices such as calculators and many toys are battery powered. They are aware that mains electricity can be harmful and know that a battery driven electrical circuit has to be complete for a bulb to be lit.
93. Pupils in Year 4 have a good knowledge and understanding of scientific facts. The teaching introduces this knowledge thoroughly and brings science to life with practical experiments. Pupils have good skills in carrying out investigations. They work together well and handle equipment carefully. However, the recording of these investigations is not always systematically completed. More advanced pupils are being challenged to work at the higher levels. Pupils show good knowledge, for example of the function of muscles and the skeleton. They successfully organise fair tests to investigate the insulation properties of everyday materials, reading thermometers accurately, compiling tables of results and analysing them through the drawing up of bar charts. Although this is accurate work, the pupils do not use the data handling application of ICT to complete this task and they do not use sensing devices to support their measurement of temperature change. These are missed opportunities.

94. Teachers take great care to see that less able pupils and those with special educational needs take a full part in the lessons. They make sure that everyone is included in the discussions and give advice where it is needed. They make good progress. The more advanced pupils make very good progress in Year 4. The needs of travellers' children are addressed through the additional support they receive.
95. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1 teachers manage pupils well and use learning support assistants effectively. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to discussions. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, they contributed to the preparation of a cake mix by measuring out ingredients. Adults demonstrated the effect of irreversible change by placing most of the mixture in the oven, keeping part of the mixture in the classroom, then challenging the children to make predictions. Similar activities were organised as part of the children's preparation for making clay pots. Some children answered a teacher's question by saying that 'clay will melt if it is held in the teacher's hand'. More advanced pupils predicted that 'it will dry out and go hard'. However, the opportunities to set up an investigation to test this prediction were not followed up. Pupils systematically complete their work but there is an over reliance on worksheets that prevents them from developing their own independent styles and following up their own ideas. There is a need for higher expectations and more practical work so that pupils can achieve higher standards.
96. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is good overall. Lessons are clearly planned, resources are available and brisk explanations by the teachers ensure that pupils know what to do. Pupils co-operate well during their investigations. In Year 3 they sustain their concentration and enjoy their learning as they develop their skills of fair testing to find the strongest points of a magnet by hanging paper clips from different parts.
97. Pupils in Year 4 are challenged to take full responsibility for devising their investigation such as into procedures for separating various mixtures by sieving, filtering and the use of magnetism. Pupils are challenged to consider the properties of the materials in the planning of their investigations.
98. Pupils work together well, particularly in Key Stage 2. Excellent collaboration between small groups of pupils was observed as they decided to separate a mixture of marbles and polystyrene by means of immersing it in water. Their prediction was accurate and, whilst the marbles sank, the polystyrene floated and could be skimmed off. Other children refined their experiments when their mixture of both rice and marbles sank in the container of water, deciding to repeat the experiment by using a sieve. In these investigative environments, teachers take on the role of expert observers, intervening to help the pupils order their thinking and to improve and extend their investigations. In Year 3 pupils are showing sound progress in recording their results. Year 4 pupils carefully record how they complete their investigations using labelled diagrams, writing up notes of their results and compiling a written report. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the teachers' high expectations and make excellent progress to identify the qualities of the materials they are studying then use them as a basis for their practical investigation.
99. The recently appointed subject co-ordinator is managing change well. New resources have been acquired to support teachers' planning and introduce more practical work. The co-ordinator is currently drawing up plans to improve the accuracy of assessment procedures, extending them to support the regular assessments that

are carried out at the end of each unit of work. The programmes of work are now being more effectively planned through the identification of steps of progression within the scientific programmes.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

100. Standards in art and design are broadly typical of those found in most schools. These standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.
101. Pupils are given opportunities to acquire skills using a range of media such as paint, crayon, tissue, computer images and clay. They explore pattern, texture, colour and line and learn to apply these skills in a variety of ways. Year 1 pupils, for example, have completed observational drawings of old toys as part of their work in history. The drawings show good attention to proportion. Information and communication technology is used well to supplement the work in art and design. In the lesson seen in Year 3, pupils were using a computer program to print out patterns as an extension to their topic on exploring pattern and shape. Other pupils produced good quality repeating patterns using different coloured paper. In this lesson pupils with special educational needs and travellers' children were fully included in all activities and made progress that was commensurate with their peers.
102. Pupils' work is enhanced by opportunities to watch local artists at work. For example, a local sculptor has been in school working with Key Stage 2 pupils. The banner created for the Millennium is a good example of collaborative artwork depicting the different aspects of God's Creation. Every class in the school contributed to the finished product. Pupils are able to extend their interest, knowledge and understanding of art in a wider perspective by looking at books and examples of art from different cultures. The work of famous artists is studied, for example pupils in Year 1 have recently looked at the work of Picasso.
103. The co-ordinator has been in post for some time and provides satisfactory support by giving informal guidance to colleagues and by seeing that the resources are up to date. However, there is no agreed system of assessing the progress that pupils make and so skills are not always built on from year to year.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

104. Standards in design and technology are broadly typical of those found in most schools. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in learning how to work with tools, materials and components.
105. Pupils in Key Stage 1 develop an early understanding of the design process and how to record their ideas. In Year 2, for example, when they were designing their puppets, pupils commented that designs needed labels and a list of materials as 'Otherwise you would not know what your model would look like or what you need to make it.'
106. Throughout the school pupils enjoy designing and making and show much interest in what they are asked to do. They are given a range of materials to use. Infant pupils become competent in cutting, attaching and decorating paper and card as well as the techniques of stitching or gluing materials together. Year 2 pupils successfully sewed pieces of felt together when they were making their puppets. Very good teaching and use of the support assistant ensured that the pupils did their best work. Comments such as 'Keep your template very still on the felt!' ensured that good results were

produced during the lesson. Pupils who have special educational needs and those from the travellers community benefit from the good support they receive.

107. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 2, but evidence from displays and scrutiny of previous work, shows that an appropriate range of work is covered and that pupils learn to evaluate their products. Year 3 pupils, for example, have been investigating packaging and have designed boxes. Year 4 pupils have designed and made money containers.
108. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over the management of the subject and has not yet been able to have an impact on standards. One detailed assessment of a completed piece of work is carried out each year but this is an area for development as the progress that pupils make in developing their skills is not systematically assessed or recorded. The school has adopted the nationally recommended scheme for the subject and this helps teachers to plan appropriately. There is a satisfactory range of tools, equipment and materials that are used to support the learning.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

109. Standards achieved in geography are in line with expectation for age in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. When they start in Year 1 pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world is at a level expected for their age. Throughout the school they make steady progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils who have special educational needs also make satisfactory progress.
110. Pupils in Year 1 can identify some of the geographical features in the local environment such as the river, bridge and church. They also know about some of the jobs that people do, such as the school secretary. They demonstrate some understanding of a simple map and some pupils have plotted their journey from home to school. They have talked about how to make the school safer, such as by encouraging visitors not to bring their cars on to the school site. Pupils in Year 2 have used the 'Katie Morag' stories to learn about geographical features such as an island, hill, mountain and river. They can compare the island to their own home and have looked at maps of the United Kingdom that identify Scottish islands and Bedlington. They can identify the types of transport that would be needed to get to and around the island, and know that transport used often depends on the length of the journey to be made. Higher attaining pupils can independently draw and describe a route across the island and the features they would see.
111. Pupils in Year 3 have studied the weather around the world and know some facts about temperature and conditions. They know some symbols that are used on weather maps and can identify some countries on a map of the world. They can find information about places using books, brochures and the Internet, and can identify positive and negative features in terms of suitability for a holiday. Higher attaining pupils extend this knowledge by giving more detail, such as 'Malta has a lovely climate', and 'Cornwall is a good place for a holiday because of the nice beaches'. Pupils in Year 4 identify climate zones on a world map. They have used local maps to give directions and know some of the ordinance survey signs and symbols used for such things as a church, wood or lighthouse.
112. Teaching in geography is good. Lessons are well planned and prepared with clear intended learning outcomes that are shared with the pupils. Good references are made to prior learning in lessons enabling pupils to consolidate what they know and to

build on their understanding. Interesting tasks are provided, such as making holiday brochures, and this promotes pupils' interest and keeps them motivated. Good use is made of opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills through labelling drawings and discussing how the layout of a brochure helps to locate information. Teachers are careful to use and promote geographical vocabulary. Pupils' learning is good. They demonstrate good attitudes to learning in the way that they concentrate, respond and work co-operatively together.

113. The leadership and management of geography are satisfactory. The co-ordinator carries out some monitoring of the subject and has established that assessment is in need of further development so that pupils' progress can be more accurately tracked as they move through the school. Resources for the subject are good, and good use is made of the local environment and visits to places such as St Mary's Lighthouse and a garden centre to bring the curriculum to life. Pupils' personal and social development is promoted through opportunities for group work, and the study of other places makes a positive contribution to their cultural development.

## **HISTORY**

114. Standards achieved in history are above average in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Because of the good provision that is made, and a clear focus on developing pupils' skills of enquiry as well as their factual knowledge and understanding of the subject, pupils make good progress throughout the school. Pupils who have special educational needs make equally good progress as their peers. At the time of the previous inspection standards were judged to be in line with expectation for age. Progress since then has been good.
115. By the age of seven, pupils have a good understanding of historical events such as The Great Fire of London and know facts relating to it such as when, where and how it started. They also understand differences between that time in history and the present. Pupils in Year 1 have developed a good understanding of the differences between the past and the present through their study of old and new toys. They have used both primary sources, such as looking at old toys and talking to older people about them, and secondary sources such as photographs, books and the Internet, to develop skills of enquiry and extend their knowledge. By the time they leave the school at the age of nine pupils have a very good knowledge of local history, particularly during Victorian times. Through studying photographs of Bedlington in this era alongside those from the present day, they have identified differences and attempted to explain why these have occurred. For example, the doorways in Victorian times were often wider to allow horses and carts through. Pupils have made very good use of census information from 1851 and 1891 to learn about changes that occurred during that period, developing skills and understanding above those achieved by most pupils of their age. In Year 3, pupils have learned about The Romans at a depth and range beyond that usually found.
116. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. Lessons are very well planned, prepared and resourced, for example in a Year 1 lesson the teacher had provided a very good range of old toys for pupils to study. Lessons build well on pupils' prior attainment so that they systematically develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge, for example the Year 4 teacher demonstrated very good knowledge of the history of the local area and of Victorian times. The subject is often used well by teachers to develop speaking and listening skills through discussing artefacts and pictures, and writing skills through writing accounts such as 'My life as a miner', and taking notes from information

provided. Pupils respond well to the good teaching and their learning is good. They show genuine interest and enthusiasm for the subject and are keen to contribute their ideas and share their knowledge. For example one pupil in Year 4 had carried out his own research at home and found out that there used to be a workhouse in Bedlington.

117. The leadership and management of history are good. The long-term plan, drawn up by the co-ordinator and based on the national guidance, ensures that the subject is covered well. Assessment procedures have been developed, although there is still some work to be done in implementing these and using the information gained to keep more accurate records of what pupils know, understand and can do. The curriculum is enhanced well by visits to places of historical interest such as a Roman fort and Beamish museum. A strong feature is the use of the local area for historical study, and the links made through this to developing skills and understanding in geography. Visitors to the school also enhance the curriculum and bring the learning to life for pupils, for example parents and grandparents visited the Year 1 class to talk about their toys, and the Year 4 class was expecting a visit from a local historian to talk about the area. Good links have been established with the local middle school to ensure continuity and progression. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal and social development because they often have to co-operate in pairs and small groups, and sometimes are expected to make presentations to the class about what they have found out. Their cultural development is also extended because they learn about their own local culture and how it has developed, and about the lives and traditions of people from other times and places.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

118. Standards in Year 2 and at age 9 are average. Overall achievement is satisfactory. Although this appears to be the same standards as at the last inspection, provision has improved because teachers have attended training which has improved their confidence and subject knowledge and the school has purchased up to date computers enabling more sophisticated software to be introduced. All classrooms now have access to the Internet.
119. By the age of seven, pupils are confident users of the computer and other technology, such as tape recorders, cameras and dictaphones. In Year 2, they use word processing well when they write letters. Children use the mouse skilfully to lift pictures of animals onto the screen to illustrate their research. Pupils successfully explore the facilities of a painting programme to create complex symmetrical patterns, linking this work to their studies in mathematics.
120. By the age of nine, pupils use computers for a suitable range of purposes. They use desktop publishing procedures very effectively to produce a 'School Journal'. This project, together with the 'Study of a Wasteland Area' in their locality, was also produced using information and communication technology techniques. These examples are very good and include high quality techniques of organising accurately punctuated and edited text into columns and the inclusion of digital photographs and other illustrations. Data handling techniques, including the organising of information collected from questionnaires and its analysis using block graphs, are of very good quality. This work is a very good example of the use of information and communication technology across many subjects.
121. The school has identified many opportunities for information and communication technology to be used in other subjects, for example, appropriate software is used in English and mathematics to help pupils make good progress. This is particularly

valuable for those children with special educational needs as they can receive immediate feedback on the accuracy of their work.

122. Older pupils often use the Internet to search for information during their geographical studies, using menus to locate information about holiday resorts. The Year 4 pupils apply their data handling skills in their history studies to organise the information collected from census materials as they compare life in present day Bedlington with Victorian Times. In these circumstances, pupils are effectively applying their recently learned information and communication technology skills.
123. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There were few opportunities to see lessons and when the teaching of information and communication technology was observed, it was good. Teachers show good subject knowledge and tasks and procedures are carefully explained and demonstrated. However, the absence of any 'white board technology' makes it necessary for half the class to follow the teacher demonstration using only one machine. For example, the lack of sufficient computers to enable all pupils to input quickly the information they had collected about themselves, resulted in the information already being entered by the teacher and the classroom assistant. This prevented the pupils from practising these procedures. Good organisation and the deployment of a skilled learning support assistant enabled pupils to work in small groups in the corridor using two computers. Here they quickly settled to their task working in a group of four, watching other members of the group complete the task, giving support and advice if required as they patiently waited for their turn.
124. New computers have been purchased and, when those currently on order arrive, the school's provision will be close to the advised minimum ratio. The large class sizes together with the comparatively small area of many classrooms, and the lack of sufficient mains electricity power points, makes it difficult to incorporate more than one computer safely into each class. This is partly alleviated by placing computers outside classrooms. The lack of a computer suite or the availability of 'lap top technology' prevents teachers from accessing computer technology immediately when its use would be valuable. This school has recognised this and plans are in place to develop an information and communication technology suite of up to fifteen machines.
125. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator gives good support to staff, advising on appropriate software, and seeking training opportunities on their behalf. She is currently improving the school's assessment procedures, linking them more closely with those recommended by the local authority.



## MUSIC

126. Standards are in line with expectation for age at both key stages. Pupils make steady progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils who have special educational needs make progress that is as good as other pupils.
127. In Key Stage 1, pupils are able to keep a steady beat in time to music they listen to, by clapping in time and playing percussion instruments such as tambourines, drums and claves. They are beginning to understand the difference between a steady beat and a rhythm, and can play rhythms on the percussion instruments. The higher attaining pupils are able to keep a short rhythmic pattern going throughout a song, so providing an ostinato accompaniment. They recognise and sing a range of simple songs, singing quite tunefully and in time.
128. In Key Stage 2, pupils demonstrate an awareness of phrases in the songs that they sing, listening to their efforts by recording their voices. They can also identify how they could improve. They can use appropriate musical vocabulary and use tuned percussion instruments to copy and play a short tune or phrase. They listen to a range of music and can identify their likes and dislikes and say how the music makes them feel. They can also use a computer programme to help them compose short pieces.
129. Teaching in music is satisfactory overall, but gaps in subject knowledge and lack of confidence on the part of some teachers inhibits better than satisfactory progress. However teachers do make good use of a commercial scheme of work to support them, and this ensures that pupils make steady progress and that all aspects of the curriculum are covered. Lessons are appropriately planned to build on prior learning, intended learning outcomes are clear and are shared with pupils, and praise is used effectively to encourage pupils to try hard and improve their performance. In Year 1 expectations are particularly high and explanations clear.
130. Leadership and management of music are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is new in post, having taken responsibility for the subject only three weeks before the inspection. Music has not been a recent priority for development, but the scheme of work reflects the national guidance and the long-term plan for the subject ensures a good balance between all aspects. The co-ordinator recognises that in order to make better use of the commercial scheme of work, and to improve staff expertise, training is needed. She has not as yet had sufficient time to monitor the subject and to identify precisely what needs to be done to secure improvement, but is aware that more resources are needed. Assessment activities have been planned but not yet implemented.
131. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' cultural development through listening to the music of other cultures. For example pupils in Year 2 have listened to salsa music, and Year 4 to aboriginal music. Around half of the pupils participate in guitar or keyboard lessons offered by the local education authority and this makes a positive contribution to the development of their performance skills.
132. Now that a new co-ordinator has been appointed, monitoring activities have been planned and staff confidence is improving with the support of the scheme of work, there is every indication that standards in music have the potential to improve.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. Standards in physical education are in line with those expected nationally. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress throughout the school. These standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Over the year, pupils take part in a range of activities in dance, gymnastics and games. Pupils attend swimming lessons in Year 4 and achieve good results. The vast majority can swim and over half can already swim over 25 metres, which is the distance expected at the end of Year 6.
134. Pupils achieve steadily throughout the school. They understand the effects that exercise has on their bodies and are aware of the importance of warming up exercises prior to beginning skills practise. For example, in a lesson in Year 1, the teacher asked the pupils to feel their hearts after the warm-up to show how they were beating faster. In Year 2, the pupils showed good ball control and had a good awareness of space. The teaching enabled the pupils to develop their skills during the lesson. In the good dance lesson observed in Year 3, the pupils were given the opportunities to evaluate their own performances and comment on each other's. This had the double impact of raising their own performances and evaluating other pupils' work. One pupil was heard to say 'I am showing you how I can proudly prowl like a lion!'. In all the lessons, pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all the activities.
135. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are planned effectively and have a good structure. Generally teachers manage the pupils well and they respond by taking part enthusiastically and behaving well. Occasionally when teachers talk for too long and pupils have to sit still and listen, they become restless and their behaviour suffers as a result. This was evident in the lesson observed in Year 1. Teachers always present themselves as good role models by dressing appropriately for the lessons and paying due attention to safe working practices.
136. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has developed a scheme of work that helps teachers to plan their lessons and ensures that pupils are able to develop their skills. Plans for assessment have yet to be implemented. Resources for the subject are satisfactory.