

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST PAUL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY
AIDED FIRST SCHOOL**

Cramlington

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122310

Headteacher: Mrs A Dawes

Reporting inspector: George Brown
21060

Dates of inspection: 16th – 19th June 2003

Inspection number: 248342

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: | 4 - 9 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Doddington Drive Cramlington Northumberland |
| Postcode: | NE23 6DF |
| Telephone number: | 01670 713553 |
| Fax number: | 01670 713553 |
| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Father R B Harriott |
| Date of previous inspection: | February 1998 |

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|---------------|----------------------|---|--|
| 21060 | Mr G Brown | Registered inspector | Science History Geography The Foundation Stage English as an additional language | The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Leadership and management Key issues for action |
| 13723 | Mrs J Overend | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers |
| 30954 | Mr B Ashcroft | Team inspector | Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Physical education Educational inclusion | Quality and range of opportunities for learning |
| 18370 | Mr K Johnson | Team inspector | English Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs | Teaching and learning |

The inspection contractor was:

Primary Associates Limited
Suite 13
West Lancashire Technology Management Centre
Moss Lane View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

Page

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

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

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Paul's is a voluntary aided Catholic first school for pupils aged between 4 and 9-years-old. Located towards the centre of Cramlington New Town, it draws its pupils from the two adjacent parishes of St Paul's Cramlington and St John's Annitsford, as well as more outlying areas. Approximately 83 per cent of pupils come from Catholic backgrounds. There are 153 full-time pupils on roll and a further 25 4-year-olds who attend school part-time. With the exception of the youngest children and some Year 1 pupils, most pupils are taught in single age classes. A very small number are of Mixed or Asian background (Urdu speaking) and no pupil is at an early stage of learning English. A below average number of pupils (currently 9 per cent) is entitled to free school meals and a well below average number of pupils have special educational needs, some of whom have autism, moderate learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties. Three pupils have statements of special educational needs. A significant number of children are below average on entry to the reception class. The aims of the school centre on its mission statement and the need for the whole school community to be seen as part of the Christian family. The Gospel values form the heart of school life where individual pupils can flourish and realise their full potential.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Paul's is a very good school that lives out its aims and values very effectively. Pupils achieve very well and make rapid progress across the school, enabling them to reach mainly above average standards by the time they are 7 and 9-years-old. There is a strong Christian ethos of care, teamwork and commitment among all who work among the pupils. The quality of teaching and learning is good and the school is very ably led and managed by the headteacher, senior staff and governors. Given pupils' attainment on entry and the subsequent standards they reach, the school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- By the end of Years 2 and 4, pupils' standards are above those expected for their age in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and art and design;
- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage (early years and reception) is well organised and ensures they make a good start to their school lives;
- The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good across the school and plays a significant part in the standards reached by the pupils;
- The quality of leadership offered by the headteacher is very good and provides the key to a strong and influential management team;
- The arrangements made for pupils' learning (the curriculum) are very good. Learning opportunities are generally exciting, rich and varied, ensuring pupils grow in confidence, knowledge and skills as they move through the school;
- Effective provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress towards their individual targets;
- Considerable emphasis is placed on the personal development of the pupils including the excellent provision made for their spiritual, moral and social development. This helps to create excellent working relationships and a very positive working environment. Pupil's behaviour is also excellent and they show great enthusiasm for learning.

What could be improved

- Standards of handwriting and the general presentation of pupils' work.

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 very good progress since it was last inspected in February 1998. Pupils' standards have risen and the curriculum has become better organised and planned for. The quality of teaching and learning has improved considerably, particularly as staff have become more reflective about their performance in relation to pupils' needs. National initiatives such as the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and new forms of staff appraisal (performance management) have all been integrated well into school practice. Areas identified as requiring some improvement in 1998 have been strengthened to good effect. Investigational work in science is now more challenging for younger pupils and teachers' expectations have been raised as to the standards younger pupils can reach in literacy. The work pupils undertake with many types of books has also improved and reading is now an overall strength of the school. The emphasis on pupils' thinking skills has strengthened considerably as has the teachers' knowledge as to how best pupils learn.

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 | B | C | A | A | well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E |
| writing | D | A | C | C | |
| mathematics | A | A | C | D | |

The outcomes of inspection show that by the end of Year 2, pupils achieve very well and reach above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Although the results of statutory tests indicate a picture more typical of fluctuating standards in these areas, the current position is stronger than this, as the impact of more accurate target setting and better teaching, not least among higher attaining pupils, begins to take effect. The indicative results of the national tests taken in 2003, suggest a further strengthening of standards in writing and mathematics. More pupils are currently reaching the higher levels for their age and the school's emphasis on writing and mathematics has also strengthened attainment in these areas. The general trend in test results is now upward. By the end of Year 4, pupils have also made good progress and achieve very well. Many reach standards above that expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. Standards in ICT and art and design are good by the end of Years 2 and 4 and junior pupils do particularly well in history. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well set against their individual targets, as do pupils with English as an additional language. The school continues to meet its targets and these reflect high expectations in the future.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Very good. Pupils work hard and are enthusiastic learners. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Excellent. Pupils respond to high expectations and their behaviour and conduct around the school is often exemplary. |
| Personal development and relationships | Excellent. The highly supportive Christian ethos helps to promote excellent working relationships. The development of the whole child is central to the school's aims and pupils mature very well over time. |

| | |
|------------|--|
| Attendance | Satisfactory. The absence or lateness of a few pupils is receiving attention as this could affect the efficient start to the school day. |
|------------|--|

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Early Years 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.

The quality of teaching and learning is good across the school. This leads to pupils achieving well and making good and sometimes very good progress over time. In the early years and reception classes, teachers are successful in placing their emphasis on children learning important key skills in literacy and numeracy. Pupils across the school are taught to apply their 'thinking skills' in a mature way and there are high expectations as to their work ethic and the targets they are likely to achieve. Teachers plan their lessons well and employ a wide range of methods and resources that maintains pupils' interest and teaches them the importance of their own role in learning. Lessons are generally brisk because of the effort pupils make and because they are managed and organised well. Effective use is made of all available adults. Teachers know the needs of their pupils and support them further by the good use of ongoing assessments which indicate clearly the point reached in their learning. Good use is made of homework to reinforce learning in several subjects. The teaching of literacy, numeracy and science is consistently good and leads to above average standards. Teaching and learning in all other subjects is at least satisfactory and it is good in art and design and ICT across the school and in history in the junior years.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Very good overall. The statutory curriculum is enriched further by after school activities and educational visits. There is also good emphasis on pupils' thinking skills and health education. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good. Pupils likely to experience difficulties are identified early and are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Good. They are well supported and achieve as well as the rest of their class. The monitoring of their progress is also good leading to well defined targets which are clearly met. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Excellent overall, particularly the provision for spiritual, moral and social development. These are an accurate reflection of the school's ethos and values which celebrate the worth and importance of individuals. Cultural provision is good and pupils understand the need for racial harmony and are well prepared for life in a diverse society. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Very good overall, including matters relating to child protection and pupils' welfare. Health and safety assessments are carried out regularly, including the safe use of the Internet. The procedures for monitoring behaviour and the avoidance of bullying are both excellent. The monitoring of attendance could be stronger. The assessment of pupils' standards, including the levels they reach, is very good as is the use made of results to set challenging targets for learning. |

Parents' views of the school are very supportive and many play an important role in partnership with the school in helping their children to learn and develop.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Very good. The headteacher provides clear educational direction and, with others, ensures that the school is developing well and is an enjoyable and challenging place in which to learn. A strong and committed team of staff support the vision of the headteacher and help meet the aims of the school. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Good. The well established governing body meets its statutory requirements, acts well on the strengths and weaknesses of the school and provides good quality support to staff and pupils. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Very good and a strength of the current administration. A school that is always trying to self-improve through careful monitoring and establishing new priorities as the needs of the school change. |
| The strategic use of resources | Very good. Available finance is well directed and managed. The most efficient options are chosen to help the school get best value for its pupils from its resources. Good, stable levels of staffing are in place. The accommodation and educational resources are good and used well to promote learning. |

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The standards of the pupils and the progress they make; • The quality of teaching including all the many ways that their children are supported; • The high expectations that children should do well, play fair and work hard; • The school is helping pupils to think for themselves and to take on increasingly wide responsibilities; • The able way the school is led and managed and the support offered to parents with their queries or offers to help. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents feel they could be better informed as to how their child is getting on. |

The inspection supports the many positive views expressed by parents and recognises many of these to be strengths of the school. The opportunities given to parents to follow and question their child's progress through the school are good and within the range expected for schools of this type and size.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. A significant number of children enter school with below average standards, particularly in language, mathematical development and aspects of their personal development. Almost all children go on to achieve very well due mainly to the good organisation and teaching within the Foundation Stage, that is the provision for all early years and reception children. By the time they reach the end of their reception year, most children are on course to attain the standards anticipated for their age in all areas of learning. Several show particular strengths in speaking and listening and in their all round personal development.
2. The school's provision for Foundation Stage children has continued to grow and improve since the previous inspection. The curriculum is organised well and there is particularly successful emphasis on the teaching and learning of essential early skills that children will use higher up the school. Children of nursery age (the part-time early years class) settle quickly into school routines and are quick to grow in confidence. The part played by a team of experienced classroom assistants is highly significant in this respect. The basic skills of many children are built on carefully during their reception year, including good enrichment of their knowledge and understanding of the world.
3. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 also achieve very well and make rapid strides as they move through the school. This is illustrated in their everyday work as well as in the national and optional tests they take in Years 2 and 4. The results of the 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 showed that they scored well above average in reading and science and broadly average in writing and mathematics. In relation to similar schools, pupils scored well above average in reading and science, broadly average in writing, but below average in mathematics. The school's performance dipped to average or below in 2002, mainly as the result of fewer pupils than usual obtaining the higher levels for their age. The presence of some new pupils or those with special educational needs, also affected the school's overall performance. Looking at the school's performance over time (1998 - 2002) pupils' results have been generally good, with boys and girls exceeding the national average for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Indicative results from 2003, suggest that standards are set to rise again, a position that was confirmed during the inspection.
4. Although no statutory tests are given to Year 4 pupils in English, mathematics and science, the results of optional tests, combined with inspection outcomes, give a convincing picture that significant numbers are likely to reach standards higher than those expected for their age. Pupils' skills are well developed and teachers are careful to build on existing knowledge and understanding. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 also achieve well because of the impact of their own endeavours, most working hard to reach or exceed their targets.
5. The successful adoption of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has helped to raise standards since the previous inspection. Pupils learn at a brisk pace in English and mathematics and apply their skills well. In speaking and listening, many pupils in Years 2 and 4 show confidence and clarity beyond their age and reading skills are applied very successfully to help extend learning across a wide range of other

subjects, including history and geography. The school's recent emphasis on the achievements of above average pupils has paid off in terms of the proportion who currently reach the higher levels for their age. Pupils' writing is suitably varied and aimed at different audiences. Spelling and grammar are also secure for most pupils. However, standards of handwriting and general presentation are often the weakest aspect of pupils' attainment, and additional effort and teacher input are needed in these areas. In mathematics, pupils show particular strengths in their understanding of the number system and in developing a wide range of mental strategies to help them work accurately and at speed. The ability of pupils to solve problems has also improved, as has their general use and application of number across the curriculum. Standards in other aspects of mathematics, such as shape and measure, are most often good.

6. In science, pupils reach above average standards by the end of Years 2 and 4. Those in Year 2 retain a particularly good knowledge and understanding of their topics and know how to carry out a wide range of science investigations. By the end of Year 4, most use their previous knowledge well to help develop new skills and a greater understanding of topics. Some have a good grasp of how to undertake a genuine science enquiry involving predictions, careful observations and in being able to say why things turn out as they do. A relative weakness remains in presentation, whereby too many pupils show below average standards when recording their work, particularly when they complete worksheets.
7. Pupils across the school achieve well in ICT and, by the end of Years 2 and 4, many reach above the expected standards for their age. Most have good computer skills and can store and retrieve information very readily. When given the opportunity, many are able to use ICT skills to support successfully their learning in other subjects.
8. Due to the strength of the curriculum, the overall quality of teaching and learning and the sheer effort of the pupils themselves, standards in all other subjects are at least in line with those anticipated for their age. Standards in art and design are above average as are those in history by the end of Year 4. A further strength in attainment is the way pupils are currently using their 'thinking skills.' Together with 'philosophy', which teaches them to debate and argue a case, pupils are being trained very effectively to think about positive involvement in their own learning process.
9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their individual targets for learning and personal development. There are several examples where pupils, who formerly were only able to cope in small groups, now work comfortably as part of a whole class. Teachers' records show that pupils make good progress in basic number and literacy skills and achieve well. Although the school could usefully raise its horizons in relation to the most gifted and talented pupils, learning expectations on the average and above average pupils are very secure. The different work set ensures pupils make good progress and achieve very well, particularly relative to their below average standards on entry to the school. Pupils with English as an additional language also do well. The school's 'inclusive' policy has been well thought through and is working successfully.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The high standards of behaviour, attitudes, relationships and personal development that were reported in the previous inspection, have all been improved further. Only attendance has declined slightly. This is a very happy school with a purposeful and caring ethos that has helped create among the pupil's very good attitudes to work

and to each other. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents were sure that bullying was not an issue and that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.

11. In the early years and reception classes, children attitudes to learning are frequently very good. Excellent relationships are constantly encouraged and modeled well by staff. The clear routines and very good classroom management ensure that children settle quickly and become confident learners who are keen to explore new learning. This was seen when the reception children, working in groups, had to join up and draw minibeasts to compare and contrast their features. They were willing to offer suggestions and justify the connections they were making whilst working productively as a small group. Pupils in all classes are very enthusiastic learners who concentrate well on their activities and use their listening skills very well. This significantly sharpens their learning and progress. An example of this was seen in a Year 2 English lesson using a text about the local heroine, Grace Darling. The quality of the pupils' debate, combined with listening skills, were so good that the rate and quality of learning about the text were improved.
12. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and is having a very positive effect on their learning. Behaviour is often exemplary at playtime where pupils show very high levels of discipline for their age whilst still enjoying their play. In lessons, most pupils show very clearly that they understand the effect of their behaviour on others and on their learning and are very willing to rise to the very high standards expected of them. Pupils move sensibly round the school and choose to be courteous and helpful to visitors and to each other. They are very respectful of conventions, such as in acts of worship, where they listen carefully or participate in the singing, prayers or other activities. There has been one exclusion in the past 12 months.
13. Relationships throughout the school are excellent and this permeates through all aspects of school life, contributing richly to the learning, quality of life and pupils' personal development. Most work extremely successfully in pairs or small groups, co-operating productively. In a Year 3 science lesson, the group discussions on the optimum requirements for plant growth and the planning of fair test criteria for living things increased the pupils' learning of experimental processes. Pupils' personal development is also excellent. The responsibility given to Year 4 children in the 'Buddy' system provides excellent opportunities for initiative and is very popular with parents and children alike. Pupils show a remarkable appreciation of their role to prevent loneliness or bullying and perform their duties admirably. The Year 4 pupils in particular, provide very good role models for younger children. Pupils also have an opportunity to use their initiative when they produce the school newspaper. Many show a very high level of awareness of the needs of others both in the school and in the wider community. This is seen in their generous response to charitable initiatives such as the 'Shoe Box Appeal', about which Year 4 pupils speak with considerable feeling and sensitivity.
14. Attendance has fallen since the previous inspection and is currently in line with the national average. However, there has been a rise in the number of parents taking their children on holiday during term time and there is some danger of putting their progress at risk, as work missed is often hard to catch up. Some parents have rather a casual attitude to making sure their children arrive punctually and this also can be a barrier to learning both for their children and their classmates if the start of the day is regularly disrupted. Registrations are undertaken correctly and there is little unauthorised absence.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Three out of every four observed lessons was good or better and there was a significant amount of very good teaching. There was also a very small amount of outstanding teaching and no lessons were less than satisfactory. The high standards seen in the previous inspection have been maintained and strengthened, in that a larger proportion of lessons are now judged to be good or very good. The quality of teaching remains a vital factor in pupils' progress and the standards they achieve.
16. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is good. There is a very good ratio of staff to children and this is used to good effect with several skilled adults able to support children's needs at any one time. There is strong emphasis on the teaching and learning of key skills and most activities are designed well for children to develop and practise these systematically. Teaching covers all the areas anticipated for young children and is careful to target individual learning according to the children's needs and experiences. The management and organisation of the children is also a strength of overall provision. All staff observe carefully what children can do and keep accurate records of children's progress and achievements.
17. Literacy and numeracy are taught well across all age groups. The school has fully embraced the National Strategies for these subjects and ensured that teachers have met the relevant training requirements. As a result, English and mathematics lessons are planned well and delivered at a brisk pace. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, so pupils are challenged by the work prepared for them and consequently make good progress and achieve very well. Pace and challenge were, for example, very strong features of an English lesson whereby pupils were continually engaged in learning in a variety of ways. Pupils worked collaboratively to discuss answers, used whiteboards to record joint decisions and completed short, but very focused written tasks as well as extended exercises. By the end of the lesson, all pupils could use colons and semicolons correctly in order to link ideas in sentences.
18. The quality of teaching and learning is good in art and design and in ICT across the school. It is also good in history among junior pupils. In all these subjects, the teachers use their own knowledge, skills and enthusiasms to good effect and these impact well on learning.
19. All teachers have high expectations of pupils' progress in learning and personal development. They plan work carefully to make sure pupils with different abilities are challenged at the right level. There is, however, no able and gifted register that would identify pupils who perhaps would benefit from a sometimes different approach. Teachers set targets for achievement within the lesson, either by making expectations clear or sometimes by using a timer to speed up pupils' problem solving skills. The aims of lessons are shared with the pupils so that they are fully aware of the standards expected of them. Teachers and pupils reflect on the aims again at the end of most sessions and this is a valuable form of assessment for both as to what has been achieved. A variety of teaching methods are chosen and this tends to motivate pupils because their interest is sustained. A recent initiative in the school is the focus on the developing pupils' 'thinking skills.' Teachers use open questioning which requires pupils to think carefully about a response so that they can give reasons and explanations for their opinions afterwards. This encourages pupils to think logically or take a step-by-step approach to finding solutions. It also has a very positive impact on pupils' speaking skills. This was very clearly demonstrated when a teacher asked pupils in Year 1 to explain what a 'philosophical question' was. After

some thought, a 6-year-old said 'It could be a question where there is no right or wrong answer.'

20. Good learning and progress in many lessons are underpinned by the quality of classroom relationships and the teachers' very good management skills. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is often exemplary because that is what is expected of them. Teachers deal with pupils' different needs sensitively and are consistent in their use of praise. Pupils know that they are treated respectfully and that their efforts are valued. Consequently, most are polite, co-operative and eager to take part in lessons.
21. Although there are no major weaknesses in teaching there are some inconsistencies in teachers' expectations as to how well pupils should present their work. Sometimes working on loose paper generates a feeling that tidiness and general presentation do not really matter, when clearly, over time, they do. Sometimes handwriting standards and the layout of work is unacceptably low. Teachers do not always challenge this in their marking, so pupils do not see the need to improve as expectations on them are not strong or clear enough.
22. Resources are used effectively to help pupils achieve learning objectives. In an art lesson, for example, the teacher had gathered an extensive selection of Seurat's paintings to demonstrate techniques of Pointillism. As a consequence, pupils made a good start on their own pictures whilst experimenting with that particular style of painting. In a science lesson, the same Year 2 pupils had access to a computer microscope to examine more closely, for example, the nature of foodstuffs. Many teachers use ICT effectively in lessons. The use of projectors linked to the computer is a feature of many lessons. Similarly, pupils frequently draft and edit their own writing. During a Year 1 ICT lesson, the pupils learned a great deal about battery and mains powered appliances because of the wide range of items on display. There was some outstanding practice in this lesson, when the teacher taught a group how to use an audio tape recorder to record their voices. Pupils delighted in having their voices played back to them and were very excited by the new skill they had learned.
23. Teachers assess pupils well in order to build systematically on what they already know and understand. Skilful questioning has become an effective feature of the assessment process. Probing questions at the beginning of a science lesson enabled the teachers to test pupils' knowledge of growing plants and their understanding of technical language before moving on to the next stages of their topic.
24. Pupils who have special educational needs and any with English as an additional language, are taught well, usually within the whole class. Teachers and classroom assistants provide good support by ensuring that work is suitably matched to pupils' needs. This enables them to make good progress towards their targets for achievement.
25. Occasionally, small groups are withdrawn by the teaching assistant for focused teaching to boost literacy skills. There is a brisk pace to these lessons and an urgency to learning which results in pupils making good progress. Good strategies are used to help pupils sustain their interest and ensure that work is finished in the time allowed. In one session, the teaching assistant used a puppet to add interest for the Year 1 pupils. Because of this, pupils were more attentive and learned their vowel sounds and how to structure sentences more easily.

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

26. The learning opportunities (the curriculum) offered to pupils are very good and are a strength of the school. The curriculum fully complies with statutory requirements and includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. There is also good emphasis on the 'thinking skills' of children and health education. The school has recently received two well merited awards; a Quality Mark for its learning programme and the Healthy Schools Award. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils grow in confidence and develop knowledge and skills as they move through the school. This is because the curriculum is exciting and provides many enrichment opportunities in all subject areas including, for example, practical activities, visits and the use of the outdoor environment. It is also an 'inclusive' curriculum that ensures pupils have fair and equal access to learning opportunities. The school has yet to formalise its register of gifted and talented pupils so that their specific needs can be met more fully.
27. The school has adopted successfully nationally recommended schemes of work in most subjects. These have been adapted well to meet the needs of the pupils and to relate them more closely to their own experiences. Very good cross-curricular links are also in place. Pupils are able to make effective connections in their learning. For example, pupils use ICT in their literacy lessons to practise their word processing skills, and in mathematics and science to manipulate the data they collect. Local studies in geography have led to planning and model making in design and technology.
28. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good overall, and is securely based on all the approved areas of learning for children of this age. Particular strengths include the provision for literacy, mathematical and personal development. There are good attempts to link several areas of learning into one theme so that children can see their learning as a whole, for example, the study of minibeasts. Although there is satisfactory provision for outdoor play, the school has rightly identified this as an area for further improvement in the future. All young children would also benefit from greater emphasis on creative and imaginative opportunities in general.
29. The school has implemented well the National Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. The effectiveness of both strategies on pupils' learning is good. In literacy there is a strong emphasis on the basic skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling. This gives the pupils the confidence to use a wide range of vocabulary. Any specific curriculum focus on reading, writing and spelling skills has resulted in good improvements in standards. The Numeracy Strategy has contributed well to the raising of standards in mathematics, including mental processes. The development of number skills and operations are planned for well and pupils have a good understanding of number throughout the school.
30. The range of additional learning opportunities, mainly through the school's programme of extra-curricular activities, is satisfactory. These activities extend the curriculum, particularly in physical education. Boys and girls play 'Kwik Cricket' and attend the Gymnastics Club. Children throughout the school take advantage of the football coaching. A visiting music teacher works with some older pupils giving guitar and keyboard tuition and others learn the recorder. These activities extend pupils' musical skills and experiences.

31. The provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is very good. The programme of 'philosophy and thinking skills' helps pupils think about their lives and make appropriate and informed choices. The pupils are familiar with the conventions and benefits of these sessions. They realise they are being given very good opportunities to discuss and reflect on feelings and emotions. Sex education and drugs awareness are given appropriate consideration.
32. There are now very good links with the community which make a positive contribution to the pupils' learning. Pupils visit local stores and other places of interest such as the sorting office within the locality. There are very strong links with local churches and the clergy visit the school regularly to share in acts of worship. The relationship with both St John's and St Paul's Catholic Churches is very strong and leads to much that is good within the school's ethos and values. Many visitors, such as the local policeman, nurses, firemen and representatives from the Morpeth Disability Group, visit the school regularly and talk to the pupils. All these opportunities are effective in helping pupils understand what it means to be part of a wider community.
33. The school has very good links with partner institutions, particularly the local middle school. Pupils visit the school regularly and staff interchange for lessons. This helps to smooth the Autumn induction and transition of pupils. The curriculum for pupils aged 7 to 11-years-old is being worked out thoroughly between the two institutions. There are also positive and helpful links between the early years class and the playgroup on the school site. Students from Newcastle University regularly have teacher training placements in school that is mutually beneficial to the students and the school. The school is also a key partner in the Network Learning Consortium for Thinking Skills.
34. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are fully involved in the whole curriculum and make good progress with their learning and personal development. Individual learning programmes are used efficiently to plan suitable work which matches pupils' abilities and helps them to achieve well.
35. A further strength of the school is the overall excellent provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The provision for spiritual development is excellent. Respect for each other underpins the life of the school. There are very well planned assemblies, the best of which allows time for quiet reflection, prayer and thanksgiving as well as reinforcing the children's understanding of their Catholic Faith. Prayers are said throughout the day and pupils are encouraged to write their own. The teaching of 'thinking skills and philosophy' is increasing the children's ability to think through and reflect on their learning and on their emerging beliefs and values. During lessons, pupils are given time to think so they can frame clear and articulate answers. Teachers discuss children's targets with them so that they gain better understanding of their own progress and development.
36. The curriculum is also used sensitively to promote pupils' spiritual awareness, particularly through literacy where they consider their own feelings and those of others in the stories they study. For example, in a Year 4 lesson looking at 'The Secret Garden', pupils completed an emotion line which showed how a character's feelings had changed over time. Many moments of awe and wonder are created for pupils and this was observed when reception children were studying minibeasts. There was also a special moment in a Year 1 ICT lesson when the children heard their own voices recorded by the teacher and their faces glowed with the excitement and wonder this generated. A Year 2 'India Day' also caused many gasps of wonder

as pupils caught sight of the many fabulous artefacts that had been brought in for them.

37. Pupils receive plenty of guidance on knowing right from wrong throughout the day and the provision for moral development is excellent. The school rules are simply worded and known well and understood by all. The teachers have very high expectations of the pupils and this is shown in their behaviour, self-discipline and thoughtfulness for others. Opportunities are planned to include aspects of moral debate and in discussions pupils have to justify their views. For example, in a Year 4 history lesson about the wives of Henry VIII, pupils had to make an argument as to why each wife was the most important in their impact on the King's life. Assemblies are also used to explore moral issues and to celebrate good work and behaviour so that pupils recognise the value of right behaviour and choices. Midday staff also reinforce right choices so there is a consistent approach achieved throughout the day. The children are given many opportunities to consider the needs of those less fortunate than themselves and to respond through several charitable initiatives. The school is also involved with St Cuthbert's Care including its work among disadvantaged children and adults throughout the Diocese.
38. There is excellent provision for pupils' social development. Many opportunities are created for pupils to work co-operatively in pairs and groups and the children know when to use their 'partner voices.' The playground has been designed to give different social settings and the wide range of activities provided during playtimes also encourages co-operation. There are excellent relationships throughout the school which allows the children to make best use of the playtime and classroom arrangements. The friendship or 'Buddy' system is very effective. The literacy work on the 'Flat Stanley' project required sensitive and thoughtful collaboration between pupils as they had to write in new storylines and ideas to other pupils' work.
39. As part of the provision for PSHCE, the pupils take part in circle time whereby they sit and discuss issues that relate to them or learn to relate to each other in different ways. The school is using the DANSI programme to help teach children more about keeping safe and about drugs education in a child friendly way. It has recently achieved the Healthy Schools Award which includes many areas of good social behaviour. The authority's Life Bus has also visited to give pupils many extra and interesting experiences to help them understand the importance of keeping healthy. Many visitors and the range of visits out of school, allows pupils to relate to each other in new social settings.
40. Cultural development is being promoted well but is not as fully embedded across the curriculum as the other areas. The school ensures that pupils learn about cultures represented in Britain today in an atmosphere of respect, racial harmony and acceptance. There is a welcome sign in languages from around the world at the school entrance and other displays around the school help to celebrate cultural diversity. The school makes good use of the children's own background culture as for example in the provision of 'India Day' where parents have contributed their experience and fabulous resources to make the day enjoyable and successful. In religious education the pupils learn about other faiths and they speak well of how they have enjoyed this and of celebrating other festivals. Traditional games are played and traditional tales are studied and compared in literacy lessons. The outside lesson activities provide additional cultural experiences. A Visit to Alnwick Castle (the millennium tapestry display) and to others, such as Cragside House and the Mining Museum, further enhance pupils' learning about their local culture and historical heritage. A good range of theatrical productions have been enjoyed by the children

including the Stockwell puppets and a production of The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. The school provides good access to modern technological culture through its ICT provision so that, overall, pupils experience a broad range of cultural experiences.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school takes very good care of its pupils. Staff provide a very supportive environment in which all pupils are shown they are special and can succeed. This makes them very confident learners who are able to seek help when they need it. Several improvements in this area have occurred since the previous inspection, including the use made of assessments to inform classroom practice. Parents express considerable satisfaction with the guidance care and welfare that their children receive. There is good support for children with special educational needs and for those children under five-years-old.
42. The school meets statutory requirements to provide a safe place for pupils and adults to work. It makes very good use of available health and safety expertise including the caretaker, governors and the local authority, who recently audited the school and its report has been duly acted on. Risk assessments are in place for many school activities including all visits and there are sufficient qualified first-aiders. The medical needs of pupils have been well planned for and pupils themselves are taught about safety at appropriate points of the curriculum and also through additional visitors such as the local fire officer and the community policeman.
43. The school is working hard to promote long-term healthy lifestyles through its involvement in the Healthy Schools Award scheme, encouraging, for example, healthy snacks at break times. Provision for child protection has also been thought through very thoroughly. The co-ordinator has ensured that all staff have received child protection training and had the chance to feed into the recently updated policy. Use of the DANSI teaching programme is ensuring the children can make safe choices, can say No! when something is wrong and know when to tell an adult. The 'Buddy' system is also having a considerable impact on reducing bullying and isolation so contributing to child protection.
44. Teachers and classroom assistants know how best to support pupils with special educational needs and are very sensitive to their particular needs. Progress is carefully monitored through assessments and learning plans are reviewed termly. The school recognises the value of reviewing some plans more regularly to ensure new targets always keep pace with pupils' progress.
45. The school has in place satisfactory procedures to promote and monitor attendance and punctuality but these could be improved. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting said the school emphasizes the need for good attendance and punctuality and that absences are followed up rigorously. The school has good links with the Educational Welfare Service. However, with a slightly falling attendance, a rise in holidays taken in term time plus the number of families with punctuality problems, the school needs to look into these aspects to prevent further decline.
46. The promotion of good behaviour is excellent and indeed the logbook for serious behaviour incidents has had no recent entries. Parents are very pleased the way older children are encouraged to look after younger ones and the effect the 'Buddy' system has on behaviour. There is a totally consistent application of the behaviour policy across the school that also involves midday staff rewarding good behaviour or

watching for problems. The stickers, use of Golden Time and Table of the Week are all very popular with the children and very effective motivators of good behaviour. The pupils are very familiar with school rules as they contribute to and discuss them. Assemblies and circle time also help pupils to recognise good behaviour and understand the effects of their behaviour on others. The excellent promotion of personal development is monitored through the PSHCE programme and recorded through religious education. Many pupils are also involved in self-evaluation so that they understand their own progress and can choose how best to improve. Very good links with the middle school help the children make the best use of their time in school affecting both their academic and personal development very positively.

47. The procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are very good. There have been several refinements and improvements since the previous inspection and the school has recently achieved the Basic Skills Award, partly as a consequence of the strength and use of its assessment procedures.
48. Very good assessments begin in the Foundation Stage where pupils are closely monitored to determine the early progress they make and the 'value added' the school is providing. The school goes on to make very good use of assessment information to adjust the curriculum if and where a weakness is identified. The pupils' performance in national, statutory or optional tests is carefully analysed and extra attention given to those areas identified as a potential weakness or areas of difficulty for the pupils. For example, pupils' standards in problem solving in mathematics and in spelling across the curriculum were identified as causes for concern, but very good focused teaching in these areas has improved results considerably.
49. Targets are set for all pupils. Tracking systems in English, mathematics and science enable teachers to pinpoint accurately the next steps in learning and set specific targets for individual pupils. Many are also aware of their own targets when they complete a piece of work. Records to track progress are systematically maintained to help in planning for individuals and groups of pupils. Teachers follow the clear marking policy and mark pupils' work carefully. However, marking does not always give pupils advice on how best to improve their work, particularly in relation to standards in handwriting and general presentation.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. Parents view St Paul's very favourably and the school is also very happy with its own links with parents. Parents believe that the leadership and management and the teaching are good and that the school is helping their children become mature and responsible. They are also happy with the school's open door policy and feel it is very easy to approach the school with questions or problems. The trusting relationships established between school and home from earliest contacts through home visits onwards, ensure the partnership is effective. Parents are aware of recent improvements in the school including the buildings, the strong links with the middle school and teachers exchange visits. They are also satisfied that when staff leave they are being replaced with equally good teachers. A few parents are not happy with the information they receive on their child's progress and a few would like to have more outside of lesson activities. However, the inspection judges the provision of extra-curricular activities is in line with other similar schools and is satisfactory. The information provided for parents on their child's progress is good.
51. Parents praise the weekly newsletter and the fact that they know exactly when to expect it and any homework. The twice-yearly parents' evenings are also good formal

opportunities to receive information on progress and on their targets. The end of year written report to parents is a good source of information although there is considerable variation between subjects in reporting what the child needs to do next to improve. Topic information is sent home termly and good curriculum information is also available in the school's brochure, which is a very good source of ways that parents can help their children with each subject. There is good guidance for parents to help with homework and good use is made of the home school record books. Parents of children with special educational needs receive good information and support. Parents are invited to review their children's individual learning plans with the class teacher and co-ordinator and feel they have a valued input into these.

52. Parental involvement in the life of the school is good with a group of parents coming to school regularly to help in the classroom. They are made very welcome and their help in this way is supporting the children's attainment and progress. Many parents volunteer to give occasional help such as on school visits and with swimming lessons and after school football. The Parents' Association is very active and successful at raising funds with which to support the school. Although the school has not consulted the parents formally through questionnaires, their views have been sought through contact with the Friends and through parent governors. Parents asked for an information evening for parents of children in Year 2 which the school took up and will repeat. Parents feel their views are welcomed and valued.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The school is very well led and managed by a team of skilled and committed adults, including the headteacher, key staff and governors. Under the leadership of the headteacher, the school has continued to grow and develop since the previous inspection and has been successful in raising standards further, improving the overall quality of education and ensuring the aims of the school are met.
54. The headteacher is an effective leader. She shows clear vision, a determined sense of purpose and high aspirations as to what the school can achieve, including the standards that pupils ought to reach. In this she is ably supported by a senior team of staff who provide good role models for other staff and the pupils in general. This is a very good 'inclusive' school that seeks successfully to meet the diverse needs of its pupils and plans for their general academic growth and personal development particularly well. This is essentially due to a very good team effort that identifies clear targets and priorities for school growth. The contribution made by the subject leaders in this process is generally good with many making significant impact on standards reached in their own subjects. The school is rightly targeting the monitoring of the foundation subjects as being areas where their influence could be more measured and effective.
55. The role of the governing body has been improved and extended since the previous inspection and governors now make a good and valuable contribution to school life. Some aspects of their work such as school visits, overseeing finance and understanding the school's strengths and weaknesses, are very good. In these and other areas, the headteacher wisely draws on their enthusiasm and levels of experience and expertise. Governors clearly meet their statutory requirements and are gradually becoming more involved in strategic and developmental planning, although these remain areas where improvements to their work could be made. Effective use is made of various committees to ensure the governing body's duties are discharged and managed effectively. Key representatives are in place in relation to the school's smooth and statutory management of special educational needs,

literacy and numeracy and performance management, the latest form of staff appraisal and development. Learning for pupils with special needs is managed particularly effectively. The co-ordinator liaises well with staff and parents. Appropriate help from educational support agencies is sought as necessary to ensure pupils receive the help they need.

56. The school has made very good strides in relation to undertaking rigorous forms of self-evaluation and monitoring its own past and present performance. A wide range of adults with management responsibilities now use available data very well in order to assess performance and to set new and challenging targets for the future. Staff do particularly well in monitoring pupil performance data, reviewing the resulting patterns and taking the appropriate action for pupils to succeed further. The school's recent success in achieving the Basic Skills Award was due in no small measure to its work on assessment and its use in establishing new priorities in learning. The performance management of staff, including support staff, is both thorough and effective in bringing about many of the improvements that have occurred. This has been realised through effective staff development, the support of newly qualified staff and by considerable involvement in initial teacher training. Although more senior staff could be usefully involved, the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is very good and leads to several improvements in teaching practice.
57. The school makes very good use of its annual budget and various grants to support the priorities expressed in its development plan. The available finance is used effectively to target growth in selected subject areas and to enrich the curriculum by the acquisition of important learning resources, such as those for ICT. Financial and budgetary control are good and the most recent local authority audit indicated very sound financial measures were in place. Staff and governors are well aware of the importance of comparing and contrasting standards and practice with what is achieved nationally and in other institutions. As a result, the school is active in setting new challenges in order to ensure best value is obtained for all its pupils.
58. The recruitment and deployment of staff are both well managed. Despite some financial difficulties, the school has managed to retain an adequate number of teachers to support pupils' learning in the curriculum. In addition, there is an above average number of skilled support staff and classroom assistants who contribute significantly to pupils' standards. Other non-teaching staff make good contributions to the efficient daily running of the school, including the office, dinnertime arrangements and the cleaning of the building. The available accommodation is bright, clean and cheerful and used very well by staff to display and celebrate the achievements of the pupils as well as support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's policy on developing good quality and attractive learning resources over time is paying off and almost every subject now has a good level of resources that makes learning even more assured and attractive for the pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. In order to improve on the already good standards achieved by the pupils and the overall quality of education they receive, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (a) Improve the quality of pupils' handwriting and general presentation by:
- reviewing the school's handwriting policy, ensuring it meets pupils' needs and targets consistently any inadequacies they show;
 - raising both teachers' and pupils' expectations as to what high quality presentation looks like and how best this can be achieved in the setting of the classroom;
 - extending the scope and purpose of teachers' marking to include comments and support directed at the general tidiness and presentation of pupils' work.

(paragraphs 5, 6, 21, 49, 89, 90, 93, 98, 113, 129, 130 and 136)

As well as the above, the school should include in its post-inspection plan the following areas for improvement:

- restore as soon as possible a register of pupils' names who show particular talents or giftedness in relation to any aspect of school life;
(paragraphs 9, 19, 26, 91, 97 and 105)
- establish more effective measures to monitor and improve the attendance of any pupil who is either regularly late for school or whose attendance pattern could affect their learning and progress.
(paragraphs 14 and 45)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 42 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 37 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 1 | 13 | 18 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 2 | 31 | 43 | 24 | 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 two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

| | Nursery/EYs | YR – Y4 |
|---|-------------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 13 | 153 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 0 | 13 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

| | Nursery/EYs | YR – Y4 |
|---|-------------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 0 | 3 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 0 | 17 |

English as an additional language

| | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 1 |

Pupil mobility in the last school year

| | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 9 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 9 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 5.6 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.3 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

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

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2002 | 14 | 15 | 29 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|----------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 13 | 12 | 14 |
| | Girls | 15 | 15 | 15 |
| | Total | 28 | 27 | 29 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 97 (90) | 93 (100) | 100 (93) |
| | National | 84 (84) | 86 (86) | 90 (91) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|-----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 13 | 14 | 14 |
| | Girls | 15 | 15 | 15 |
| | Total | 28 | 29 | 29 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 97 (100) | 100 (100) | 100 (100) |
| | National | 85 (85) | 89 (89) | 89 (89) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

| No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| 117 | 1 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 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 – Y 4

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 7.07 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 22 |
| Average class size | 28 |

Education support staff: Y R – Y 4

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 9 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 163 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: early years

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 1 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 25 |
| Total number of education support staff | Shared with R |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 0 |

Financial information

| | |
|--|---------|
| Financial year | 2002/03 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 335,550 |
| Total expenditure | 319,637 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1880 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 14,343 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 19,493 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 6 |
|--------------------------------|---|

FTE means full-time equivalent.

EYs taught as part of reception adult ratio

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|-----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 0.6 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 1.0 |

| | |
|--|---|
| 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.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 179 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 84 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 64 | 29 | 6 | 0 | 1 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 63 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 56 | 35 | 4 | 0 | 6 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 42 | 50 | 6 | 0 | 2 |
| The teaching is good. | 71 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 51 | 33 | 10 | 4 | 2 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 74 | 17 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 61 | 36 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 58 | 35 | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 74 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 65 | 29 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 37 | 45 | 7 | 1 | 10 |

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

Other issues raised by parents

Some would like to see the school develop more precise methods for gathering parents' views, perhaps through regular questionnaires that follow broadly the OFSTED model or cover specific issues. Others are keen to have the results of any review of their child's performance targets to be sent home so they can be shared and developed with the child.

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

60. The school's provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and has been strengthened and improved since the previous inspection. Teachers' planning is good and represents very accurately the six areas of learning established for very young children. The large classroom is well organised into specific yet flexible spaces for learning and the wide range of interesting activities create and support a pleasant and welcoming environment.
61. The school's organisation of the Foundation Stage is quite complex and relies heavily on a particularly good pupil/adult ratio to help overcome any problems associated with the lack of specialised space. The youngest reception children are taught alongside part-time, early years (nursery age) children, whilst the older reception children are taught alongside some Year 1 pupils, but in the same classroom. To overcome some potential planning and organisational difficulties, all reception children are taught as a discrete group for literacy and numeracy, whilst early years children also come together for several discrete sessions of their own that target their needs well. To maximise the benefit of these arrangements, the school employs a higher than average number of classroom assistants who ably support learning at critical times.
62. Almost all early years children spend between one and two terms working part-time alongside reception children, having spent up to a full year previously in a separate playgroup housed in the school's grounds. Effective links are established between teaching staff and playgroup leaders. The school's assessment information and the analysis of children's work since the beginning of the school year, indicates a wide range of children's attainment on entry, to both early years and the reception classes. However, significant numbers enter school below average in relation to language and mathematical development and aspects of their personal development. Because of the way the curriculum is planned and organised and the overall strength of teaching, children make rapid progress in almost all aspects of their learning and achieve very well over time. Most are on course to achieve at least what is expected nationally in mathematics, reading, writing, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development. The attainment of several children is on course to be above national expectations in speaking and listening and aspects of their personal development.
63. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and largely effective in helping children to make significant progress over time. Planning is very corporate between all the adults involved and sets out very detailed and appropriate learning objectives for children of different ages and abilities. During the inspection, the world of minibeasts was the linking theme across much of the planned work, enabling children to see all their learning linked in a natural and cohesive way. Particularly strong emphasis is placed on the teaching and learning of key skills for young children which many go on to apply successfully higher up the school. Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of very young children and select from a wide range of approaches and activities that support their learning well. The management of the children is particularly good, the result, in part, of the very good ratio of adults to children. This promotes rapid and effective learning, the skilled contribution of classroom support staff being particularly significant. The assessment of children's work and their ongoing progress is carried through very effectively using

formal and informal means. This helps to build up an accurate portfolio of evidence about every child as well as forming a good basis of reporting to parents. Children with special educational needs are identified at a very early age and make good progress because of the support and intervention of staff.

64. Good links are established with parents. They support reading particularly well and reading diaries move between home and school with increasing regularity. A very good induction programme of home and school visits help to ease the children's entry into early years and full-time schooling. Parents are kept well informed as to their child's progress because of the very good levels of oral and written communication.
65. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed by an experienced teacher who has a clear vision as to how best the school can plan for and promote the needs of young children. This vision is shared by other staff who contribute much by their own talents and enthusiasms. The indoor accommodation, whilst just about large enough for the numbers of children and staff who use it, has some drawbacks in its design that are difficult to overcome in relation to noise levels. The outside accommodation is purpose built and whilst further improvements are planned, provides well for safe and imaginative play. Resources are good, bright and attractive for young children to use and impact very well on their learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

66. By the end of the reception year, most children are likely to achieve and some exceed the early learning goals in this area. This represents significant progress for most children, given their below average start in this area of learning. Teaching is frequently very good overall in this area. Strong emphasis is placed on the thinking skills of children and on the many positive relationships they form with adults and with each other. Adults make very good and consistent role models from which children learn.
67. Children enter early years and the reception classes eager to learn. The established routines are quickly learned and children respond positively to 'golden rules' and the importance of the presence of others. They soon take turns without fuss and learn to consider the space needed by others. Their everyday environment is very secure and a place where very good behaviour is expected and attained. Children are proud when their names reach the top of a large paper sunflower as a reward for good behaviour and effort with their work. Play is harmonious and there is very little unproductive movement between activities which are well chosen to stimulate interest and challenge their learning. Children are largely very sensible and show surprising maturity for their age. Reception children help younger ones and show them where equipment is stored and how to tidy up properly. Except on those rare occasions when the rather strong adult presence results in them being helped too much, most children develop good levels of independence in their learning and relate well to others.

Communication, language and literacy

68. By the end of their reception year, most children are likely to reach the standards anticipated for their age in this area of their learning. Standards in speaking and listening are good for many children and represent significant progress during their time in the Foundation Stage. The quality of teaching and learning is good and children achieve well in establishing early reading and writing skills. Some children

find it difficult to form their letters correctly or to recognise letter blends that create certain key sounds, and are therefore unlikely to reach the expected standard by the end of the reception class.

69. Many opportunities are planned and taken to promote the children's knowledge and use of language. Sometimes this can be during imaginative (role) play, such as working in 'the market garden', and sometimes when an adult asks them to reflect on or explain part of a story. Talking is a major part of many lessons and most children achieve very well in using their speaking and listening skills as a way of communicating with others or to help them think through their ideas. When both early years and reception children read 'The Bear Hunt' they have several imaginative ideas of their own and contribute a good range of words that might add excitement to the story. They later acted as bear hunters themselves and their speech and imaginative outside play were very good.
70. Books, pictures and posters play a prominent part in the children's environment and they learn to read captions, key words and a good range of early reading books. This good provision results in many children developing an early love of books which they readily share with each other, school staff or with their parents. Many progress smoothly onto the early graded reading scheme adopted by the school and know the characters really well. Some can draw inferences as to the likely outcome of a story given their previous knowledge of books and characters of a similar type. Given a blend such as 'sh', most children can suggest a good range of words or objects that begin with the selected sound.
71. The particular emphasis on speaking, listening and reading skills means that some children's earliest attempts at writing come rather late in the year, although others have gained a good degree of independence in this respect by the time they enter Year 1. Teachers could display and model children's early stages of writing a little more effectively in this respect. However, many go securely through the routines of overwriting and underwriting an adult's work and eventually are successful in writing independently their own names or a few words describing their homes, families or pets. One child wrote very confidently and accurately, 'I like my friend because he plays with me.' Children in the early years class make marks to represent their writing and some become rather frustrated when an adult fails to interpret these as well as they clearly can! Older children take care when tracing or forming letters by themselves, although several do not yet show the level of pencil control and dexterity to complete the task to a good standard.

Mathematical development

72. The large majority of reception children are on course to reach the standards expected for their age by the end of the school year. For many, this represents good progress and sound levels of mathematical achievement. This area of learning is taught well, particularly the children's early understanding of number patterns and mental counting. A further strength of the overall provision is the way children are taught to see number and shape in a wide variety of contexts.
73. Children are justifiably proud of their counting skills and readily draw an adult aside to show them what they can do. Many early years children count with confidence between 1 and 20 and several count in 2s recognising odds and even patterns. Reception children know the pattern of 5s and 10s and recognise the names and values of our most popular coins. Although several move onto a commercial workbook a little early, they go on to show a good understanding of all sorts of

number relationships including days of the week. Some are particularly accurate when completing equations such as $4 + ? = 9$. In one lesson, early years children showed good knowledge of the use of 'positional language', using with confidence words such as between, beside, underneath and above. Higher attaining reception children recognise the names and properties of several basic shapes and can explain to a visitor what makes their sunflower vase symmetrical.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. By the end of their reception year, most children are likely to reach the standards anticipated for their age in this area of their learning. Most make good progress and achieve well in extending their knowledge and understanding of the things around them. Several higher attaining children have a secure grasp of things and places beyond their immediate environment. During the inspection, the theme of minibeasts was central to much that children did and teachers were skilful in interweaving language, mathematics and creative opportunities into a theme that clearly brought much delight and understanding to the children. Teaching and learning in this area are good overall, and several adults bring their own ideas and enthusiasms to the classroom creating several examples of very effective teaching.
75. Reception children use their thinking skills to find the odd minibeast out from a selection of several, whilst others read the 'Hungry Caterpillar' and record their own likes and dislikes in fruit by a series of drawings and happy and sad faces. Older reception children were very successful when joining together (mapping) creatures with similar characteristics and were able to explain the criteria they had used. This part of the curriculum places considerable stress on children exploring and understanding through direct observation and the classroom provides some lovely opportunities for them to see at first-hand, butterflies hatching out and tadpoles emerging as frogs. Such experiences enrich spiritual understanding as well as extending oral and written language. One child explained, 'My sunflower seed is soon going to be as big as you!'
76. Most children learn well from imaginative play. Staff are careful to provide a range of imaginative settings that children can explore with each other. The 'home corner' can sometimes be a camping shop but is equally useful to children as a post office or doctor's surgery. Some children look carefully at picture books to give them ideas and then act out in role play what they have seen and learned. Children also use a wide selection of constructional material to build houses, towers and vehicles as well as articles that support their imaginative play. Computers play an increasingly important role in developing knowledge and language. Some children spend lengthy periods with software that extends their knowledge and increases the opportunities to learn number bonds or phonic blends. Most reception children show keyboard skills and mouse control appropriate to their age.

Physical development

77. Most children make satisfactory progress in this area of their learning and are on course to attain the standards broadly expected for their age by the end of their reception year. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and planning meets the needs of the children in the development of both their small and larger movements. Staff ensure that the chosen activities develop children's dexterity and make them sufficiently aware of the development of their own bodies and the importance of regular exercise.
78. Most reception children can undress and dress themselves with relative independence and look forward to vigorous exercise. Some know about healthy

eating and how to look after their bodies. In one lesson, reception children did well when using their bodies in response to various forms of musical stimuli and were able to move imaginatively whilst keeping to a steady rhythm. In another, the same age group were able to recall a series of minibeasts and move, crawl and scuttle by way of imitation. Early years children showed sound awareness of their bodies whilst completing their own minibeasts obstacle course in the play area.

79. Most children show the expected level of dexterity for their age. Reception children are able to manipulate jigsaws into the right shape and use scissors with care and accuracy. Some younger children in particular, have difficulty handling a pencil correctly and have yet to develop the right level of eye and hand co-ordination to produce satisfying results.

Creative development

80. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory overall and staff provide a satisfactory range of experiences for children to explore and use. Sound emphasis is placed on the learning of painting and other creative techniques. However, staff realise that this is an area that can be used more imaginatively across the entire Foundation Stage with perhaps a slightly greater range of techniques and experiences made available to the children. Most children are likely to reach the standards expected for their age by the end of their reception year.
81. Sound use is made of displays of children's creative work as a starting point for discussion and ideas for further exploration. Most reception children whose work is on display can say what their piece represents and how they did it. Almost all children recognise and name accurately the primary colours. When painting landscapes, for example, they choose an appropriate colour that is fit for purpose, for example, blue for the sky or green for fields. Relatively few children are yet at the stage where they are particularly aware of the potential of a piece of material or the likely effect of a specific technique. One group of reception children showed this element in their learning was improving when they made a very good attempt to create their own minibeast using paint or collage having studied the real thing in pictures or outside in the grass. Most children paint imaginatively or from memory to a satisfactory standard.
82. The children's powers of observation have progressed well over the year. Many drawings have matured and become more accurate as they have examined things more closely at first-hand. Older reception children made a good effort at painting sunflowers in the style of Van Gogh, whilst early years children observed blossom and captured its colour and texture using paint wash and wax crayon.
83. All children in the Foundation Stage were seen to enjoy singing, particularly when it involved songs with choruses or repetitive words and actions. Their ability to maintain a beat and to accompany themselves on percussion is broadly at the level anticipated for their age. Reception children are able to use percussion to create simple sound effects by way of interpreting a classroom story.

ENGLISH

84. Standards seen at the end of Year 2 are above average in reading, writing, speaking and listening. By the end of Year 4, standards in English exceed expectations for the age of the pupils. The high standards in reading are consistent with previous years. Writing in Year 2 has improved following a slight dip to 'average' in the 2002 National

Tests; mainly the result of a higher proportion of pupils with additional learning needs. The indicative results of 2003 suggest standards are set to rise again with more pupils attaining the higher levels for their age.

85. Given their attainment when they start school, most pupils achieve very well. Their rapid progress reflects the balance of good and very good quality of teaching seen. There are also effective systems for monitoring progress and setting targets as well as a strong curriculum that focuses on basic skills in reading, writing and spelling. School data shows that boys tend to do less well than girls over time, although because of the school's monitoring and its resulting action, boys' writing standards show an improvement this year. Standards overall, are generally higher than those seen in similar schools although not consistently so in writing.
86. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop good speaking skills. Teachers question pupils skilfully so that pupils have to answer thoughtfully. In some lessons, 'talking partners' gives pupils the opportunity to discuss problems and negotiate answers. Pupils happily engage in many forms of conversation, for example, when at the dining table, and clearly enjoy talking about those things that interest them most. Pupils are confident when using specific subject language because it is strongly encouraged and modelled well by teachers. A good example of this was an art lesson, when pupils in Year 2, talked about primary and secondary colours and tone line and shade. Speaking skills are developed further in Years 3 and 4. Pupils are confident when expressing views and are prepared to challenge and discuss those of others. This is the school's approach towards 'philosophy' and helps boost confidence among many pupils. The strategies used to promote thinking skills strongly influences the ability of pupils to express their opinions in clear and precise language and many lessons contain periods of quite intense debate.
87. Because of the school's recent focus on reading skills, standards have risen. Reading records kept by teachers are very good and clearly inform them of what pupils can do and what they need to do next. Consequently, pupils make good progress and develop very good attitudes to reading because they are so motivated. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are confident, independent readers. They choose from an increasing range of fiction and non-fiction books and develop good understanding of how to use contents, index and glossary to find information. When asked about traditional tales, such as 'The Three Bears' and 'Red Riding Hood', a year 1 pupil remarked, 'Personally, I prefer non-fiction!'
88. By the end of Year 4, most pupils talk about different genres in writing and discuss the characters and plots of the novels they read such as 'The Secret Garden' and 'Charlotte's Web.' They choose from a wide range of texts, including novels, non-fiction and books they have written themselves. The pupils' knowledge of books and authors is good. They talk about the works of Enid Blyton, Jill Murphy, Jacqueline Wilson and JK Rowling, giving reasons why they like particular stories. Most supplement their reading by borrowing from the public library. Almost all read fluently for their age and demonstrate good understanding of how to gain written information from books, computers and Teletext. Interest in reading is promoted very strongly in the school. Pupils hear good quality text during literacy lessons. Books are displayed and accessible and there is a flourishing library lending system, run by the pupils themselves.
89. Writing is another aspect of English which has improved because of the schools drive to raise standards. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 write independently and have a sufficiently extensive vocabulary to express their ideas clearly. Pupils in Year 1 learn that stories have a beginning, middle and an end, so their sentences show a logical

sequence. By the end of Year 2, pupils sustain their ideas and begin to use more complex sentences. There is more range and purpose to their writing which includes poetry, narrative and letters, for example, to the 'Giant' to persuade him to allow children to play in his garden. Basic punctuation is generally correct and spelling shows increasing accuracy. Handwriting is not as good as it could be and this is reflected in the presentation of pupils' work.

90. In Years 3 and 4, pupils are given many opportunities to write. A good stimulus is the 'Flat Stanley' journals composed by pupils. The journals are exchanged so others can add to them. There are even some contributions emailed from other countries, making this shared writing an exciting and stimulating project. Pupils learn to write for different purposes and select formal or informal styles appropriately. Pupils write reflectively about poems they have read and practice writing skills in other subjects, including history and music. Writing is often word processed, enabling pupils to practise and improve their ICT skills. Pupils in Year 3, for example, use computers to write about something new that they had learned about the Romans. Most pupils have a sound grasp of essential punctuation and spelling and sentences are usually grammatically correct. However, as with younger pupils, handwriting is not so well developed and this results in some indifferent presentation of written work, particularly that presented on worksheets.
91. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with some very strong features. All teachers establish very good relationships in classrooms and this promotes good behaviour and positive attitudes to work. Teachers value pupils' views so they feel secure and more confident about taking part in discussions. Planning is good. Learning objectives for each lesson are clearly set out. These are shared with pupils so they know what is expected of them. Planning also takes account of the different abilities within classes. Where this is most effective, planning identifies what pupils *must* achieve, what they *should* achieve and, with the greatest effort, what they *could* achieve. In this way, targets are set for all groups of pupils. There is however, no register of any particularly talented and gifted pupils in English.
92. In most lessons there is good pace and variety in the teaching methods used. For example, class discussion may alternate with short focused written tasks. Discussion with a partner or use of individual white boards engage pupils in thinking about language. There is also a very strong emphasis on developing pupils' thinking skills. A good example was when pupils improved their comprehension of the 'The Secret Garden' by analysing statements about the main characters and creating an 'emotion line' by matching the statements to how the characters might feel. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and consequently most basic skills are taught well. Spelling is taught systematically and pupils acquire a good vocabulary for writing, underpinned by many opportunities to develop their speaking skills.
93. There are some inconsistencies in teachers' expectations of standards in handwriting which affects the overall quality of pupils' work. In some lessons, teaching assistants' time could also be used more productively, for example, to monitor pupils' responses or contribute to the initial input of the lesson.
94. Leadership and management are good. There is a strong commitment to higher achievement and good systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress ensure that challenging targets can be set. Lesson observations provide co-ordinators with a good overview of teaching. However, the monitoring of lessons needs to be more focused on what pupils learn, as a result of the very best teaching practice, so that this can become more widespread. The quality and use of learning resources,

including a wide range of reading matter, has become fundamental to the good standards reached by the pupils.

MATHEMATICS

95. Inspection evidence indicates that by the end of Year 2, pupils' standards are above the national average. By the end of Year 4, standards are above those expected for the age of the pupils. There is no significant difference between the standards reached by girls and boys. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve very well over time. Indicative results from the 2003 National Curriculum Tests show that there have been several improvements, particularly the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels for their age.
96. The subject has made significant improvements since the previous inspection. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well and subject leadership has become more informed and influential. Staff have received appropriate training and are now fully conversant with the recommended ways of working. Teachers follow the structure of lessons carefully. Teaching has been monitored over time to see where further improvements could be made. Results of tests are carefully analysed to see where pupils could achieve better; for example, the school identified word problem solving was an area for development and has acted on this to good effect. There has been more focused teaching on this aspect of mathematics which has resulted in more opportunities for pupils to extend their mathematical knowledge in this area.
97. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in developing their number skills in relation to their abilities. This is because work is planned at the right level for them and they are given good targeted support by the classroom assistants during the lesson. For example, in a good lesson in Year 1, the lower attaining group were consolidating their knowledge of o'clock and half past times. The classroom assistant questioned the group well. Good resources were provided for them to use, such as individual clocks. This kept the pupils' interest and they were able to complete the tasks correctly. This raised their confidence and self-esteem. The work planned for higher attaining pupils is generally appropriate to their needs although some could be more adequately challenged.
98. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop a good knowledge of number. They learn to add and subtract mentally and know how to write the 2, 3, 5 and 10 times tables in different ways. They understand how to use different methods of calculating, such as counting on or breaking up the numbers into tens and units to make their calculations simpler. By Year 2, pupils accurately apply these skills to money calculations. They recognise o'clock and half past times and understand what a fraction such as 'one half' or 'one quarter' means. However, because a lot of the work the pupils attempt in the infant years is completed either in a workbook or on a worksheet, the pupils do not always present their work as neatly as they could. Many lack sustained practice in setting out their work in a more conventional way.

99. By the end of Year 4, pupils present their work in exercise books a lot better. They have a good knowledge of place value and apply this well when multiplying and dividing by 10 and 100. They use different methods of calculations when solving problems and can draw and interpret information from charts and graphs. Their work on symmetry and shape is of a high standard.
100. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and as a result, pupils achieve very well over time. The teaching of mental arithmetic skills is very strong. Teachers also use the beginning of each lesson very effectively, usually to provide a good focus for counting, using number skills and refining pupils' skills in handling number. Pupils use a variety of resources such as whiteboards or number fans to record their answers. For example, in Year 3, the pupils recorded their answers on whiteboards when the teacher had used an overhead projector to show the pupils the values of different coins. This ensured that all the pupils were taking an active part in the lesson.
101. All teachers plan their lessons well. They always incorporate a good variety of activities and provide a range of resources to make the lessons enjoyable and interesting. No time is wasted and the pupils settle down quickly and quietly to work after the tasks have been explained. Teachers know the pupils very well and have formed excellent relationships with them. This motivates the pupils to become willing learners and to work hard in lessons.
102. Most pupils know exactly what they are going to learn because teachers talk to them about this at the beginning of the lessons. Pupils look forward to this and are keen to know, for example, in Year 1, what 'Molly's (a puppet) message for the daily lesson is.' Teachers question the pupils well to consolidate their knowledge. For example, in Year 4, when the pupils were investigating multiples of single digit numbers, in answer to a question a pupil was heard to say, 'I knew that the patterns would be in the 12 times table after I saw the first number.' This showed that he had a good understanding of what he was doing. Occasionally, the time at the end of the lessons is not used as well as it could be. Pupils talk about what they have been doing in the lessons rather than completing a task that would further develop the learning.
103. Many opportunities are given for pupils to extend their mathematical knowledge in different contexts. In science, for example, the pupils arrange information in charts and graphs. ICT is used very well in the lessons by using programs to consolidate the work being done. For example, in Year 3, the pupils were using a program to consolidate their knowledge of turns and right angles.
104. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator gives good support to colleagues and monitors planning, learning and pupils' work. Teaching has been monitored to see where improvements could be made. Resources for the subject are good and are well used by adults and pupils.

SCIENCE

105. Most pupils achieve well in science and the provision for the subject and the standards reached by the pupils, have both improved since the previous inspection. By the end of Year 2, teachers' assessments and the outcomes of inspection, show that pupils reach above average standards in much of their work. Pupils continue to develop their science knowledge and skills in the junior years and, by the end of Year 4, reach standards above those expected for their age. This is largely the result of a subject that is led effectively, is supported by a well organised curriculum and where

good teaching and learning impacts on all year groups. There is no significant difference between the standards reached by girls and boys. There are some lost opportunities when the higher attaining pupils could be challenged more. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well supported in science and several find it a subject in which they can achieve particularly well in relation to their targets.

106. Many pupils have strengths in reading and interpreting data and have little difficulty in understanding the nature of investigative work. The school has also been successful in its attempts to create more investigative work for pupils and more time for them to reflect on past knowledge and understanding before applying their skills to new areas. This can be seen when junior pupils in particular revisit topics relating to life processes, light and materials.
107. During the inspection, considerable emphasis was placed on pupils learning about how best to approach a science enquiry. Some of the related discussions and resulting group work showed that many pupils had matured in their approach to science work. There is now greater emphasis on the use and application of science principles and less on the accumulation of science knowledge, almost for its own sake. This approach is highly appropriate to the stage many pupils have reached.
108. Starting in Year 1, pupils are encouraged to ask why things turn out as they do and to work towards some sort of reasoned explanation. In a study of forces, pupils were very clear in their understanding of how toy vehicles moved and the power behind a push or pull. Less able Year 1 pupils were successful in sequencing pictures depicting the life cycle of a butterfly following close observation of their own caterpillars and cocoons over a good period.
109. Year 2 pupils complete some detailed and lively topics over the year. Among those that tested their ability to think and record scientifically, were how best to make recycled paper and where can ice be placed to last the longest. Their ability to understand and conduct a fair test was seen very readily when had to predict, then test, the effect of heat on a piece of apple, chocolate and plastic. This is a year group in which several pupils use scientific language particularly well.
110. Pupils in the junior classes are successful in carrying out their investigative work to a good depth. They apply previous knowledge well and the teacher is careful to ensure they develop methods of approach in which they will have to evaluate much of their findings for themselves. In Year 3, some thorough work has been attempted on magnets and springs, light and shadows and the groupings of materials by characteristics and use. During one lesson, pupils demonstrated above average knowledge of plant growth and made a very good and detailed study of the effect of light and temperature change on plant growth. In Year 4, many pupils have developed good enquiry and investigative methods and approach much of their work in the same reflective manner. This was true during projects on the digestive system, food chains and how to separate solids from liquids. During one lesson they became fascinated by the behaviour and life support systems of worms and the wood louse. By careful observation, they were able to conclude accurately enough as to what appeared to be the best conditions for each creature to thrive.
111. The quality of teaching and learning is good and frequently very good across all age groups. Teachers and pupils have developed a real enthusiasm for the subject and teachers use their knowledge to good effect. In many of the observed lessons, the use made of available time, staff and resources was particularly effective. There is

also strong emphasis on pupils learning about science through practical applications and teachers' expectations are high in this respect. During a particularly good Year 1 lesson, the teacher took pupils into the hall and conducted a brief PE session in order to show them the power of forces acting in and around their bodies. This knowledge was then taken back to the classroom where pupils continued their science discussions and experiments.

112. Effective use is made of pupils' thinking skills and their need to work collaboratively in small groups. Teachers manage their classes well and organise lessons around a rich variety of tasks that keep pupils motivated and 'switched on' by science learning. Planning is very clear and the aims of a lesson are shared with the pupils so that they can assess their own learning and take more responsibility for it. In some lessons, the pupils' learning becomes over directed by the teacher and pupils are faced with less of a challenge in the time available.
113. Pupils with special educational needs have few problems in science because of its largely practical nature and the support they receive. Similarly, any pupil with English as an additional language, achieves as well as their class friends. Homework is used satisfactorily to supplement class-based learning. In some classes, the pupils' recorded work is very centred on worksheets. Whilst many of these are school produced and match the needs of the pupils, the resulting work is frequently untidy and poorly presented. It also does not reflect accurately, the knowledge and understanding of the pupils. Teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of their pupils in this respect.
114. Science is well led and managed by an experienced co-ordinator who typifies staff enthusiasm for the subject. Although monitoring of teaching could be more precise and influential on practice, pupils' standards are monitored well through careful use of assessment data which often details the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. The priorities for subject growth and development are very apt and include greater use of ICT to strengthen subject knowledge and better recorded work that involves pupils doing more in exercise books for themselves. Learning resources are good and the school has established good ongoing projects, such as its environmental garden which help pupils to explore growth and seasonal changes on a regular basis. The school also makes effective use of the authority's loan service to extend its range of science books and these are used well in helping pupils to improve their research skills.

ART AND DESIGN

115. Standards in art and design at the end of Years 2 and 4 are better than those typically seen. Overall, standards have improved since the previous inspection. This reflects the stronger curriculum which is based on the national subject guidelines and the strength of teachers' subject knowledge, which enables good teaching and promotes high standards. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language also achieve well.
116. The school is currently developing a good system for assessment which involves pupils in evaluating their own work. Pupils use the digital camera and computer to record their own progress, as well as the shared views of others and are able to modify and improve work as it progresses. Although relatively new, the signs are that the use of the 'digital portfolio' leads to pupils setting higher standards for their own personal achievement.

117. The quality of teaching seen and work displayed indicates that pupils throughout the school are taught well. There is a good emphasis on the teaching of basic skills such as colour mixing and the use of tone and shade in observational work. Techniques for printing and collage are taught well as pupils move through the school so that their skills are increasingly challenged. Sketch books have a greater significance in the development of art than previously and are used effectively to practise skills and record and develop early ideas.
118. Pupils learn to use paints with confidence and choose colours appropriately to gain the best effect. Carefully selected colours for their leaf collage, for example, gave a pleasing autumnal effect to Year 1 work, while there was also some exciting use of paint in the illustrations of 'The Owl and the Pussycat.' Pupils in Years 3 and 4 captured sensitively the tones and shades of pieces of fruit and plants using media such as charcoal and pastels.
119. Teachers encourage pupils to explore the uses of ICT; for example, younger pupils use computers to generate patterns and designs, whilst those in Year 3 used digital technology to superimpose photographs of their sculptures onto others of the outside environment. This resulted in very realistic images of their work in a chosen setting. Shape and pattern are explored imaginatively using paper and fabrics. Some successful mixed media work was seen in Year 4 pupils' project entitled 'Take a Seat', where they designed and made chairs which were then attractively finished with paper and fabric 'upholstery.' A strength of teaching is the way in which pupils are encouraged to select and experiment with different materials. Teachers value the work pupils do and as a result they are more willing to put ideas into practice.
120. The co-ordinator makes an effective contribution to the leadership and management of art by her good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work. Her subject knowledge and commitment to improve quality ensures that high expectations are maintained. Opportunities to work alongside colleagues provides a good overview of standards in the school. The subject action plan includes provision for a stronger focus on sculpture and further development in the use of ICT in order to build on pupils' current experiences. Resources for art are both imaginative and of good quality and are used to good effect throughout the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

121. Standards seen by the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are typical of those seen in most schools. These have been maintained since the previous inspection. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily although some do better than this over time. There is no difference between the standards achieved by girls and boys and this is a reflection of the many positive attitudes expressed by the pupils towards the subject. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language enjoy the subject and achieve well through good levels of support.
122. The school has adapted national subject guidance successfully to plan for a satisfactory range of designing and making skills. The use of a 'digital portfolio' system whereby pupils record their own progress in art and design and design and technology is being trialled. Indications are that resulting evaluation by pupils of their own work is helping to raise their personal achievements and overall standards.
123. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn basic design skills and work with construction sets, card and recyclable materials to construct models. In Year 1, for example, pupils become 'Bob the Builder' and had to draw and estimate the measurements of their

models, then choose the particular construction set they needed before assembling them. Pupils design and build 'lighthouses' which incorporate bulbs that light up and vehicles with working axles and wheels. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 build well on earlier skills, sometimes combining art with design and technology. For example, work on Egyptian history provided them with the opportunity make 'Egyptian jewellery' by using paper mache and different pasta tubes strung together to make the chains. Pupils learn about simple mechanisms such as levers when making moving pictures and pop-up books and practise the skill of constructing rigid structures for photograph frames.

124. Available evidence indicates that teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils are motivated and talk enthusiastically about what they do. Good features include the cross-curricular links which make work more purposeful for pupils, and also work done through teaching links with the feeder middle school. Not all teachers share the same level of confidence in all aspects of the subject and some additional in-service training would be of benefit to them and the pupils in this respect.
125. Leadership and management of design and technology is satisfactory. The recently appointed subject leader has already gained a good overview of strengths and areas for development. A portfolio of photographs and the new computerised records kept by pupils provide good information for assessment. Well maintained resources adequately support the planned activities.

GEOGRAPHY

126. By the end of Years 2 and 4 pupils' standards are broadly in line with that expected for their age. Most pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and achieve sound standards relative to their previous learning. There is little difference between the attainment of girls and boys. The work given to pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is generally well chosen and directed enabling them to make satisfactory gains in knowledge and understanding over time. The subject meets statutory requirements and has improved satisfactorily since the previous inspection.
127. There is an adequate balance created between the need for pupils to grow in knowledge and the need for them to develop geographical skills that must be practised and developed further. Over a year, pupils tend to experience an overseas topic in addition to one relating to their home environment. An early understanding of mapping in Year 1 is followed in Year 2 by an introduction to the wider world. Pupils use the theme 'Where in the World is Barnaby Bear', as an effective means of studying places the pupils have visited on holiday and some that are new to them. Good use is made of atlases and large maps (borrowed from the University) which the pupils thoroughly enjoy looking at. Pupils in the same year make a quality in-depth study of India including its location, culture, animals and lifestyles. Thanks to some first-class resources, pupils learn well and take pleasure in sharing with visitors the knowledge they have gained.
128. In Year 3, pupils make an in-depth study of weather patterns and their effect on human activity. The same year group used a resource called 'Flat Stanley's Journal' to help them make useful booklets on wide ranging countries such as Mexico, Spain, Italy and Japan. By Year 4, most pupils are able to use their growing knowledge at least satisfactorily in order to compare and contrast environments. This was seen in their study of Chembakolli Village in Southern India and their sound attempts to

compare it with Cramlington New Town in relation to weather, family life and transport systems.

129. In these and other topics, pupils are quick to grasp facts and build up their reference and mapping skills. Many are particularly interested in life overseas and are keen to build up their knowledge through books and the Internet, both of which are used well. Most are less adept at recording their work to a high standard or using data on a more regular basis. Much of the pupils' work is completed on worksheets and although these reflect what they have learned, the finished results are frequently untidy and not adequately presented. More care is required in producing written work of a higher quality.
130. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers plan their topics satisfactorily and often research them very well, using their own knowledge and enthusiasms to good effect. The teaching strategies employed keep pupils motivated, particularly in the junior years. Classroom management is good ensuring there is no time wasted in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding. Sound assessments are made of pupil's attainment at regular intervals. The use made of resources is also often very effective. To complete their Indian topic, Year 2 pupils took part in an Indian Day in which they dressed up and prepared Indian dishes, such topics support their multicultural awareness extremely well. Pupils are very interested in much of the work and contribute well to their own learning through their behaviour and the effort and response they make. However, teachers place too little emphasis on the final standards of presentation reached by the pupils and need to raise their expectations in this respect.
131. The subject is well led and managed by an experienced co-ordinator who has a good grasp of its needs and organisation, including its importance in the wider curriculum. Topics are well resourced and supported by project loans from the local authority. Good use is made of visitors so that pupils can gain additional knowledge; for example, an adult group from Romania was very well received. The use of ICT is of growing importance and the CD-ROM of the Cramlington area that was produced by junior pupils and their teachers, was particularly impressive and useful. Good use is also made of visits away from the site to extend pupils' learning and experiences.

HISTORY

132. This is a subject which has improved considerably and grown in importance since the previous inspection, particularly in the junior years. It is now used as a good source of inspiration for art and English and also for the development of the school's approach towards pupil philosophy and thinking skills. By the end of Year 2, pupils' standards are broadly in line with those expected nationally. By the end of Year 4, standards are good and above those anticipated for the age of the pupils. There are no significant differences between the attainment of girls and boys. Some good work is prepared, mainly research, to help challenge higher attaining pupils and many achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language also make good progress. The work set is appropriate to their needs and abilities and they are well supported during class and group activities.
133. There is good emphasis throughout the school on pupils building up a sound sense of chronology. Most classrooms have simple yet effective time lines so that pupils gain a keen awareness of history and learning from the past. Those in Year 1 made a very worthwhile study of toys, past and present, and linked their historical learning with science by studying the forces needed to make the toys move. In Year 2, pupils

understand the role of important and influential figures from the past and wrote some effective paragraphs about Samuel Pepys and Grace Darling. Others were able to describe the sounds and smells of Scutari Hospital as part of their study of Florence Nightingale.

134. In Years 3 and 4, pupils research their chosen topics in considerable depth and, as a result, often reach high standards in much of their work. Year 3 pupils show good knowledge of what the Romans brought to Britain and to their own region in particular. They also have a very sound notion of what an invader meant to a given area and his impact on regional culture. Pupils research their topics well and know how to interrogate reference sources, including the Internet, to good effect. Pupils in Year 4 used good methods of research and enquiry when studying Ancient Egypt and had retained some fascinating facts about Tutankhamun. Their work on the Tudor period reflected well above average knowledge and understanding and led them to debate social and moral issues to a level anticipated for much older pupils.
135. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and frequently good or very good in Years 3 and 4 where the teaching is particularly imaginative and well organised. Most teachers have a flair and enthusiasm for the subject that is passed on effectively to the pupils. There is good emphasis on bringing topics to life by careful planning, high expectations and the imaginative use of good quality resources and visits. During the inspection, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were in the final stages of their research into the Roman and Tudor periods respectively. They learn particularly well by the teacher focusing on specific events or areas for investigation, rather than a more generic approach which may prove a little too much for the pupils. In Year 3, pupils rounded off their work with an excellent visit to Hadrian's Wall which clearly cemented their understanding of what had gone before.
136. Pupils in Year 4 concentrated their efforts on the wives of Henry the Eighth and the teacher used the pupils' growing knowledge of thinking skills and philosophy to answer questions such as 'Did marrying Ann Boleyn or Jane Seymour solve Henry's problems?' In another lesson, pupils worked very successfully in groups to put forward their chosen Queen as the one who had most influence on Henry and English history. Teachers plan these sessions well so that pupils can use their knowledge to take them onto the next level of learning and understanding. During lessons, teachers manage their classes effectively, carefully building on the pupils' natural curiosity and enthusiasm for the topic. Classroom support staff are also used well. Assessments are used satisfactorily and although pupils' recorded work could be presented more tidily, there is no doubting the knowledge and pleasure gained from much of their work.
137. History is effectively led and managed by two teachers who combine their strengths and interests very well in order to provide a good range of exciting and meaningful projects for the pupils. Every effort is made by them to ensure learning is accurate and enjoyable. They also take care to ensure there are effective links between classes including when pupils move to the nearby middle school. The resources are very good and frequently imaginative, such as when a 'visitor' comes into school dressed in Roman or Tudor costume and faced a wealth of well phrased questions. The subject is used effectively to extend pupils' writing as well as their speaking and research skills. Positive links also occur with other subjects such as art and design and ICT. Homework is used effectively to extend pupils' learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

138. By the end of Years 2 and 4, pupils' standards are above those expected for the age of the pupils. There is no significant difference between the standards reached by girls and boys. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve well over time. Standards and provision have improved since the previous inspection.
139. Although only one ICT lesson was observed during the inspection, many lessons were observed where ICT was used to supplement the work being completed. It is used well across the curriculum to support pupils' learning in other subjects. For example, in Mathematics, pupils use a data-handling package to print out graphs and pictograms to represent information they have gained. They also use mathematical programs well in almost every lesson to develop their number skills. In Science, Year 2 pupils were using computer microscopes to look at and comment on food materials – a very effective learning resource.
140. Pupils throughout the school are well motivated, behave very sensibly and responsibly and show much enjoyment in their progress when they are using the computers. By the end of Year 2, pupils are competent in using the computer mouse. They are beginning to develop typing skills using the keyboard to identify letters, capitalise, use the space bar and delete and insert. Pupils save their work successfully, use a variety of fonts and use the computer to generate pictures for use in cards. Year 3 and 4 pupils have created a CD-ROM about Cramlington. They used digital cameras, found information using the Internet, combined text and pictures and made and used a database for information. Pupils are familiar in using a range of equipment, such as digital cameras, movie cameras, tape recorders and computer microscopes. They know how to access the Internet to gain information. Teachers plan work of an ongoing nature that means that pupils are able to consolidate and develop their skills effectively.
141. In the lesson seen in Year 1, the teaching was excellent. The pupils were learning that everyday devices respond to signals. The objectives of the lesson were very clear and the expectations of the pupils were high. The rate of learning and the progress made in skills development reflected the outstanding quality of the teaching. By the end of the lesson, all the pupils knew how to record their voices using a tape recorder. They had learned a new skill which they could readily apply to other areas of learning. The use made of assessment could be usefully extended although satisfactory procedures are currently in place.
142. Leadership and management in the subject are very good. The co-ordinator has considerable expertise and has organised and led training for staff. Children's work and teachers' planning are monitored regularly. She is very enthusiastic and has been able to improve resources in the school because of her involvement in projects with outside agencies. Resources and provision in ICT has greatly improved since the previous inspection and are now good. The school uses the nationally agreed guidelines for teaching the subject and these have been adapted well to meet the needs of the pupils.

MUSIC

143. By the end of Years 2 and 4, pupils' standards are in line with age related expectations. There is no significant difference between the standards attained by girls and boys. All pupils make satisfactory progress including any with special

educational needs and those for whom English as an additional language. Standards and provision have been maintained since the previous inspection.

144. Pupils throughout the school sing tunefully and with expression, for example, during acts of worship. They produce a sound that has good quality and tone. Pupils hear a range of music when they come into assembly but few opportunities are given for them to talk about the music or know anything about the composer. The pupils' knowledge of composers is therefore somewhat limited.
145. Pupils handle the percussion instruments carefully and sensibly. They enjoy playing together as a group. This helps to increase their skills of co-operation and their enjoyment of music in general. Pupils in Year 1 are beginning to appreciate how a musical score is used as they use the instruments to accompany a familiar story, joining in at the appropriate time.
146. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers use the scheme of work to plan lessons effectively. The very good relationships that exist between teachers and pupils helps the pupils to work hard, listen attentively and contribute effectively to their activities.
147. The co-ordinator manages the subject satisfactorily. The nationally agreed guidelines for teaching the subject have been supplemented with other schemes to ensure that skills are taught in a systematic way. However, there are limited assessments made of pupils' progress and this is an area for development. Several pupils from Years 3 and 4 play the keyboard or guitar and others in the school learn the recorder. Performances by specialist musicians, such as the 'Hands on Drumming Group' enrich the curriculum and the pupils' appreciation of music. There are a large number of good quality resources that are used effectively to support pupils' learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

148. During the year, all pupils take part in a range of statutory activities covering dance, games, athletics and gymnastics. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 also have swimming lessons at the local leisure centre for one term each. In those aspects available for observation, pupils' standards are in line with those anticipated for their age by the end of Years 2 and 4. There is no significant difference between the standards reached by girls and boys. All pupils, including any with special education needs and those with English as an additional language, achieve satisfactorily over time. These standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. During the inspection no gymnastics lessons were observed but some Year 3 pupils were observed attending an after school gymnastics club run by an experienced volunteer and achieve well over time winning several awards.
149. Standards of swimming in Years 2 and 4 are good and the pupils achieve well. In the lesson seen, Year 2 pupils developed their confidence rapidly in the water. They used floats to develop strong leg kicks as they moved across the pool and were well supported by an experienced teacher supplied by the local authority.
150. Pupils understand the potential impact that exercise has on their bodies and are aware of the importance of warming up before beginning activities. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 1, the teacher asked the pupils to feel their hearts after the warm up to show how they were beating faster. The pupils know that when their blood flows quickly it is good for their bodies. In this lesson there was also good development of skills as the pupils were learning how to control a ball with their feet.

151. In another lesson in Year 1, the pupils were expressing themselves well through dance and reflecting the music in their movements. They responded appropriately to the music and expressed their feelings, moods and ideas. In Year 3, pupils were learning the skills of 'tag rugby' as they played various team games. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers show sound subject knowledge and organise the pupils well to make the best use of time and resources.
152. In most lessons the teachers present themselves well by dressing appropriately for the lessons and by paying due regard to safe working practices. They manage the pupils very effectively and the pupils respond by taking part enthusiastically and behaving well. Lessons are planned effectively and have a good structure ensuring learning is at least satisfactory over time.
153. The co-ordinator manages the subject satisfactorily. The school uses a scheme of work that combines the national guidelines with their own priorities. This ensures that all areas of the curriculum are covered and that skills are developed in a progressive way. The monitoring of lessons needs to be increased if good practice is to be disseminated across the school. Assessment procedures are linked to the national guidelines but could be used more effectively to determine those aspects of pupils' learning that need to be emphasised the most. Both the indoor and outside accommodation is good and used well. A wide range of resources provides pupils with quality equipment that enhances their learning and enjoyment.