

INSPECTION REPORT

St. Alphonsus' RC Primary School

North Ormesby, Middlesbrough

LEA area: Middlesbrough

Unique reference number: 111715

Headteacher: Gerard Finn

Lead inspector: Steve Bywater

Dates of inspection: 26th to 28th January 2004

Inspection number: 257556

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	178 full-time plus 25 part-time in the nursery
School address:	Cadogan Street North Ormesby Middlesbrough
Postcode:	TS3 6PX
Telephone number:	01642 243400
Fax number:	01642 243400
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A. F. Gaw
Date of previous inspection:	22 nd June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This average sized Roman Catholic Primary School serves the parish of St. Alphonsus and is situated in North Ormesby in east Middlesbrough. There are 178 pupils on the full-time roll and a further 25 children attend part-time in the nursery. Attainment on entry to the school is wide ranging but is best described as poor, especially in children's communication and social skills. The majority of pupils who attend the school live in a community which faces many of the issues associated with areas of deprivation. This is only partly reflected in the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals (currently 27 per cent), which is above the national average. A small number of pupils are from ethnic minority groups and four pupils are described as being at an early stage of English acquisition. This is a slightly higher proportion than that found in most schools. At the time of the inspection, there were 41 pupils with special educational needs - a proportion of pupils which is above that found in most schools. The majority of these pupils have specific learning difficulties but a significant number have emotional and behavioural needs. There are no pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need; this is below the usual figure in this size of school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18463	Steve Bywater	Lead inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, design and technology, art and design, music, physical education
09652	Colin Herbert	Lay inspector	
20301	Peter Isherwood	Team inspector	Science, the Foundation Stage
33098	Carole Maughan	Team inspector	English, geography, history, personal, social, health education and citizenship, special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

ALTECQ Education Ltd
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
GL53 7JX

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This **good** and inclusive school has many very good features and some that are excellent. There is **good** teaching overall and it is consistently very good in the nursery and reception classes. Pupils throughout the school achieve **well** over time and in lessons from a low base on entry. By the age of 11, pupils' standards meet national expectations in English, mathematics and science. Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes. Relationships are very good. The leadership and management of the school are **good**. The school provides **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching is good and all pupils make good progress. Pupils achieve well.
- The headteacher is a very good leader and he is very effectively supported by the deputy headteacher and other staff. They are all committed to improving pupils' standards and the quality of education. Governors support the school well.
- The provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is very good.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The quality of care is very good. The astute analysis of test results and pupils' assessments in English and mathematics are leading to improved standards.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. Relationships within the school are very good and pupils behave very well.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills and teachers sometimes miss opportunities to link subjects and use learnt skills across other subjects of the curriculum.
- Despite continual efforts of the school, parental links do little to support pupils' learning.

The school has developed well since the last inspection. The change in provision for children in the Foundation Stage has been remarkable. The curriculum is much better organised to provide for pupils' cultural development, although music provision has yet to become a priority. There has been a significant improvement in the monitoring of teaching and learning by co-ordinators but this is still not formal enough. The quality of teaching is even better than it was during the last inspection and teachers are supported well by support staff.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	B	C	A*	A*
Mathematics	C	D	C	C
Science	C	D	C	C

Key: A - very high; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2*

Overall, **pupils achieve well**. They achieve very well in the nursery and reception classes and achievement is good throughout Years 1 to 6. Pupils' attainment on entry is poor and the school has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. By the beginning of Year 1, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels is well below average, despite children making good progress. By the end of Year 2, standards in English and mathematics remain below national expectations but by the end of Year 6, standards in each subject are in line with the national average.

The table shows that in the 2003 national tests for 11 year olds, pupils' performance in English was very high (in the highest 5 per cent of all schools) when compared with the national average and when compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the above average Level 5

(71 per cent) was something to be very proud of. Performance in mathematics and science was in line with the national average and when compared with similar schools. In the national tests for Year 2, standards were in line with the national average in reading and below the national average in writing and mathematics. Additional lessons and the links with the secondary schools and local university are helping to improve standards. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with expectations, both at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. There are strengths in the way that very strong relationships support and underpin pupils' understanding of right and wrong actions. This encourages their very good behaviour. Pupils display a clear sense of belonging to their school community and demonstrate a very good attitude towards school. There are several initiatives which positively promote pupils' sense of responsibility. The attendance rate is **satisfactory**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is very good but overall the quality of teaching is good. Pupils with special educational needs are taught and supported very effectively by high quality support staff and teachers using well-organised individual education plans. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language are taught effectively and achieve at the same rate as their peers. Teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and relevant. However, pupils' independent learning skills are underdeveloped. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good and teachers use ICT well as a tool for teaching. Some opportunities to link subjects together and use numeracy skills in other subjects are missed. A good range of assessment strategies enables teachers to track pupils' attainment and set work carefully.

The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall and is enriched by a good range of opportunities to develop learning, both academically and socially, through well-organised activities before and after school and at lunchtime. There is a **very high level of care** for all the pupils' needs. Links with the community are **exceptional** and support pupils' personal development very well. There are very good links with the local secondary schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. **Leadership by** key staff is **good**. The headteacher is a very caring and sensitive leader and his very clear vision for the future is shared with all staff and governors. He is supported very well by the deputy head and senior teacher. As a team, they ensure that the management of the school is **good**. Monitoring and evaluation of the performance of staff and the quality of education provided have many very good features but subject co-ordinators' monitoring of teaching and pupils' work is not yet formalised. The governance of the school is **good**. The governors are knowledgeable of and fully committed to supporting the school. They challenge the school to achieve the best standards possible and some do a very good job in challenging outside agencies to provide additional support for the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents value the school and express positive comments about the information that they receive from school. They feel at ease about approaching the school over any concerns. Pupils also have positive views and speak enthusiastically about the care and security which the school provides.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- provide more opportunities for independent work;
- find more ways to interlink subjects and develop numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum;
- continue to explore approaches to the closer involvement of parents in their children's learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Children enter the school with **very low** levels of attainment. Pupils **achieve very well** in the nursery and reception class and **achieve well** in Years 1 to 6. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language **achieve well** as they progress through the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils achieve well because teaching and assessment are good.
- Specialist teaching and setting of pupils by ability is having a very positive effect on standards in Year 6.
- Pupils achieve well in their reading. Pupils' speaking skills and the quality of their language and vocabulary are not strong enough and this limits their writing.
- There is good integration of ICT in other subjects but there are too few opportunities for pupils to use and apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning and achieve well throughout school.
- There is a very good emphasis placed on investigative science.
- Pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to write things down in their own way, which limits independent thought.

Commentary

1. Standards of attainment when children enter the nursery are very low in all areas of learning. Almost all children enter the nursery with very much lower than expected skills in all areas of learning. Teachers and support staff pay particular attention to developing children's skills, knowledge and understanding. There is very good teaching, with well-ordered routines. However, despite the very good teaching and good achievement and progress, a very much smaller than expected number of children reach the expected early learning goals at the end of reception. For example, few children read simple passages or write sentences and few confidently carry out addition and subtraction sums without help.
2. Given their low standards on entry to school, by the end of Year 2, most pupils achieve well in reading. They achieve well because there is good quality teaching of early reading skills and the school makes reading a high priority. Most infant pupils reach average standards in writing and achieve well by the end of Year 2. Pupils make good progress in using correct punctuation and spelling and they begin to develop a neat handwriting style. Sometimes more able pupils lack an imaginative choice of words. Pupils are not doing as well as most children nationally in speaking and communicating; this weakness persists and it hampers their writing because the quality of their language and range of vocabulary is limited. Most pupils achieve well in reading and read with accuracy, fluency and expression. The school gives pupils plenty of opportunity to develop their reading and writing skills in other subjects and this enables them to improve the weaker aspects of their work. Drama and role-play are used well to develop communication skills and to stimulate pupils' writing.
3. In mathematics, all pupils achieve well from the very low starting point on entry to the school. At present, pupils make good progress, although standards are below national expectations at Year 2. Similarly, pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 2 and at Year 6 pupils are currently achieving in line with national expectations. As they do in English, teachers provide a more focused input by organising pupils in mixed age classes depending on their prior attainment in mathematics. This works well and teachers set challenging work for each class. Target setting is firmly established. Teachers identify pupils who would benefit from additional work and provide additional lessons. Around 40 pupils who struggle in mathematics and a

number of more able pupils use computer programs to support or extend their learning at various times of the day. However, a weakness is the shortage of opportunities which are planned for pupils to extend and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills in other areas of the curriculum. Although in science pupils produce graphs and charts and they apply their measuring skills effectively, not enough is done elsewhere. In English and mathematics the school has organised the subject co-ordinator to teach the more able pupils in Years 2 and 6 and this is having a very positive effect on pupils' achievement in both subjects.

4. In science, pupils achieve well because of the good quality teaching and the emphasis placed on investigative science. At this time, Year 2 attainment is below average. Although many pupils are attaining the expected level, few attain above this level. At Year 6, pupils are attaining average levels at present. Standards in ICT are in line with those normally expected for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Year 6 pupils are confident in word processing and use spreadsheets competently. Pupils achieve well and their skills are enhanced when teachers encourage pupils to apply their ICT skills in other subjects. However, on occasion opportunities are missed, particularly the kind where pupils would use their own initiative to select some application that fits with the topic they are doing.
5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because teachers set work at levels which meet their needs and ensure they receive good support. Planning and teaching ensures that pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve as much as they can and inspection evidence shows that their achievement rate is often greater than that of their peers.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.5 (14.8)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.3 (12.5)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.4 (15.1)	16.5 (16.3)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

6. The table above shows standards for Year 2 in the 2003 national tests compared with all schools were average in reading, but below average in writing and mathematics.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.0 (27.5)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.2 (25.8)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.7 (27.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

7. The table above shows standards for pupils in Year 6 in the 2003 tests were very high (top 5 per cent of all schools) in English and average in mathematics and science. Standards were higher in Year 6 than in Year 2 and evidence from pupils' prior attainment indicated sound progress in mathematics and science and very good improvements in English. There are no significant trends over time in achievement by gender. Generally the scores vary from year to year, but boys did amazingly well last year. A value added score of 101.2 puts the school in the well above average category when compared with schools nationally and also those with similar numbers of pupils on free school meals and compared with these pupils' prior attainment at Year 2.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **very good attitudes** to school and to their learning and they are **very well behaved**. The provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good overall**. Attendance is **satisfactory** and close to the national average. Punctuality is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are very good between pupils and also between pupils and all adults.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about school. They enjoy participating in lessons and their behaviour in lessons and around school is very good.
- There are excellent attitudes in some Year 6 lessons.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop independent skills.
- The provision for moral and social development is very good and good for spiritual and cultural development.
- The school values pupils with special educational needs and effectively develops their self-esteem.

Commentary

8. The school has made good progress in improving standards of behaviour and developing cultural awareness since the previous report.
9. From the moment that they arrive, pupils are enthusiastic about school. As they enter school pupils are happy. They enjoy coming to school. This enthusiasm extends into the classroom.
10. The pupils' behaviour is very good. In the classrooms, around school and in the dining hall at lunchtime there is consistently very good behaviour. There was no indication whatsoever of any unsociable or racist behaviour during the inspection. During the inspection period, very adverse weather conditions meant that there were no outdoor breaks and pupils showed extremely high standards of behaviour in classrooms, at break and at lunchtimes. All pupils are very polite and have good manners when addressing staff and visitors. Pupils show very good attitudes. They are eager to learn and co-operate very well with each other. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrated excellent attitudes in a challenging science lesson and in a citizenship session run by the local police.
11. Relationships within the school community are very good. St. Alphonsus' School is a very happy school where all pupils respond very well to the guidance that adults give them. Teachers and other adults are excellent role models for their pupils. The impact of these very high quality relationships is that all pupils are fully included in all school activities. Pupils are eager to talk about their work at school.
12. Pupils willingly carry out a range of monitorial tasks but there are too few opportunities for them to develop independent learning skills or contribute formally to the running of the school. Most activities are teacher led or directed.
13. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy school and show very positive attitudes to learning. This is because the tasks they are given are very well matched to their ability and they experience success in their lessons. Because of this and the very good quality support they receive from their teachers and teaching assistants, they gain confidence and are willing learners. The very good relationships that exist in the school enable them to tackle the tasks they are given without fear of failure.
14. The school provides good opportunities for its pupils to develop self-knowledge and a spiritual awareness. There is a very strong Christian ethos in the school. All pupils are valued and there are many opportunities to develop an understanding of the wonder and beauty of the world. Prayers are used very effectively to develop an understanding of a greater being. Occasionally opportunities for pupils to reflect on what has been said are missed, for example in whole school assemblies. The provision of moral and social development is very good. All

pupils have a very clear idea of right and wrong and they relate in a very good way to each other and work very well in group activities. Teachers and other adults provide excellent role models for pupils and this has a positive effect on both moral and social development. All pupils care for others. They raise large amounts of money for those who are less fortunate than themselves. Provision for cultural development is good. The school teaches pupils to understand and appreciate their own culture, with visitors to school including artists and musicians. There are many opportunities to learn about other countries and the traditions of different faith groups. However, the links between these visits and the wider curriculum are implicit rather than explicit at times. As part of their citizenship curriculum pupils are learning about living in a diverse society, discussing such topics as racism.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 94.2%

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.8	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

15. The attendance rate is satisfactory and it is in line with the average for similar schools. There was no unauthorised absence during the last reporting period. The school works hard with its parents to maintain this level of attendance. Punctuality to school is good.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	189	1	0
White – Irish	2		
White – any other White background	2		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1		
Mixed – White and Asian	2		
Mixed – any other mixed background	1		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	3		
Chinese	1		

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** and well supported by good quality assessment of pupils' work in each key stage. The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall but there is a good range of activities organised out of lesson time. The school makes **very good** provision for pupils with special educational needs and good provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE).

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching is **good**. It is very good in the nursery and reception classes and in a number of other classes. As a consequence, the quality of learning is **very good** in the Foundation Stage and **good** throughout the rest of the school. The quality of assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff have very good knowledge of pupils and understand their individual needs.
- Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is very good.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils, expecting them to work hard and achieve their best.
- The school uses teachers' specialist skills very well, especially in literacy and numeracy.
- Teachers use resources well, especially in ICT, and this results in good learning.
- Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and high expectations of work and behaviour. They use praise well and the management of behaviour is good.
- Teachers use adult support effectively so that all pupils, especially those with special educational needs, are taught well. Individual education plans are used very effectively as working documents.
- Occasionally, teachers over-direct pupils and this limits pupils' independent working skills.
- Although planning is satisfactory, teachers often miss opportunities to link subjects and develop and use skills, especially numeracy, across the curriculum.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	14 (46%)	8 (27%)	8 (27%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

16. The very good teaching in the Foundation Stage is explained fully in Part C of the report covering the areas of learning in this age group.
17. Throughout the school, teachers know pupils well and have a good understanding of their needs. This is because they listen to pupils and take an interest in them. It is also because they effectively assess how well pupils are performing and then use this information to plan work which is well matched for them. This is very evident in the work set for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The marking of pupils' work is mostly effective and the feedback to pupils, spoken and written, enables pupils to improve their performance. For example, a Year 6 teacher commented in marking, "This work is careless and slapdash and will stop you from attaining a Level 5, of which you are capable". Following the immediate improvement the teacher wrote, "Well done. You are mature and able to take teacher's advice". Pupils respond well in their own self-assessments and say, for example, "I'm not as strong at making predictions. I am aiming for a Level 5 and getting there". They have a good knowledge of their own learning and are clear about their own targets for improvement. Occasionally, in some classes, English marking is less effective.
18. Reading, writing and mathematics remain areas of priority in securing for all pupils the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. In order to achieve this aim the school has arranged children in classes according to ability in Years 3 to 6. This has enabled staff who are skilled in the teaching of English and mathematics to utilise their talents to best effect. Teachers have implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies very well and use the interactive whiteboard very effectively as a teaching tool. In English lessons, teachers use challenging, well-chosen whole class texts to interest and involve pupils. In numeracy lessons the teachers encourage pupils to find methods and strategies to solve problems. The mental mathematics and whole class teaching sessions are sometimes too long and on some occasions pupils become a little less interested. However, in most lessons and in most subjects, a good balance between whole class, group work or individual work creates a brisk pace and pupils show high levels of interest. Teachers sometimes over direct pupils and miss opportunities to use more practical, investigative and problem-solving activities to motivate pupils and develop their independent learning skills. Final sessions of lessons are effectively used to reinforce the learning objectives and evaluate pupils' progress.

19. Teaching is generally well thought out and made interesting for pupils. The school correctly recognises the different ways in which individual children learn and has begun to consider these when planning teaching and learning activities. Teachers share what is to be taught and learnt with pupils at the start of lessons and this helps pupils to remain focused and, as a result, pupils cover sufficient ground in the lesson. However, there are times when teachers miss links which would develop pupils' learning. For example, although pupils use their numeracy skills in science, teachers' planning seldom identifies opportunities for them to use the skills in any other subject. In art, although there are good examples of relevant work including using the local community and famous artists, opportunities to use these lessons to develop pupils' cultural development are missed.
20. A great strength of the teaching is the very good relationships between staff and pupils. This is the main reason why they manage pupils' behaviour so effectively. Common to almost all lessons is the teachers' shared expectation of good pupil behaviour and high level of interest in learning, which is effectively improving pupils' attitudes. Teachers use praise very well to encourage and motivate pupils. They work hard to raise pupils' self esteem and confidence and there is mutual respect between staff and pupils. The behaviour was very good and no time is wasted by having to discipline the class. Pupils are conscientious and complete a lot of work.
21. Teachers plan work effectively for pupils with special educational needs. It meets their particular needs. Individual education plans are very effectively used as working documents to record pupils' progress. They are linked effectively to the English and mathematics aspects of the National Curriculum. This, coupled with regular monitoring of targets, ensures pupils make good progress in their learning.
22. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are well catered for in lessons. There are currently no pupils who require additional support though teachers are careful to ensure that they are fully involved in all lessons. The speaking and listening focus within teachers' planning provides opportunities for all pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language, to develop their vocabulary and become confident speakers.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. It is suitably broad and interesting and enriched by a good range of worthwhile activities. Extra-curricular provision is good. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and the provision for PSHCE is well planned. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The curriculum for pupils in the nursery and reception class is good.
- The school offers a good range of additional learning opportunities for pupils outside lessons.
- A good range of visits and visitors enrich the curriculum.

Commentary

23. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum which meets national requirements. Everything that should be taught is taught or planned to be taught. Religious education and collective worship are reported upon separately in a different report. The school has understandably concentrated on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and has been particularly successful in doing so. In addition, since the last inspection the school has made very good progress in developing the Foundation Stage curriculum and in making significant improvements in ICT.
24. Pupils with special educational needs are included in all aspects of the curriculum. Most of their learning takes place within the classroom. When they are withdrawn it is as part of a well

thought out programme related to individual need. All pupils are learning to respect one another and support each other's learning, which most do very well. The school successfully provides equal opportunities for all pupils, whatever their age, ability, background or ethnicity, to help them make mostly good progress as they move through the school.

25. There is a good curriculum, which pays particular attention to developing children's personal, social and emotional needs. It covers all the recommended areas of learning and all children are given opportunities to develop an understanding of their own faith as well as that of other world faiths.
26. Throughout the school teachers provide a good range of additional experiences to enrich pupils' learning. These include some exceptional links with the community which especially help to develop pupils' personal development. Educational visits are always relevant to the topics being studied or in tune with the school's ethos. These include visits to the Jorvik Viking Centre in York, Saltburn Beach and the BBC studios to be involved in the filming of a children's programme. Visitors also provide a valued input. These include visiting theatre groups, Kerbcraft groups (that encourage road safety) and Middlesbrough Borough Council personnel, who have done much to provide guidance in developing citizenship. Drugs awareness and sex education policies are firmly in place and the provision is good. In sex education lessons, the school nurse supports school staff in sensitively informing pupils in accordance with the requirements of the national curriculum and the established teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.
27. Extra-curricular activities also enhance the curriculum. Line dancing is the best attended and over 50 per cent of pupils enjoy this lunchtime club. In addition there are drama, chess, science, mathematics and sports clubs.
28. Accommodation is suitably large and spacious and provides an attractive and stimulating environment. Resources are generally good and ensure that pupils have all they need to support their learning.

Care, guidance and support

St. Alphonsus' RC Primary School provides a **very high** level of care for the physical and emotional needs of its pupils and there has been an improvement in this aspect of school life since the last inspection. The school also provides **very good** support, advice and guidance to its pupils and it provides a **good** opportunity for pupils to be involved in school life by seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a very high level of care for its pupils.
- Very effective procedures are in place for health, safety and child protection.
- Very good procedures are in place to support, advise and guide pupils.
- There are good opportunities within school for the views of pupils to be heard.
- There is very good support for pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

29. St. Alphonsus' School looks after its pupils very well. This high level of care is underpinned by the very good relationships that exist within the school community and the very good knowledge that all staff have of the pupils. Parents also share this very positive view and consider that the school is very caring towards their children.
30. The quality of care begins with the sensitive arrangements for supporting both parents and their children when children first enter the school. This helps children to quickly feel at home and adjust to the routines of school life. The school takes its responsibility for health, safety and child protection very seriously. Appropriate records are maintained for risk assessments,

first aid, fire drills and accident recording. Additionally, the school benefits from a thorough annual inspection from an outside agency. The procedures for child protection are very effective, understood by all staff and managed very well by the named persons.

31. There is a very good level of provision for the support, advice and guidance of all pupils. This is based on the very good knowledge that all adults have of pupils and the very high quality of trusting relationships that exist between children and adults within the school community. Pupils know that the school will listen to their concerns and they describe adults in school as very friendly and helpful. The school is currently considering the setting up of a school council and this will further improve the opportunities for pupils to make their views known about aspects of school life.
32. There are very good systems in place to track and identify pupils who may need additional support. The regular monitoring and reviewing of pupils' needs ensures that they are being met effectively. Links with outside agencies are satisfactory.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has maintained the **satisfactory** quality of its links with parents and it has now developed **excellent** relationships with the community. Links with other schools are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent quality of community links.
- The good link with local schools.
- There are very good opportunities for parents to be involved in helping pupils with special educational needs develop their learning.

Commentary

33. A small number of parents help out in school on a regular basis and more give their time to support class visits into the community. Although there is no formal fund raising organisation in school, parents are supportive of such events as the Parish Fair and Race Nights. The school values the contribution that all its parents make to school life. Parents who responded to the questionnaire or who attended the meeting expressed very positive views about the school. In particular they felt that there had been improvements to the internal environment of the school and the quality of teaching and standards.
34. Although the school does not regularly seek the views of parents, it encourages them to come in, at any time, if there are concerns or issues to discuss. Most parents are happy with the quality of information that they received from the school and they say that reports are useful and informative. They would, however, like to be informed about the topics that their children would be studying each term. A home/school diary system is in place in junior classes but has not been introduced into infant classes.
35. The school has developed an excellent partnership with the local community since the last inspection. This has had a very good impact on pupils' understanding of the importance of living in the community and adopting a very responsible attitude towards others. For example, a very strong link exists with the local police force and fire brigade, who often visit school and participate with pupils in role-play exercises. Additionally, the school benefits from the support of many other organisations, including the local Rotary Club who have recently helped set up an initiative to introduce chess into school as an extra-curricular activity. The school is also very aware of those who are less well off than themselves and pupils raise generous amounts of money for local, national and international charitable organisations.
36. A good link exists with St David's Technology College and this ensures that pupils in Year 6 are able to make the move into the next stage of their education without any concerns.

37. Parents are informed at an early stage if their child has special educational needs. They are regularly updated on how their child is progressing. Targets are discussed and agreed at parent consultation evenings. Parents and older pupils are encouraged to contribute towards the targets.
38. The visits to Teesside University and the visitors from this institution are positive developments and currently support pupils' progress in ICT. Links with Middlesbrough Council have helped to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of citizenship. Close links exist with a number of secondary schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is very good.

The governance of the school is **good**. The quality of leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. This has been maintained since the previous inspection. The quality of leadership of key staff and other staff with responsibilities is **good** and **very good** in English, mathematics, science, the Foundation Stage and special educational needs. Overall the effectiveness of management is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body ensures the school fulfils its statutory duties.
- Governors keep in touch with all aspects of school life and are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They challenge the school well as critical friends.
- The headteacher shows a clear vision and sense of purpose. He has high aspirations for the school.
- Leadership of English, mathematics, science, the Foundation Stage and special educational needs is very good.
- There is a very strong commitment to the development of staff.
- Monitoring of the curriculum is not formal enough.

Commentary

39. The governing body plays an active part in school life. It is well organized and has a range of committees and governors with specific roles who deal competently with the curriculum, financial and personnel matters. All statutory requirements are met. Governors are highly committed and supportive. They keep in touch with the daily life of the school through regular visits, with some providing support on a regular basis. They are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and clear of their role as 'critical friends'. They are suitably involved in creating the school development plan and they monitor the implementation of policies and annual planning well. There is regular reviewing of performance reflected in the school's development plan.
40. The headteacher provides strong and sensitive leadership. His clear vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations ensure that the school develops and improves. There is clear inspection evidence to show that standards have been maintained and developed. The headteacher places high priority on the development of staff, delegates well and gives good support to allow staff to 'grow'. Because of this, the staff are willing to accept responsibility and gain valuable experience from within the school and beyond; they are keen to share their knowledge and skills to support each other in their roles. The headteacher leads by example and is a very good role model for pupils and staff. Staff have confidence in his leadership and feel valued. Teams are well established and specific responsibilities and accountability are clearly defined. Parents feel the school is very well led and managed.
41. The headteacher and the very able deputy headteacher work in close partnership to ensure the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and are well supported by the senior teacher. Subject leadership is good overall and very good in English, mathematics, science, the

Foundation Stage and special educational needs. This is because pupil progress is carefully tracked in these areas and test results are carefully analysed to identify areas of weakness. This then informs future action within the school development plan. Improvements in the Foundation Stage mean that pupils now make a very good start to school and they achieve very well in relation to their capabilities. Co-ordinators in English, mathematics and science have had few opportunities to observe lessons, though the outcome of this monitoring is not formally recorded and therefore has limited impact on the development of individual staff. Other subject co-ordinators have not yet had an opportunity to observe lessons in their subject area though they check teachers' plans and assessments to ensure pupils reach the expected standard for their age.

42. The school places high priority on the inclusion of all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs benefit greatly from the very high quality systems put in place by the special educational needs co-ordinator. Regular effective monitoring of provision ensures that pupils receive very high quality support. The pupils make good progress and achieve well because of the systems that identify their needs and ensure that they are met very effectively. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection because of the improvement in provision.
43. The management for pupils for whom English is an additional language is good and teachers carefully analyse results of assessments to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can.
44. The professional development of staff is well organised and reflects the needs of the individual and the school. Performance management procedures are well established and are monitored to check that they bring about whole school improvement. The headteacher and governors are very aware of the need to check that all staff have a sensible workload and some time and support is provided to allow them to carry out their role. The standard of financial management is good and this helps the school to achieve its educational priorities and apply the principles of best value at all times.
45. The very positive relationships and commitment of all members of the team are significant aids to raising achievement. There is a very high level of care and concern for pupils coupled with high expectations and this results in good and often very good achievement. The creation of a high quality environment and resources is a tribute to the school's desire for pupils to have 'the very best' of everything to support their learning and development. The school hopes to provide further information and support for parents in the future.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	601,448	Balance from previous year	55,825
Total expenditure	561,243	Balance carried forward to the next	39,895
Expenditure per pupil	2,836		

The carry forward figure has been planned in order to maintain staffing levels in the nursery due to an increase in pupil numbers.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision is **very good** in the Foundation Stage.

46. There has been very good improvement in the Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. The school has addressed the key issue of relationships between the nursery and reception classes very effectively. The relationship between the nursery and reception classes is now excellent. Children get off to a very good start in the part-time nursery class and reception. There were 31 children attending on a part-time basis in the nursery and 23 full-time in the reception class.
47. Standards of attainment when children enter the nursery are very low in all areas of learning. Teachers and support staff work very hard to improve standards. The quality of teaching is consistently very good in both nursery and reception and this ensures that all children make good and at times very good progress and achieve well based on their capabilities. There are excellent relationships between all adults in Foundation Stage, providing children with very good role models for social development. Very good leadership and management of the Foundation Stage has led to the good improvements since the previous inspection. The very good systems of assessment and recording shared by all staff ensure work and activities are well matched to children's needs. Children with special educational needs are fully included in all lessons and the school works closely with a specialist teacher for hearing impairment.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-ordered routines have a very positive effect on social development.
- Children achieve well because of the very good emphasis on social and emotional development.

Commentary

48. Almost all children enter the nursery with very much lower than expected social skills. Teachers and support staff pay particular attention to developing personal, social and emotional skills. There is very good teaching, with well-ordered routines such as picking up name cards on arrival in the nursery. There is an insistence on good manners and children are expected to say 'please' and 'thank you'. Children settle very quickly into school routines because they feel wanted and valued. They are given many opportunities to take turns when working in groups. Behaviour is very good. Teachers use role-play situations such as the garage in reception very effectively to develop relationships. Despite the very good teaching and good achievement and progress, a very much smaller than expected number of children reach the expected early learning goals at the end of reception. Children listen well and relate very well to adults. However, a significant number have not developed an understanding of how their actions affect others, despite the good opportunities provided, and they often rely on teacher direction rather than using their own initiative.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults use all opportunities to develop communication skills.

- Adults are good role models when pronouncing words, although the pronunciation of individual letter sounds could be improved at times.

Commentary

49. Children enter the nursery with exceptionally low language skills. There are very good opportunities to develop communication and language skills in all activities. In the more formal language sessions, children are encouraged to listen to nursery rhymes. They handle books and the use of name cards develops recognition of their own name. Teachers and other adults repeat the often immature or incomplete sentences used by the children thus giving them good role models. When teaching letter sounds there is a tendency for some adults not to make the initial sound 'crisp' enough. In all activities adults develop children's language skills very effectively by discussing what they are doing and asking questions. Older children are given opportunities to copy or occasionally write their name from memory. Teaching in both nursery and reception is very good and this has a very positive effect on learning. All activities are well planned. Lessons are interesting, for example a lesson on initial letter sounds in which children had to 'jump' in the circle if items had the same initial letter as their name. Despite the very good quality teaching and learning and good achievement, attainment is well below the expected level at the end of reception. Few children read simple passages or write sentences.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching places an emphasis on practical activities.
- Children have good attitudes and achieve well in mathematics.
- There is good development of mathematical language.

Commentary

50. There is very good quality teaching in mathematical development which helps children achieve well from a very low starting point. Despite this, attainment is well below the expected level by the end of reception. Children learn number rhymes and most rote count to 10 and above. Few confidently carry out addition and subtraction sums without help. Most children recognise two-dimensional shapes, including circles, triangles and squares. Teachers make very good use of resources. In work on full and empty, buckets were used very effectively. Scales are used very well in work on lighter and heavier. The higher attaining children record on pre-prepared sheets. The water and sand trays are used very effectively in both classes to develop an understanding of capacity. Teachers and support staff develop mathematical language well when they repeatedly talk about 'full', 'empty', 'lighter' and 'heavier'. Children enjoy mathematics and are keen learners, and this has a positive effect on the good progress they make.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

The provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good quality teaching provides children with many opportunities to learn about the world around them.
- Resources are used very effectively to develop learning.

51. There is very good quality teaching and support that ensures that all children achieve well. Most children enter the school with very restricted knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Teachers and support staff work very effectively together to develop children's

knowledge and understanding. They link areas of learning together very effectively when they record different types of transport used by the children. Imaginary skills are developed well when children imagine what they might see on a train journey. An anatomical doll is used very effectively to illustrate what is inside a child's body. In the nursery the water tray is used very effectively to illustrate that some materials float while others sink. Children use computers with adult support and a large mouse ensures that children with co-ordination difficulties access programs easily. Despite the very good quality teaching and better than expected progress, attainment at the end of reception is well below expected levels. Most children talk about their family but a significant minority are not able to discuss their likes and dislikes about their environment. Few have the expected levels of understanding of past and present events.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good range of planned physical activities.
- Physical activities are linked effectively to other areas of learning.

Commentary

52. No outdoor sessions took place in the inspection period because of very adverse weather conditions. Planning and photographic evidence show that there are a wide range of outdoor activities, including climbing and use of large toys and equipment. One reception class formal physical education session took place. This was very well planned with very good quality teaching. Very good use was made of demonstration both by staff and children. Children responded very well to the high expectations of behaviour. Standards of attainment are below those expected. Children make good use of space but many have difficulty in throwing and catching beanbags. Teachers use other lessons effectively to develop physical skills such as cutting using scissors. In a creative development session, reception children persevere very well even though they find cutting out difficult because of underdeveloped co-ordination skills. Children achieve well from a very low base because of the very good quality teaching and opportunities given to them. Despite this, few attain the expected levels by the end of reception.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Quality of teaching is very good. A large number of interesting activities help to develop learning.
- Children achieve well from a very low base.

Commentary

53. Children enter the nursery with much lower than expected creative skills. Teaching is very good. Adults provide children with a large number of very good, interesting activities to develop creative skills. In the nursery children are encouraged to experiment with colour when they paint. More formal printing, using a variety of shapes and materials including corrugated paper, results in good quality pieces of art work being produced in reception. Children are encouraged to use their imagination but many find this difficult and are at a much lower than expected level in this area. In music, children have many opportunities to join in songs and rhymes. In reception children develop their musical skills very well when they add percussion to 'The Train Ride' song. Most children join in the singing but a few find this difficult. Despite the very good quality of teaching and good achievement, many children do not attain the expected levels of attainment when they leave reception.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school.
- Pupils' speaking skills and the quality of their language and vocabulary are not strong enough and this limits their writing.
- The leadership and management by the co-ordinator is very good.
- Specialist teaching is having a very positive effect on standards in Year 6.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.

Commentary

54. Given their low standards on entry to school, by the end of Year 2 most pupils achieve well in reading. They use a range of methods to work out the meaning of new words and are keen to express opinions about the main events and characters in their books. They show enthusiasm and enjoyment for reading and take pride in showing off the comments in their home-school reading diaries. They understand the value of reading and describe being able to read as 'fantastic' and 'exciting'. They achieve well because there is good quality teaching of early reading skills and the school makes reading a high priority.
55. Most infant pupils achieve well in their writing. They express simple ideas well but sometimes their writing lacks the imaginative choice of words that are usually associated with higher standards. Assessments of their language skills when they start school show that they are not doing as well as most children of their age in speaking and communicating; this weakness persists and it hampers their writing because the quality of their language and range of vocabulary is more limited than usual. Pupils make good progress in using correct punctuation and spelling and they begin to develop a neat handwriting style.
56. The weakness in pupils' language and communication skills persists in junior classes and shows during class discussions or when an adult questions them. Many pupils still lack the confidence to offer an answer or explanation because they find it hard to explain what they are thinking. Although teachers and support staff are very good at carefully phrasing questions, in some cases pupils do not always understand what they are being asked and this means they cannot respond. The school is well aware of this difficulty and teachers now identify opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills within weekly teaching plans. The school also plans to use the new government teaching materials to further improve these areas, as soon as they become available.
57. By the end of Year 6, most pupils achieve well in reading and read with accuracy, fluency and expression. They understand the main ideas in stories and poems and are able to justify their views. Most can use books to find information. The school has decided that the subject co-ordinator will teach the more able pupils in Year 6 and this is having a very positive effect on pupil achievement in both reading and writing. Very careful assessments are made and these are used to plan the next steps of learning through individual targets. The school's success of 71 per cent of Year 6 pupils achieving above national expectations in English last year is recognition of the success of the many creative teaching ideas and methods being used such as drama, video and art. The school also recognises the different ways in which individual children learn and has begun to consider these learning styles when planning teaching and learning activities.
58. Pupils who find learning difficult are supported well during lessons and this enables them to make good progress. However, in a minority of lessons independent activities are not carefully enough matched to the ability of higher and lower attaining pupils and they do not achieve as

well as they could. Although most lessons are carefully planned to ensure all pupils achieve well, in some lessons planning does not show exactly what pupils are expected to learn or how their learning will be assessed. This results in a lack of 'focus' for the lesson and the learning that takes place is limited. In the vast majority of lessons seen pupils' attitudes and behaviour were very good and this enabled teachers to make very good use of the time available.

59. Literacy lessons are mostly of good quality and some very good teaching was observed during the inspection. Teachers have good and sometimes very good subject knowledge and this means that pupils develop the skills of using grammar, punctuation and spelling at a good pace. Overall, teachers set high expectations for handwriting and presentation which results in pupils showing pride in their work. Some good examples of marking and feedback to pupils was observed during the inspection but this was not always followed up and opportunities for pupils to improve their work were lost.
60. The subject co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management. Systematic tracking of pupil progress means that weaknesses are identified and action is taken to remedy problems. Careful assessments at the end of each term help to set pupil targets in reading and writing and teachers have a clear understanding of how to help pupils to progress further. The school recognises the need to improve standards in speaking and listening, and in writing at the higher level in Year 2, and has made this a whole school priority.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

61. The school gives pupils plenty of opportunity to develop their reading and writing skills in other subjects and this enables them to improve the weaker aspects of their work. Drama and role-play are used well to develop communication skills and to stimulate pupils' writing, while history lessons provide pupils with opportunities to imagine themselves as Ancient Greeks or to re-tell stories such as The Great Fire of London. A wide range of visitors provides a wealth of opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills. The use of school visits to stimulate reading, writing and communication skills, however, is underdeveloped.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because teaching and assessment are good.
- Setting arrangements are successful.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to use and apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- The subject is led and managed very well.

Commentary

62. The positive picture of the last inspection has been improved upon. All pupils achieve well from the very low starting point on entry to the school so that although standards are below national expectations by the end of Year 2, this represents good progress. Similarly, pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 2 and by the end of Year 6 pupils' standards are in line with national expectations.
63. The quality of teaching and learning are generally good and this is especially the case when lessons are taught by the subject co-ordinator who has very good subject knowledge. In order to provide a more focused input, the school has organised pupils in mixed age classes in the juniors depending on their prior attainment in mathematics. This works well because assessment is good and teachers know well what pupils need to do next to improve. Test results are analysed regularly and effectively by the subject co-ordinator and she helps to set the challenging targets for each class. This is done each half term and any gaps in pupils'

knowledge and understanding are identified and included in the subsequent targets for each class.

64. Target setting is firmly established. Pupils are aware of their targets, many of which are in pupils' books, and teachers track pupils' progress carefully. Teachers identify pupils who would benefit from additional work and provide additional lessons such as 'booster work' after school, currently for higher attainers but soon to be arranged for others. In addition, around 40 pupils who are identified with learning difficulties in mathematics and a number of gifted and talented mathematicians regularly use computer programs to support their learning.
65. Lessons are carefully planned and confirm that the National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well. The school uses suitable planning which is challenging for all groups of pupils and the variety of activities keeps pupils interested. Occasionally the mental mathematics starter and the main teacher led activity are a little too long but generally lessons move at a brisk pace. The end session is often used well to share problems and to show how well pupils are doing.
66. A positive feature of the teachers' work is the way that most teachers encourage pupils to explain how they calculate their answers. This helps pupils to understand what they are doing. Sometimes, however, teachers set work and guide pupils too much without providing the resources which would support them in finding things out for themselves. This reduces their independent learning. Further strengths include the very good relationships between staff and pupils and teachers' use of the interactive whiteboard to aid their teaching. Marking is often good and in the best examples teachers are sensitive and supportive and inform pupils of how to improve.
67. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator leads by example. She has monitored work and assessments very well and observed the teaching in other classes. Whilst this monitoring of teaching is generally effective, it is often not recorded or fed back to others in a formal way. This results in teachers not being made aware of how to improve their practice.

Mathematics across the curriculum

68. All aspects of the mathematics curriculum are taught but, with the exception of science, very few opportunities are planned for pupils to extend and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills in other areas of the curriculum. In science, pupils produce graphs and charts and they apply their measuring skills effectively. Not enough is done elsewhere.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout school.
- There is a very good emphasis placed on investigative science.
- An over-reliance on worksheets limits independent learning.
- Assessment is used very effectively to develop learning.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

69. Pupils throughout the school achieve well because of the good quality teaching and the emphasis placed on investigative science. Inspection evidence shows that in Year 2 attainment is below average and, although many pupils attain the expected level, few attain the higher level. Pupils in Year 6 are attaining at average levels. This reflects the 2003 national test scores. No significant difference was observed between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make progress in line with their classmates

because teachers and support assistants give additional support. In mixed attainment groups pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils receive good peer support. Year 2 higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of living things. They understand the life cycle of a butterfly. A number of pupils do not reach this level. They do not fully understand why plants need light and water to survive. Many pupils have difficulty in making scientific suggestions. Most pupils understand the need to stay healthy. Pupils identify a range of materials and identify natural and man-made materials. Higher attaining pupils understand that some materials change form when they are heated or frozen. By the end of Year 6, pupils have built well on their previous knowledge. They present their work very well. They investigate scientific questions such as 'will white bread go mouldy before brown bread?'. They have a better than expected understanding of micro-organisms. Pupils understand why it is necessary to carry out an investigation more than once to validate the result. Pupils have good understanding of multiple forces and a sound understanding of insulators and conductors. Pupils record using a variety of charts and graphs, including straight-line graphs.

70. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In most lessons there is very good planning with very good emphasis placed on developing investigation and enquiry skills. Occasionally there is an over-reliance on worksheets and this limits the opportunities for independent learning. In very good lessons pupils are very well challenged by questions posed by the teacher. In Year 6, pupils worked together very well to investigate the effects of micro-organisms on bread. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge. They have very good relationships with the pupils and as a result class control is usually very good. Occasionally when pace becomes a little slow pupils become restless and a little time is lost. Teachers use assessment very effectively to measure progress and ensure work is at the correct level. Self assessment by pupils, for example that carried out in Year 6, is of very high quality and allows pupils to measure their progress and challenge themselves.
71. There is very good leadership and management in the subject. The subject co-ordinators are committed to raising standards. They have identified and addressed successfully areas for development in the subject. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection because of improvements in the quality of teaching and an increased emphasis on scientific enquiry and investigation. Well run extra-curricular science clubs effectively enhance the science curriculum.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is good. The school has acted on the recommendations of earlier reports with determination to resource a significantly improved provision.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good achievement by pupils.
- There is good integration of ICT in other subjects.
- Effective contribution to teaching and learning by other agencies.
- The pupils do not show enough independence in selecting some of their own applications.

Commentary

72. A good programme of national and school-based training has increased teacher confidence and expertise. As a result, all teachers are able to use the computer suite to build up pupils' basic skills in the complete range of required topics. Year 6 pupils are confident in word processing. Some very good work in the Years 5 and 6 class shows pupils have word processed letters to the 'Editor' to complain about vandalism, litter and thefts. They use spreadsheets confidently and input formulas to enable them to interrogate information. Pupils also use the computer to control events. For example, they devise instructions to turn a light on and off. Most pupils in Key Stage 2 are confident in moving text about and illustrating it with 'imported' pictures. They readily open up the Internet and are proud of their research work in various subjects, including geography and history. Good planning by all teachers takes pupils through a carefully structured set of learning steps. As a result the pupils' standards are

securely up to the expected level in Year 2 and Year 6. This represents good achievement by pupils.

73. A suitable scheme of work underpins teachers' planning and enables teachers to build steadily on pupils' previous learning. However, only two lessons were seen and in these teaching was good, although no lessons were seen in Years 1 or 2. The quality of work on display and saved on computer and discussions with pupils show that pupils are making good progress. A positive feature is the link with Teesside University and the 'Meteor project' which enables other adults to support staff and pupils particularly well.
74. Pupils enjoy using the computer suite and a very pleasing sight of pupils supporting each other in a very friendly way was a common feature in the two lessons seen. Pupils concentrate well and show a good degree of independence when using computers. However, this independence could be further improved if pupils were encouraged to choose programs for themselves to support their work.
75. The subject co-ordinator has a good oversight of developments and planning to deal with those aspects that need further attention. She has acquired a good range of relevant software and hardware to ensure pupils can enhance and consolidate their skills.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. Teachers encourage pupils to apply their ICT skills in other subjects. Many teachers regularly make good use of the interactive white boards to make learning more effective in English and mathematics. Most years use the Internet to get information for their topic work and teachers use mathematics software effectively to support pupils who are of lower ability or with special educational needs. Pupils in Year 1 have produced pictograms on the computer to consolidate their data handling work. Some classes have the opportunity to incorporate the computer into art activities and Years 3 and 4 have done so by producing work in the style of Kandinsky and William Morris by producing repeating patterns. However, on occasion opportunities are missed, particularly the kind where pupils might use their initiative to select their own application instead of being directed by the teacher.

HUMANITIES

77. In humanities, work was sampled in **history** and **geography**, with only one lesson seen in history. **Religious education** was addressed separately by a different inspection. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. From work samples and talking to pupils, standards in history and geography are typical of those seen in most schools at Years 2 and 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards in geography were below national expectations.
78. In both subjects it is clear that a range of visitors and visits play an important part in making the work interesting and relevant, though the range of visits is limited. At the meeting held before the inspection, parents spoke with enthusiasm about visits to Jorvik Viking Experience at York and Middlesbrough Football Club and the benefits for their children. From discussions with pupils in Years 5 and 6 many obviously enjoy history and geography and they spoke enthusiastically about their current work on Ancient Greece and rivers. One pupil for whom English is an additional language was particularly captivated by the work on Greek mythology and this encouraged him to read more in his own time and to do some further research.
79. Subject co-ordinators have developed and monitored planning but have not yet had an opportunity to observe teaching in their subjects. This needs to be addressed in order to monitor the quality of provision. Appropriate assessment procedures are in place and resources have been improved in both subjects since the previous inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

80. No lessons were observed in design and technology or physical education during the inspection. Since the only art and music lessons observed were in Key Stage 1, no firm judgement could be made on provision in these subjects. However, work was sampled and pupils' work was scrutinised. As in the humanities subjects, co-ordinators help to develop and monitor planning but they have not yet had an opportunity to observe teaching in their subjects.
81. In **art and design**, there are some good examples of work especially as a result of studying the work of a wide range of artists but there is limited three-dimensional work on display. Pupils in Year 2 demonstrated sound observational skills as they looked at the patterns and shapes in photographs of local buildings. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 created pictures by looking at the work of Seurat as a starting point and using the computer to produce works in a Pointillism style. The work currently on display uses a limited range of media but planning shows all aspects of art are taught. There are links to other subjects; for example, Year 2 produce work linked to history work on the Great Fire of London, but some opportunities are missed in other subjects. In particular, the cultural development of pupils could usefully be extended if teachers plan to make more of links with this subject. The work in art is currently too teacher-directed and pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to express themselves through exploring their own ideas and their own choice of materials.
82. In **design and technology** planning shows that all that should be taught is taught but there is little evidence available at this time. In **physical education**, planning shows all strands of the subject except outdoor and adventurous activities are taught.
83. There was little evidence that **music** figures prominently in the work of the school but the one lesson seen was very good. Pupils in Year 2 develop a sound understanding of how to explore sounds and use symbols. Some teachers lack confidence in the teaching of music but others have good skills. A weaker element of music is singing because teachers do not encourage pupils to improve their diction or breathing. This results in pupils not achieving the standards expected for their age. Most pupils, however, make an effort.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

84. Personal, social, health and citizenship (PSHCE) is fully covered in a curriculum which includes drugs, alcohol and sex and relationships education. This is a very positive aspect of the school curriculum. The school sensitively manages all aspects of the programme. The development of pupils' self-esteem and the opportunities to talk about their feelings is a real strength. The school provides good opportunities to reward pupils for their efforts, for example through the house system. All pupils have been involved in creating their school and class rules, so they all fully understand right from wrong. Within class, pupils often help each other and the courtesy shown by most pupils to one another and visitors speaks highly of their personal development. However, although the school listens well to pupils, there is currently no forum such as a school council where pupils' views can be sought formally. During circle time, pupils know they have a safe place to talk about their feelings and the things that are important to them. A very good link with Middlesbrough Council enables pupils to consider important issues of bullying, vandalism, the danger of strangers and other important matters. Broader issues covered enable pupils to consider matters of poverty around the world and pupils are generous in their response to charities.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).