

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **ST. JOHN VIANNEY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Newcastle-upon-Tyne

LEA area: Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Unique reference number: 108501

Headteacher: Mr A. M. Duffy

Lead inspector: Mrs M. R. Shepherd

Dates of inspection: 27 – 30 April 2004

Inspection number: 257709

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 – 11 years  |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed   |
| Number on roll:              | 249   |
| School address:              | Hillhead Road<br>West Denton<br>Newcastle-upon-Tyne |
| Postcode:                    | NE5 1DN   |
| Telephone number:            | 0191 2672233  |
| Fax number:                  | 0191 2679538  |
| Appropriate authority:       | The governing body                                  |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Father D. Peel                                      |
| Date of previous inspection: | 1 <sup>st</sup> June 1998                           |

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St John Vianney Catholic Primary School serves the pupils from a mixture of private and rented accommodation. The employment of parents ranges from professional work to unemployment. A small proportion of pupils come from a very disadvantaged area. There are 249 pupils on roll, with 130 girls and 119 boys. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average and varies from year to year. The current Year 3's standards on entry were below the usual level and this year group has a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than any other class in the school. The school started to provide education for nursery children in 2002 with the opening of brand new purpose-built accommodation. During the inspection there was a supply teacher working with these pupils. Nearly 5 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below average. Nine per cent of pupils are on the register for special educational needs and nearly 1 per cent have full Statements of Special Educational Need. Both these percentages are below the national average. Fewer than 1 per cent of pupils have English as an additional language and are of Chinese origin. Since the previous inspection there has been a gap of two years when the school did not have a permanent headteacher. There have been a considerable number of changes in staffing since the previous inspection. The headteacher is in his third year in the school and the deputy headteacher is in his second year. There is little movement of pupils in or out of the school between the beginning and end of their education.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |                    |                | Subject responsibilities  |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|---|
| 11328                          | Mrs M. R. Shepherd | Lead inspector | Mathematics, information and communication technology, English as an additional language, personal, social and health education |
| 9986                           | Mr W. Twiss        | Lay inspector  |   |
| 22197                          | Mr M. Mayhew       | Team inspector | English, music, special educational needs   |
| 32155                          | Mrs C. Taylor      | Team inspector | Science, Foundation Stage, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, physical education                        |

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school with many very good features. The headteacher ensures that there is a very strong emphasis on continually improving the work of the school. The key focus is to raise standards and extend pupils' personal development within a Christian ethos. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science and above expectations in information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology, history and performing music.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes, behave very well and have a very good understanding of how to improve their work. Their spiritual, moral and social development is very good.
- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and his management is very good. He works very closely with the very good quality deputy headteacher and senior management team as well as the good quality co-ordinators and governors.
- Teaching is good overall. Teachers make very good use of interactive whiteboards but a small proportion of whole class sessions are too long.
- The curriculum is very good quality with many opportunities for enrichment.
- There is not enough outdoor learning for nursery and reception children: the design of the classroom spaces restricts children's movements in lessons.
- The school takes very good care of its pupils and creates very strong partnerships with parents and the community and excellent links with local businesses.

There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. All the previous key issues have been thoroughly addressed. Standards have risen in English, mathematics, science, ICT and design and technology. Teaching is better. Leadership of the school has improved.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

#### Year 6 results

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

Key: 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

The average standards compared with similar schools reflect the many changes that these pupils experienced between Year 2 and Year 6, which reduced their rate of progress as they moved through the junior classes. The inspection judges achievement as **good** overall and very good in reception and Year 6. Standards in Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science and above expectations in ICT, design and technology, history and performing music.

The 2003 national tests showed standards in the then Year 2 to be average in reading and well below average in writing and mathematics. That reflected the lower standards on entry than usual for the school for that year group. The current Year 2 reflects the normal intake for the school. The inspection judges standards to be well above average in mathematics and ICT and above average in English and science. Standards in reception are well above the expected level in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and

the aspects of ICT, investigating and music. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress because they are well supported.

Pupils have very positive attitudes towards school. They behave very well around the school. They have a very good understanding of how to improve their work because teachers regularly provide very good opportunities to develop these skills across the curriculum. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is **very good** overall. Levels of attendance are well above average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **good**.

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. There are excellent features in Years 2 and 6 in mathematics. Teachers are very good at making sure pupils understand what they are learning. They all use the electronic whiteboards skilfully. The use of whole class sessions is inconsistent. Homework is very good. Assessment systems are very good quality and teachers use them very effectively to respond to individual needs.

The quality of the curriculum is very good and enriched very effectively. All pupils are fully included in the work of the school. Teachers use ICT very effectively across all subjects. Provision is good for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. There are not enough opportunities for reception and nursery children to extend their learning out of doors. The design of the classrooms restricts the space for movement of pupils in lessons, which has a negative impact on practical activities.

The school takes very good care of its pupils. It provides very good quality support and advice and ensures that it acts on pupils' views. Each pupil has very trusting relationships with adults in the school. The secretaries, caretaker and midday staff make very positive contributions to pupils' welfare.

Links with parents are very good. Information for parents is very good quality and the partnership with parents contributes very well to learning at home. Links with the community are very good. The school strives to extend its partnership with the parish and a wide range of community organisations. Links with local businesses are excellent.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **very good** overall. The headteacher is an excellent leader who inspires his staff and sets an extremely clear educational direction for the work of the school. He is a very good manager. The deputy headteacher is very good and provides a high quality role model for staff and pupils. The senior management team plays a very important part in taking the school's work forward. Co-ordinators' management and leadership are good. The governance of the school is good. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

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

Parents and pupils agree that staff expect children to work hard. Parents believe that teaching is good quality. They are pleased that their children like school and agree that the school is led and managed well. Pupils enjoy learning new things in lessons and are confident that there is an adult to go to if they are worried at school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- extend the outdoor learning opportunities for reception and nursery children;
- investigate ways of enlarging the classroom spaces;
- improve the consistency of the effectiveness of the time spent in whole class sessions.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **good** overall and very good in reception and Year 6 Standards are **well above** average in Year 6, **above average** in Year 2 and **well above** expectations in reception.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science and above expectations in ICT, design and technology, history and performing in music.
- Achievement accelerates in reception and Year 6 due to the very good quality teaching.
- Standards in Year 2 are well above average in mathematics and ICT and above average in English and science.
- Children in reception reach standards that are well above the expected level in all aspects that were inspected and their achievement is very good.
- Achievement of nursery children during the inspection was lower than that of the reception children.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well; pupils with English as an additional language make good progress.

#### Commentary

1. Children enter the nursery with standards that are broadly average. Only the current reception children have benefited from the nursery provision because it opened recently in 2002. It was not possible to judge the achievement of nursery children with their usual teacher because she was not present during the inspection. Children made satisfactory progress with the supply teacher. Children achieve very well in the reception class due to the very good quality teaching and well-balanced curriculum. Standards of these children are well above the expected level in personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literature, in mathematical development and in the aspects ICT, investigations and music. By reception, children behave very well and share their resources willingly. They enjoy reading simple texts and talk confidently to each other. In mathematical development reception children handle numbers to 20 confidently, which is higher than expected for their age.

#### Key Stage 1

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading       | 16.7 (17.5)    | 15.7 (15.8)      |
| writing       | 14.3 (16.0)    | 14.6 (14.4)      |
| mathematics   | 15.4(17.3)     | 16.3 (16.5)      |

There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Standards in the national tests in 2003 were above average in reading, but below average in writing and mathematics. Compared with similar schools, standards were average in reading and well below average in writing and mathematics. This year group of pupils entered the school with standards lower than the usual level for the school, with a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Standards were higher in previous years, when the pupils' attainment on entry was average. The inspection judges achievement to be good in the



infant classes. This is due to the good quality teaching and carefully structured curriculum that builds systematically on previous learning. The Year 2 teacher is particularly skilful in teaching mathematics and pupils make very good progress in this subject in her class. Standards are well above average in this subject with pupils handling mental mathematics with great skill. Standards in English and science are above average. Pupils read with expression and enjoy talking about their favourite authors. They write confidently across a range of different styles. In science they carry out experiments confidently and have a good understanding across the scientific curriculum. Standards in ICT are well above the expected level. This is due to the considerable increase in resources that the headteacher has brought into school, the very good teaching in Year 2 and the regular opportunities pupils have to extend their skills.

## Key Stage 2

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English       | 28.8 (29.4 )   | 26.8 (27.0)      |
| Mathematics   | 28.8 (26.6 )   | 26.8 (26.7)      |
| Science       | 30.2 (28.4 )   | 28.6 (28.3)      |

There were 31 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Standards in the national tests increased considerably in 2003 and were well above average in English, mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, standards were above average in all three subjects. This increase in standards is due to the impact of the very good quality teaching in Year 6, which increases pupils' rate of progress in this year group. Standards in the 2003 national tests compared with similar schools of prior attainment were average in all three subjects. This cohort of pupils did not benefit from the long-term impact of the curriculum that is now in place as they moved through the junior classes. The inspection confirms the high standards attained in the national tests and judges standards in English, mathematics and science to be well above average. Achievement is good overall and very good in Year 6. Pupils read confidently and discuss different aspects of fiction with enthusiasm. They have a very good understanding of the impact of their writing on an audience. In mathematics pupils handle numbers at a higher level than expected for their age and are particularly skilled in explaining their mathematical thinking. Pupils carry out scientific investigations imaginatively in a variety of different ways.
4. Standards in ICT in Year 6 are above average across all aspects of this subject. These pupils have not benefited from the resources and increased teacher expertise throughout their junior education, but they now receive a very thorough coverage of the curriculum and regular opportunities to practise. This ensures that they develop skills at a higher level than expected for their age. Teachers in the junior classes all cover design and technology thoroughly and by Year 6 standards are above the expected level. Standards of performance in music are above the expected level because the school employs a part time teacher who works with all pupils as they move through the school. This ensures that pupils build systematically on their previous learning.
5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of well-prepared teaching and effective support. The good systems that the school has developed for identifying pupils and fostering particular gifts and talents are having a positive impact on these pupils' learning. Such pupils make good progress in extending gifts and talents, in subjects such as mathematics, music and art. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress because teachers ensure that they cover the full curriculum systematically. They receive well-focused support during lessons to ensure that they understand the task. There are no significant trends in boys' or girls' achievement.

- Standards have risen in Year 6 and Year 2 in English, mathematics and science since the previous inspection. Standards have risen significantly in ICT throughout the school and in design and technology by Year 6. Standards were too low in Year 6 in both these subjects and they are now above the expected level. Standards in performing music are also improved. Children in reception reach higher standards than previously across all aspects inspected.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and other personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **very good**. Attendance is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school encourages and nurtures very good relationships throughout the whole school community.
- Pupils are very interested in school life and handle responsibility well.
- Pupils respect the feelings and values of others very well and have a very good understanding of the responsibilities of living in a community.
- Pupils of all ages behave very well both in lessons and around the school.
- Relationships are very good and help pupils feel happy and want to do well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social development is very good and cultural development is good.
- Attendance is well above the national average.

### **Commentary**

- From their earliest time in school all the children are involved fully in day-to-day events. Reception children develop fully as responsible individuals. They have already met or exceeded the expected learning goals in personal, social and emotional development by the end of the present school year. Pupils' interest and enthusiasm for school are pronounced and their keenness in fulfilling the many duties they have around the school is very good. Year 6 pupils are proud of their roles in befriending others and supervising behaviour in the playground. They are particularly effective during wet playtimes by helping in the younger classes, reading stories, singing or using the interactive whiteboard to interest the younger pupils. School council representatives are justifiably proud of their active forum, which has succeeded in initiating various useful changes to school life. Pupils feel a secure sense of ownership of the school and this has a very positive impact on their attitudes in classrooms and in the efforts that they put into their work.
- Pupils' behaviour in class, as elsewhere, is very good, supported in most cases by teachers' very good management skills. This leads to pupils being alert and ready for each lesson to begin, keen to offer ideas and to learn from the activities prepared for them. They co-operate well, and this results in an industrious atmosphere in which pupils can make good progress. The warm relationships are characterised by mutual respect, in particular the respect shown by adults to the pupils, which helps build their self-esteem and fosters confidence.
- The daily acts of worship play a particularly valuable role in developing pupils' strong spiritual sense. Pupils approach them positively, encouraged by a lighted candle and appropriate music. The content is thought-provoking and pupils respond warmly to the invitation to join in the prayers. The understanding of right and wrong is implicit in every aspect of school life for which staff provide good role models. The very good range of visits and visitors, which enriches the curriculum, provides occasions for pupils' successful social and cultural development. The level of pupils' development in understanding of their own cultural development is higher than that of other cultures. There was no evidence during the inspection of bullying, racism or other forms of harassment and pupils state that they feel free from bullying and that the school deals effectively with any problems that do arise.

### **Attendance**

10. The school consistently achieves rates of attendance that are well above the national average. Pupils come to school on time and are eager to start their work. Parents support the school's efforts and appreciate the value of regular attendance. There have been no exclusions from the school. Since the previous inspection, the school has introduced a computerised attendance register system and this fully meets the legal requirements.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

| Authorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| School data:       | 4.1 |
| National data:     | 5.4 |

| Unauthorised absence |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| School data:         | 0.0 |
| National data:       | 0.4 |

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education is **good**, with many very good features. Teaching and learning are good, with some excellent features. The curriculum is very good and is enriched very effectively. The school takes very good care of its pupils. The partnerships with parents and the community are very good and links with business are excellent.

**Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are **good** with some excellent features in Year 2 and Year 6. Assessment is **very good**.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers use the interactive whiteboards skilfully, sustaining pupils' concentration very well.
- There are high expectations of the quantity and quality of work produced.
- Teachers identify key learning to take place in lessons and give pupils very good opportunities to evaluate their own learning.
- Homework is of very good quality.
- Teachers promote equal opportunities very well.
- A few teachers spend too long in whole class sessions.
- Assessment is systematic and efficient and by Year 6 pupils have a very good understanding of their own rate of learning.

**Commentary**

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons**

| Excellent | Very good | Good     | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor   | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 1 (3%)    | 11 (29%)  | 17 (46%) | 8 (22%)      | 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; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

11. Teachers use their interactive whiteboards very effectively, particularly at the beginning and end of lessons. This strategy engages pupils' close attention because they are fascinated by the technology. Pupils thoroughly enjoy taking part in these sessions and handle the whiteboards confidently. Teachers use the review facility of this technology well, moving back to previous screens to show pupils work that was carried out earlier. This reinforces the learning very effectively.

12. The planning for individual and group tasks is good, with opportunities for more able pupils to extend their learning through additional challenges. Equally effective is the support for pupils with special educational needs, with tasks that match their level of development. Teachers expect pupils to complete their written work by the end of sessions. They also expect pupils to produce neat and well-presented work. Pupils respond well to these expectations and produce a good volume of work by the end of lessons.
13. Throughout the school at the beginning of lessons, teachers identify the learning that is expected to take place. This gives pupils a good understanding of what will be covered during the session, which is particularly helpful to the boys' learning needs. Teachers also encourage pupils to evaluate the success of their individual learning at the end of lessons or the end of units of work. This can vary from a simple thumbs up or down in infant classes to sophisticated written evaluations in the older junior classes. These strategies give pupils a very good understanding of what they need to do to improve their own work.
14. Teachers use homework very well throughout the school. There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy work and pupils appreciate the regular tests of spelling and tables that allow them to show how hard they have worked at home. Teachers create a sense of pride in pupils' use of homework through careful marking and the use of special homework books. There are good quality incentive schemes for celebrating pupils' efforts in homework, such as the display board in Year 1. The amount of homework builds steadily as pupils progress through the school. Teachers ensure that the work at home is carefully matched to the learning in school.
15. The strong whole school emphasis on including every individual's contributions to school life is evident in lessons. Teachers use questioning effectively across the range of different pupils. Pupils with English as an additional language receive sensitive support and develop good levels of confidence as they tackle their work. The inclusion of every pupil in the whole class discussion is a key feature in the excellent teaching in Years 2 and 6. These teachers target pupils systematically, matching the level of questioning carefully to each pupil's needs. Pupils remain vigilant in whole class sessions because they never know when they will get their chance to contribute to the whole class discussion. In reception the teacher organises lessons very carefully in order to provide every child with work that matches their needs. Her combination of independent learning and teacher-based small group work provides very good opportunities for developing skills and knowledge across the different areas of learning. Teachers use display sensitively to celebrate the full range of pupils' work.
16. In a small number of lessons teachers spend too long in whole class sessions. This reduces the opportunities pupils have to be actively working and some lose their concentration, which reduces their levels of learning.
17. The current headteacher has worked very hard to ensure that there is a comprehensive system of assessment running through the school and teachers use them very effectively for identifying and providing for all pupils' learning needs. There is a clear focus on pupils with special educational needs and those whom the school identifies as being especially gifted or talented. Teachers assess pupils' achievement in all subjects and keep relevant, efficient and usable records. As a result of their assessments, teachers set pupils challenging targets to achieve, and record those for English and mathematics in pupils' workbooks. Pupils, especially in the juniors, know their targets very well. By Year 6 pupils are skilled in evaluating their own rate of progress across different aspects of their learning. They often record these evaluations in their written work, with perceptive comments about their learning. This is having a significant impact on their achievement in English and mathematics. The marking of pupils' work is rigorous and regular. It contributes very well to pupils' attainment through acknowledging progress and giving very good guidance to pupils about how they can improve their work.

## The curriculum

The school provides a **very good** curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils and the requirements of the National Curriculum. Opportunities for enrichment are **very good**. Accommodation is **satisfactory**, and resources are **good** and well used.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The breadth of the curriculum and the interest engendered are major factors in helping the pupils to achieve well.
- Good links between subjects make learning more relevant to pupils.
- The curriculum provides well for pupils' personal development.
- All pupils are very well included in the learning opportunities that the school has to offer them.
- Many facilities are provided to enhance and enrich pupils' learning experiences: ICT facilities are very good.
- A good match of teachers and good use of support staff helps to maintain good learning and very good relationships.
- The absence of a secure, designated outside area for children in the reception class restricts their learning across the different areas of learning.
- The design of the classroom spaces restricts pupils' movements in lessons.

### Commentary

18. There has been good improvement in this aspect since the previous inspection. The curriculum overall is very good and meets the needs of pupils in all areas of the National Curriculum, personal, social and health education. The curriculum for children in the nursery is good and in reception is very good. The careful balance of activities arranged by the teachers ensures that the children learn at a good rate and achieve well.
19. The curriculum is well thought through. It takes very good account of the varying needs of pupils at different levels of attainment, and of links between subjects, where possible and relevant. The school plans very carefully for using ICT in other subjects to effect better achievement. This helps to make the teaching more interesting and relevant to the pupils, and they draw on skills learned in one subject to enhance their learning in others.
20. The way that the curriculum is planned ensures that pupils become engaged in a range of strategies to build their personal skills. Teachers successfully engage pupils regularly in discussion about a wide range of topics. This encourages pupils to listen to others' points of view and to apply their own opinions, thus developing their social and moral understanding and skills. It is notable how well all pupils are included in what the school has to offer them. Girls and boys take part equally in all school activities, and increasingly take responsibility for tasks. The staff make special efforts to ensure that all pupils, whatever their levels of prior attainment, are included in lessons. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school carefully adapts the curriculum to cater for those pupils who have special educational needs. This adaptation, with the good use of teaching assistants where they are available, works well throughout the school. Planning for pupils with English as an additional language is good and takes account of their particular interests and culture.
21. A broad range of well-planned visits and visitors supports the curriculum very well. These include residential trips for pupils in Years 5 and 6, trips to local and wider places of special interest, and visits from well-known artists and writers, who have engaged the pupils in valuable learning and creative experiences. A recent notable event was the school's involvement in a joint schools' musical performance at a city theatre. Homework is used very well to support and enhance pupils' learning.
22. Human resources are good. The committed team of able teachers is well matched to the needs of the curriculum and the pupils. Well-trained and deployed teaching assistants support

teachers and pupils very well, and their commitment makes a significant contribution to the very good provision.

23. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, and resources are good. The caretaker works very hard and has a great sense of justifiable pride in keeping the building neat and clean. Some classrooms are too small to carry out practical activities comfortably, especially in Years 5 and 6, although staff and pupils make efficient use of the current room sizes. The addition of a purpose-built nursery has added very well to the school's facilities for providing nursery education. This ensures a smooth transition between the two different ages of the nursery and reception curriculum. However, the reception children do not have immediate access from their classroom to a secure outdoor learning area. This means that they are unable to extend their independent learning into the outdoors. Planning for outdoor learning does not cover all the areas of learning and the school has clear plans to extend their curriculum and resources to supplement the learning indoors.
24. There are good resources for most subject areas. Resources for ICT are particularly good, not only for the use of technology, such as interactive whiteboards in all classrooms to aid teachers, but in computers and software for pupils to both develop their ICT skills, and to use them in learning in other subjects.

### Care, guidance and support

Procedures for ensuring the pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are **very good**. The support, advice and guidance given to the pupils are **very good**. The school has **very good** procedures for involving the pupils in its work and development.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Monitoring and support for the pupils' academic and personal development are very good.
- Standards of care for the pupils' welfare and safety are very good.
- Pupils enjoy trusting, secure and confident relationships with their peers, staff and visitors to the school.
- Pupils are eager learners and are very well involved in the school's development.

### Commentary

25. The staff know the pupils and families well and are alert to their individual needs. Formal systems that track the pupils' achievements enable the school to provide very specific support wherever it is needed. A useful and comprehensive record of achievement exemplifies what the pupils have achieved and provides a further avenue for monitoring the pupils' all-round development. Through the use of this very good monitoring, staff offer very good support throughout the school. In lessons, teachers use a range of techniques to help the pupils succeed. In a Year 1 numeracy lesson, for example, pupils were motivated and encouraged through the supportive comments and advice given by the teacher. The school offers very good support for the pupils' personal development. It recognises the achievements of all of the children and will always encourage them to develop and implement their own ideas. The staff fully supported the pupils' fund raising for the hospital that had looked after one their peers. Pupils feel that they are supported and encouraged to take part in the many interesting after-school clubs. They feel a great sense of personal pride in representing their school and succeeding in competitions.
26. The school's very high standards of care and welfare are strongly rooted in its caring Christian ethos. Every child is welcomed into the family atmosphere of the school and is encouraged to learn in this safe and caring place. The school looks after the welfare and safety of the pupils very well. Procedures for child protection are clear and are understood by all staff. The governors, staff and the caretaker are vigilant in their approach to health and safety matters. They routinely assess risks and take action to remedy any shortcomings. In lessons, the teachers remind the pupils of the need for safe and sensible working. The school nurse offers

effective health screening and advice to the parents. Visitors, such as the local police and fire officers, come into school and talk to the pupils about the dangers they may face in society at large. The school has very good relationships with the support agencies and when required, it draws the differing expertise of professionals together to provide the most effective support for individual needs.

27. Pupils trust all adults within the school. They are confident in approaching adults and say that they are treated with respect even when they need to talk about personal or sensitive matters. Pupils of all ages appreciate this trust and feel that they are valued. Consequently, they are safe and secure, enjoy their schooling and are eager to learn.
28. The pupils respond very well to the warm and positive standards of care. As a result, they are empowered to make suggestions and to offer mature and practical ideas. The school council takes note of contributions from every class ideas box. It acts as a representative voice of the school and seeks to improve and enhance its work. The pupils have, for example, been involved in improving the grounds and have also presented the case for using interactive white boards in industry to a team of managers from a major utilities company.
29. The very good standards of care and guidance have been maintained since the previous inspection. They make a very good contribution to the pupils' personal and academic achievements. This aspect of the school's work is one of the many that are appreciated by the parents and the community.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school's links with the parents are **very good**. Its links with the local community are **very good** and have some excellent features. The school's links with other schools are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has very good relationships with the parents and enjoys their support.
- The range and quality of information provided for the parents are very good.
- The school's partnerships with the community are very good overall and links with business are excellent.

### **Commentary**

30. The school's relationships with the parents are very good and they contribute very well to their children's learning. The parents support the school in all that it does and have, for example, raised staggering sums of money to purchase high quality computer equipment. All of the parents have signed up to the home-school agreement and take their responsibilities seriously. They are keen to help their children learn at home and support reading and the completion of the good quality homework that the school sets. Parents support the school's trips and visits and are frequent visitors to celebratory events such as assemblies and liturgies.
31. The school works hard to provide useful and understandable information for the parents. An interesting brochure introduces the parents to the school's aims, its routines and what it has to offer. Regular meetings for the parents inform them about what is being taught and a very good feature of this work is the information that the teachers provide on important matters such as the teaching of numeracy and literacy. The school communicates very effectively with the home and regularly lets parents know about school events and achievements. A home-school record enables the parents to make comments about their children's progress with reading. Reports, which now fully meet requirements, provide a clear picture of what each child has learned and how they can achieve even more. An active association for the parents organises fund raising and social events and makes a very good contribution to the quality of relationships between the home, school and the community. The parents are very satisfied with all that the school provides.

32. The school has worked very well with its wider community and has very good links, which demonstrate some excellent features. The headteacher has worked hard to ensure that there are excellent links with the business community. Local businesses have contributed to resources. In partnership with businesses, the school has succeeded in a design innovation challenge which has normally only been open to secondary schools. The school's relationships with visitors are very good. On her recent visit, the city's Lord Mayor was so impressed that she invited the pupils to the council chamber as ambassadors for the school. The school has worked well with the parish and enjoys very good relationships with the fellowship of the church and its community. The headteacher, his deputy and staff work harmoniously with the secondary schools and make sure that the pupils' transition to their next stage of education is smooth.
33. The school's very good relationships with the parents and the community contribute very well to the pupils' learning and development. The previous inspection judged this aspect of the school's work to be good. The efforts that have been put into building the relationships with the parents and community have paid off and they are now very good.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** overall. The governance of the school is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is an excellent leader and manages the school very well.
- The deputy headteacher provides a very good quality role model for staff and pupils.
- The senior management team is very good quality and co-ordinators manage their subjects effectively.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

### Commentary

34. The headteacher has a great determination to raise standards and provide a carefully balanced curriculum that ensures every pupil fulfils her or his potential. He places a high value on the Christian basis of the work of the school. He sets high standards and uses a wide range of expertise to support the school community in improving the range and quality of its work. He handles change sensitively but firmly, which very effectively sustains the morale of the staff as they learn new teaching techniques and extend their subject knowledge. The headteacher is particularly successful in improving the quality of the school's facilities. He follows every avenue in finding grants and other financial sources and uses the principles of best value extremely well. This has had a major impact on standards, particularly in reception, through the new nursery provision and in ICT where standards have risen significantly through the school.
35. The headteacher handles self-evaluation very well. His use of external expertise to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of the school ensures that everyone is very clear about key priorities for improvement. Alongside his organisation of whole-school issues, he values every pupil and member of staff in the school and has a very good understanding of individual strengths and development needs. He takes great care in appointing new staff and uses performance management very well to extend the professional development of each teacher. His provision of an interactive whiteboard in each classroom, together with staff training, has ensured that learning styles have been extended across every aspect of the curriculum, leading to higher standards. He organises the daily life of the school very carefully and creates a smoothly running secretarial support team, that handle every day challenges in a very confident manner. Parents value the way he leads and manages the school.
36. The headteacher works very closely with the very good quality deputy headteacher. Their partnership ensures that key management tasks are carried out very efficiently. The deputy headteacher provides a high quality model for other staff and pupils through his very good teaching. He manages his areas of responsibility very effectively and confidently takes the lead



in aspects such as leading assemblies or monitoring weekly planning. The senior management team are very good quality. They drive key changes forward and contribute very well to the high quality levels of communication through the school. Monitoring systems for co-ordinators are very good quality. This provides a very effective basis for them to understand the development of their subjects through the school. Each co-ordinator has a clear view of how they want their subjects to improve in the future.

37. The governance of the school is good. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and support the headteacher well in extending the range and quality of the school's work. There is a good range of expertise across the governing body and governors bring a valuable knowledge of the local community to their management of the school. The chair of governors is a very regular visitor to the school and pupils are keen to talk to him about their achievements. His regular discussions with the headteacher lead to a very good level of communication between governors and senior managers. This is complemented very well by the headteacher's detailed reports to the full governing body as well as the regular presentations that staff make to outline key features of their subject responsibilities.

**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

| Income and expenditure (£) |         | Balances (£)                        |        |
|----------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Total income               | 586,090 | Balance from previous year          | 8,026  |
| Total expenditure          | 587166  | Balance carried forward to the next | -1,076 |
| Expenditure per pupil      | 2,396   |                                     |        |

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

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

Provision is **good** overall. It is very good in reception and satisfactory in the nursery.

38. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage, nursery and reception class is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. At the time of the inspection there was a supply teacher in the nursery class who was not a specialist in this age group. The quality of teaching in the nursery is satisfactory, and is very good in the reception class. Children achieve very well in the reception class because of the very good quality of the teacher and the carefully balanced curriculum. She has an in-depth understanding of the rate of development of each child across each area of learning. She uses this knowledge very skilfully to provide work that is carefully matched to the individual needs of each child. Staff work as a cohesive team, carefully monitoring all aspects of children's development.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision is very **good** overall.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well in reception and develop very positive attitudes because of the very good teaching and very high expectations of staff.
- Nursery children develop positive attitudes towards school through the careful systems set up to support their personal development.
- Both teaching teams establish supportive relationships and children develop into confident learners.

#### **Commentary**

39. Teaching is very good in reception and good in the nursery. Children settle into school well in the nursery and extend their confidence very effectively in reception. There is a high emphasis placed on this aspect of their learning. By reception the children know what is fair and acceptable behaviour because of the consistency of the routines and the caring attitudes shown to them. Children listen to and participate in the many interesting activities and stories, and most speak clearly and confidently. Teachers continually encourage them to feel confident about their achievements and remind them of the very high standards of behaviour expected. There is a high emphasis on sharing and taking turns and the importance of putting up their hands before answering a question. Consequently groups of children work very well together with no adult intervention. They behave very well, share resources, especially the wide range of books, take turns when using computers and the interactive whiteboard and share the construction equipment very well. The teachers and classroom support staff create a very caring atmosphere where children feel special and valued from the time they arrive in class to when they say prayers at the end of the day.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision is **good** overall.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well in all aspects of communication, language and literacy in reception because of the very good quality teaching.
- Nursery children make a good start in learning letter sounds and simple writing skills.
- Whole class sessions are too long in the nursery and reduce opportunities for each child to develop communication skills.

## Commentary

40. Children make very good progress in speaking and listening in reception because the teaching is very good. Staff use every opportunity to extend children's communication of the task they are carrying out. There is a very effective balance between informal talking in small groups in independent activities and more formal talking in whole class sessions. The teaching team develop children's vocabulary skilfully through asking probing questions. Staff insist that children take turns and listen to each other. When children share whole class books, such as *Anna's Amazing Multicoloured Glasses*, they read the simple text and remember the story well. Higher attaining and average reception children read fluently and accurately with good understanding because the teacher matches the books carefully to individual children's abilities and interests. There is a rigorous and structured plan for the teaching of sounds with the emphasis on children's ability to say the sounds, recognise them in words and practise their use in writing. Most children form their letters correctly and have frequent opportunities for practising letter formation and patterns. The teacher plans ICT very well in order to develop children's understanding of spelling.
41. Teaching in the nursery during the inspection was satisfactory. As in reception, staff provide interesting independent activities for children and encourage them sensitively to explain what they are doing. However, whole class sessions are too long. This extends the amount of time that children remain silent whilst they listen to other children's contributions. Staff introduce children carefully to letter sounds. The teacher makes these activities enjoyable and children steadily develop knowledge of each letter of the alphabet. Teachers provide children with individual support to extend simple writing skills through the group activities.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **good** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Reception children achieve very well because the teacher has high expectations for every child and provides a varied curriculum over time.
- More able nursery children achieve well but opportunities are missed in whole class sessions to extend each individual child's learning.

## Commentary

42. Teaching in reception is very good. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and uses assessment very effectively to guide planning based on children's prior learning. Consequently children's knowledge and understanding are very good in the required areas of number, shape and space and problem solving. Standards are well above the expected level. Most children can count to 20 and many to 50, with 50 per cent of children counting to 100 and ordering numbers accurately. Nearly all children recognise a wide range of two-dimensional and some three-dimensional shapes. Children create interesting mathematical patterns in art, showing a very good awareness of order, shape and colour. The reception teacher plans a very good range of mathematical activities associated with other areas of learning and this further enhances children's understanding and interest. Teaching in the nursery is satisfactory. Overall nursery children develop the expected level of understanding in mathematics. Some children handle small numbers confidently but in whole class sessions not enough children get the opportunity to contribute to the activity and they lose concentration.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

43. There was not enough evidence to make an overall judgement on this area of learning. The school provides a well planned curriculum to extend children's learning through topics such as 'People who help us' and 'All about me' and teachers make regular assessments. Children achieve well above the expected level in ICT in reception. All these children use the interactive whiteboard very confidently and in the computer suite they log on, enter their password, open a

program, save their work and log off the system very confidently. Children also achieve very well in reception in exploration and investigation. Children observe changes carefully and explain what is happening in simple experiments. This is due to the high quality interaction of the reception teacher, who systematically works with small groups of children to ensure that they each have a chance to contribute to the discussion. Teachers sensitively extend children's involvement in prayer through the use of regular opportunities at key times during the day. Staff use special events and visitors well to develop children's understanding of different cultures and beliefs.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

44. There was not enough evidence to make an overall judgement on this area of learning. Planning ensures that children have a range of opportunities across the whole area of learning inside classrooms. Children are provided with many opportunities to handle small items such as pencil, paintbrushes and scissors. Tasks like drawing, cutting and sticking are regularly incorporated into the programme and their manipulative skills are developing well. In the nursery outdoor area there are a small number of wheeled toys and most children are able to ride a tricycle and steer without bumping into others. However, there is no direct access from the reception children's classroom to an outdoor area and this reduces opportunities to extend their physical development.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

45. It was not possible to make an overall judgement on provision because there were not enough opportunities for creative development to be inspected. The planning of this area is thorough and ensures that children experience a wide range of activities to support this area of learning. It was possible to inspect a music lesson. Children achieve very well in music and greatly benefit from the teaching of the school music specialist. Provision is also supported very effectively by the use of a small dedicated music room in the nursery where children have unlimited access and good resources. Simple songs are a regular part of the programme and children sing enthusiastically and tunefully. Artwork on display is at the expected level. Children have regular opportunities for developing imaginative play through the use of areas such as the home corner, Italian café and travel agents in the classrooms. These areas stimulate children's interest well and they play imaginatively.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve consistently well and reach high standards by Year 6.
- Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about this subject but some teachers spend too long on the first part of literacy sessions.
- Most pupils towards the end of the juniors write very well, mainly because of some strong and well-informed teaching.
- Pupils take pride in working hard and producing high quality work in their books.
- The consistent use of homework helps pupils to achieve as well as they do.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- The school makes good use of pupils' literacy skills in other subjects.

#### **Commentary**

46. The 2003 and 2002 national tests showed standards as well above average in Year 6. This is due to the increased emphasis on the use of the literacy strategy throughout the school. The inspection confirms these standards. In Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading and writing is well

above expectations. Pupils in Year 2 attain above expected standards in reading and writing. Pupils throughout the school attain above average standards in speaking and listening. The well above nationally expected standards that pupils achieve by Year 6 is the result of consistently good teaching in the junior classes and the very strong and knowledgeable teaching in Year 6. Pupils' handwriting and presentation are good, and boys and girls make similar progress. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good teaching they receive, including that from classroom assistants. Teachers ensure that pupils with English as an additional language get regular opportunities to develop their oral skills because they give them opportunities to talk in pairs about their work. Overall, pupils by Year 6 achieve very well across the subject.

47. Teaching and learning are good overall and very good in Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers are very knowledgeable about the English curriculum, and skilfully involve all pupils in fascinating discussions about various aspects of the work. This is why pupils develop good speaking and listening skills, which they apply not only in English lessons, but also in other subjects. Consequently, teachers in the first part of English lessons use their questioning skills to very good effect in drawing out and sharing pupils' own ideas and opinions. The best teachers skilfully expand on pupils' answers in order to drive home the key learning points. For example, the teacher in a good Year 5 lesson successfully helped her pupils to identify and analyse the effects of a range of persuasive 'devices' in a commercial advertisement. However, the first part of some lessons is too long, with the result that pupils do not have enough time to complete the tasks they are set for the second part.
48. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils, and between pupils, help to ensure that lessons are consistently focused and productive. As a result, pupils sensibly discuss with each other in pairs or small groups. By Year 6 pupils talk to each other confidently about technical issues such as the differences between various descriptive sentences. Teachers often ask pupils to discuss specific points as part of the build-up to writing tasks. This approach is effective because pupils feel valued and concentrate well, for example when discussing how to build tension in a piece of writing that includes a dilemma. The writing that ensues from such work is invariably of a good standard, not only in its content, but also in standard of handwriting and organisation. This is because the teachers remind pupils about the importance of producing quality writing that is presented well.
49. Pupils by Year 6 have a mature attitude to their work and realise the importance of working hard and doing their best. This is because teachers throughout the school have high expectations that pupils will achieve well. They ensure through good assessment and planning strategies that they give pupils work to do that matches their capabilities well. Pupils by Year 6 are used to evaluating their work, which they do regularly, and then make changes to improve it. This applies to their written work, and to their reading. Pupils read very well, with good expression and understanding. They discuss different features of their texts with enthusiasm. This helps them to produce good quality writing because they are mindful of how their work will be read and understood by others. The teachers ensure that pupils have a very good understanding of how well they have learned by marking their work regularly, clearly and suggesting how improvements could be made. In effect, this sets pupils targets in addition to those written in the front of their books, which they strive to achieve, and are regularly reviewed.
50. The setting of homework is an established feature of the English curriculum and is very good quality. Parents are pleased with the work that pupils regularly get to do at home, and most pupils enjoy completing it. The homework set always comprises extension of work done in school, and teachers give it added value by marking the work as diligently as other work. As a result, homework helps pupils to achieve better standards in reading and writing. Indeed, the use of such strategies is helping to secure consistently high standards in writing by the end of Year 6.

51. The co-ordinator is very committed and knowledgeable. She leads and manages the subject well. She monitors the subject effectively, in line with the school's procedures, by looking at teachers' planning, scrutinising pupils' work, and observing lessons. Her expertise in teaching the subject acts as a good role model to her colleagues. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection, with a significant rise in standards in Year 6.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum.**

52. English skills are used very well across the curriculum, not only to improve pupils' language and literacy skills, but also to extend learning in other subjects. The school uses ICT word processing skills, both for teaching and learning, for example for pupils to present interesting and illustrated prose about the school's art exhibition. Displays around the school celebrate pupils' writing and promote topics well such as the Romans, in history, and the changing courses of rivers, in geography. Most displays are labelled attractively to support pupils' reading skills, and to entice them to take part in developing their knowledge and understanding of a wide range of subjects, such as textiles in design and technology work.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average in Years 2 and Year 6 across the whole mathematics curriculum.
- The co-ordinator provides a high quality role for staff and supports them very effectively.
- Teachers have high expectations of the quality and quantity of work pupils produce.
- The quality of mental starter sessions is not consistent through the school.
- Teachers cover the curriculum very thoroughly and use ICT very effectively to extend pupils' learning.

### **Commentary**

53. Standards in the national tests in 2003 in Year 6 were well above average. This was a considerable improvement on the previous two years where standards were average. This significant improvement is due to the high priority the headteacher has placed on raising standards in this subject throughout the school. It is also due to the high quality teaching in Year 6. The inspection confirms that standards are well above average in Year 6 where achievement is very good. Achievement throughout the rest of the junior classes is good, with very good features in Year 3. In Year 6 a high proportion of pupils are working the higher levels because the teacher has such high expectations of each pupil's potential. Pupils handle numbers in mental mathematics such as decimals and fractions very confidently because the teacher gives them such effective support. Year 6 pupils are particularly good at explaining their mathematical thinking due to regular practice in numeracy lessons. Pupils with English as an additional language make very good progress because teachers ensure that the work matches their needs. Teachers also make sure that these pupils' responses are valued in whole class discussions, giving these pupils a high level of confidence. There are no significant trends in the difference in achievement of boys or girls.
54. Standards in the national tests in Year 2 dropped last year due to the lower standards on entry of this year group. Standards in previous years were average or above average. The inspection judges standards as well above average. This is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection. Achievement is good overall and very good in Year 2. This is due to the school's high emphasis on raising standards in this subject, together with the very good teaching in Year 2. Nearly the whole class handle multiplication of 2, 5 and 10 times tables, which is much higher than expected for their age. The Year 2 teacher works at a very fast pace and pupils thoroughly enjoy keeping up with her high level of challenge.

55. Teaching is good overall with excellent features in Year 2 and Year 6. All teachers expect pupils to produce a large quantity of carefully presented work each lesson. Pupils respond very well to these expectations and take a great pride in their work. They expect to complete their tasks efficiently and are keen to complete any additional challenge. Teachers organise homework very effectively so that it provides a very valuable contribution to learning in school. They mark both classroom work and homework very thoroughly and this reinforces the value staff put on each pupil's efforts. Pupils regularly evaluate their learning and have a very good understanding of what they need to do to improve because there are regular opportunities for developing these skills. Teachers engender a great sense of fun in lessons, which produces very positive attitudes to this subject. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers ensure that the work carefully matches their needs. These pupils rise to the challenges teachers set them and make good progress.
56. The school is working very hard to improve all aspects of pupils' mathematical learning. In Years 2 and 6 the mental starter sessions are excellent. Pupils work at a very fast pace because these teachers have such high expectations of the speed of pupils' responses. They ensure that every pupil is fully engaged in the mathematical thinking through the use of skilled questioning, which matches each pupil's needs very closely. The co-ordinator plans to extend the consistency of these sessions through the school by sharing teachers' expertise.
57. The co-ordinator is a very effective leader and manager. He sets a very high standard in his own teaching and other teachers greatly appreciate the support he gives them to improve their own work. He has a very clear plan of how he intends to continue to raise standards. His level of understanding of the quality and range of the teaching through the school is very good. This is due to his very detailed monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work. He places a strong emphasis on mathematical thinking. This leadership ensures that all teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to explain how they are working out their answers. The co-ordinator ensures that each teacher covers the full mathematics curriculum through ensuring that the weekly planning matches the very detailed termly and yearly planning. There is a high emphasis on investigative mathematics, which teachers use on a daily basis in lessons as well as in special projects to extend these skills. Teachers are particularly effective in using ICT to extend pupils' learning. In ICT lessons they use programs such as spreadsheets very effectively to produce different types of charts and graphs. All teachers skilfully use their classroom interactive whiteboards throughout lessons to demonstrate new learning, record pupils' answers and to recap previous learning. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection, with standards rising both in Year 2 and Year 6.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

58. This is good overall and very good in ICT. The school plans carefully to extend mathematical learning through ICT. This includes using the computer suite for numeracy lessons. This is particularly good in Year 6 where pupils carry out mathematical investigations through the use of computer programs. Teachers regularly use charts and graphs in science to record pupils' investigations and this extends numeracy well.

#### **Excellent teaching in mathematics in Year 6 and Year 2**

'Now how are we going to get all these numbers in order?', was the challenge set in this excellent lesson as the class began their roller coaster ride of solving mathematical puzzles. Numbers flew around the interactive whiteboard as pupils moved the percentages, decimals and fractions to try to sort them all out. Questions kept flying at the pupils from all directions as the teacher urged them on to more and more complicated sequences of numbers. Each pupil could hardly wait to have a go at solving the next bit of the puzzle, nearly jumping out of their seats to offer their solutions. If they were unsure of a response to a question, the teacher moved them all into a quick talk to their partner, which produced a wealth of different solutions to the problems posed. The finely tuned use of praise kept pupils motivated and keen to offer their mathematical thinking, secure in the knowledge that it would be accepted and celebrated, no matter how they reached the answer.

In Year 2 it was the mental starter that was excellent. The teacher set up a function machine on the interactive whiteboard and pupils tried to beat it in completing the sum. Intense concentration accompanied every sum and the whole class were delighted as they beat their machine. As the tempo gradually increased, pupils became

more skilled at working out the answer and breathless in their attempts to keep up with the frenetic pace of the learning.



## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Teachers plan interesting investigations for pupils but do not always give pupils enough time to discuss their learning with each other.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good and they show interest and enthusiasm in their work.
- Scientific skills are taught well through mixed ability groups working together for practical activity and experimentation.
- Teachers cover all aspects of the curriculum thoroughly and use ICT very effectively to support teaching and learning.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.

### Commentary

59. Results in the 2003 national tests at Year 6 were well above average with a high proportion of pupils attaining above the level expected of pupils at the end of the year. This was a considerable improvement on the previous two years' standards and reflects the thorough coverage of the curriculum that is now in place throughout the school. This year's Year 6 pupils are well on course to attain standards that are well above average by the end of the year. Pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of each of the main strands of the subject and their scientific skills of planning a fair test, using scientific equipment and recording their findings in a variety of ways are well practised. As a result, pupils learn to think scientifically and can apply their knowledge and skills readily to new ideas and concepts. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as they move through the school as a result of the many opportunities for practical work in all areas of the subject. Teachers support pupils with English as an additional language effectively and ensure that they understand how to carry out the range of different tasks. The written work of junior pupils is of very good quality, with teachers providing regular and well-balanced opportunities for recording experiments and outcomes in descriptions, diagrams and charts. Achievement is good in the infant classes. By Year 2 pupils confidently predict what they expect to happen in experiments through regular practice of this skill. They have a good understanding across the science curriculum because teachers systematically provide work across each of the aspects of this subject.
60. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan activities that stimulate pupils' interest and enthusiasm for science. As a result, pupils want to contribute to the lesson, ask questions and find ways of solving problems for themselves. This was particularly evident when Year 6 pupils worked in groups to plan an experiment to investigate spinners. Very good questioning by the teacher enabled pupils to frame their research questions and set up their experiment. A significant strength of the teaching is that teachers have high expectations of presentation of work and behaviour, so pupils approach practical work safely and sensibly. Teachers give clear explanations in whole class sessions but they do not consistently allow enough time for pupils to discuss their ideas with each other. All teachers use information communications technology well to enhance the teaching and learning. For example, Year 1 understand the use of electricity to make a television work, Year 4 use the Internet and CD ROMs for their space project and Year 6 use special software to monitor sensors measuring water cooling.
61. All teachers value the opportunities the subject presents for pupils to work collaboratively and discover the wonder of the natural world, and the subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. Science links across the curriculum are developing positively, and are explicit in the comprehensive scheme of work. Leadership and management are good. and ensure that this subject has a high profile across the school. There is a clear focus on the coverage of the full curriculum. The subject co-ordinator has introduced clear systems for

assessment, recording and reporting, and monitors and evaluates teaching and learning across the school, which has contributed to the raising of standards. There is a good quantity of good quality scientific equipment and teachers make good use of it in fieldwork to support scientific investigations. Levels of improvement are good since the previous inspection with a rise in standards both in Year 2 and Year 6.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in Year 6 are above average and well above average in Year 2.
- The headteacher is an excellent co-ordinator and has made significant improvements throughout the school, particularly in resources.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards this subject.
- Teachers' use of computerised whiteboards in lessons is very good.
- Some teachers spend too long on the whole class discussion at beginning of lessons.
- The school covers the ICT curriculum very thoroughly and uses assessment very effectively.
- Planning of ICT across the curriculum is very good.

### **Commentary**

62. Raising standards in ICT was a key issue in the previous inspection. The headteacher made this one of his key priorities when he took up his post and he has been most successful in this aim. By Year 6 standards have risen from below the expected level to above expectations. Using the principles of best value extremely effectively, the headteacher has greatly improved the amount of hardware available for pupils, including installing a computer suite and providing electronic whiteboards in every classroom. This ensures that pupils have regular access to computers to develop their skills. The use of the interactive whiteboards across the teaching day provides very good opportunities for pupils to extend their understanding of ICT as a way of developing their learning and for recording information.
63. The headteacher has introduced very detailed termly and yearly planning, which ensures that pupils cover the full curriculum systematically. This planning is having an accumulative impact on learning as pupils move through the school because they build on previous learning. Achievement is good throughout the school. Despite the current Year 6 pupils only benefiting from the greatly improved provision since the headteacher arrived, they still reach standards above average. They handle computers very confidently and are proud of their final outcomes. They skilfully combine video extracts with text and hyperlinks to the Internet in their multi-media presentations. They include musical extracts as well as voice-overs in these presentations. Year 6 pupils handle spreadsheets and databases confidently and enjoy using digital cameras and videos to record their work.
64. The Year 2 pupils have gained greater benefits from the improved resources because they are earlier in their cycle of learning in the school. They all handle computers very confidently and quickly access different programs on computers. The Year 2 teacher has high expectations of pupils' work rate and they respond very well, entering information into databases and handling keyboards very confidently to enter key texts. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to use the equipment in the ICT suite, printing out their work and retrieving it successfully.
65. Teaching is good overall with very good features in Years 2 and 6. The headteacher has worked hard to ensure that teachers' subject knowledge and expertise in this subject have systematically improved. The installation of the electronic whiteboards has had a major impact in ensuring that teachers work every day to extend their own skills and confidence. Pupils see it as a great privilege when they work on these boards in front of the whole class. This has a significant impact on their personal development. In a small proportion of lessons teachers spend too long on whole class sessions, which reduces the amount of time pupils have to

carry out the practical development of skills. Teachers use assessment very effectively and pupils have a very good understanding of their own learning. The assessment at the end of each unit of work provides clear guidance for pupils' progress across the full ICT curriculum. The careful organisation of the pupils in the computer suite ensures that pupils co-operate efficiently in pairs. They support each other very sensitively and take turns systematically, which develops each pupil's keyboard skills very well. The paired organisation supports the pupils with special educational needs well and they complete their tasks confidently. Teachers work well with the ICT technician, because he is regularly in school and has considerable technical expertise. There has been significant improvement in standards, curriculum and resources since the previous inspection.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

66. The headteacher places a high emphasis on teaching ICT across the curriculum. Teachers are very skilful in ensuring that every subject includes work using ICT. This develops pupils' ICT skills very effectively and also enhances their learning in the other subjects of the curriculum. This is particularly good in physical education, where pupils use the video camera to record short sequences such as a dance in order to evaluate their own performances.

### **HUMANITIES**

67. No lessons were observed in **history** and few lessons were seen in **geography**. There was not enough evidence to make a judgement on the provision in both subjects or about teaching and learning. Pupils' work in books and on display, and discussion with pupils indicate that standards are above average in history in Year 6. Pupils have a good understanding of the work in geography and history, particularly on the Victorians and the Tudors in history and the water cycle and rivers in geography. The school has an effective assessment system and the co-ordinators play a full role in monitoring and leading their subjects. Religious education was not part of this inspection.
68. All teachers provide attractive displays in classrooms and around the school to enhance pupils' learning. Teachers make very good use of ICT resources, for example word processing work on Boudicca. Pupils visit the Hancock Museum in Newcastle linked to their work in history and the River Tyne and the local shops in geography. The Year 6 pupils undertake a residential school journey to Holy Island, which also supports their work in humanities.

### **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

69. Two lessons were observed in physical education, one in art and design and no lessons were seen in design technology. It is therefore not possible to make a secure judgement about provision in these subjects or about teaching and learning. Information was gained from discussion with staff and pupils, observations of pupils' work on display and relevant documents. The school has effective assessment systems and the co-ordinators play a full role in monitoring and leading their subjects.
70. Examples of **art and design** work throughout the school show how effectively the work the pupils do in lessons supports work in other curriculum areas as well as work relating to topics. Pupils in their Year 4 topic on journeys were inspired by the paintings shown on the interactive whiteboard. Year 1 pupils used an ICT paint programme to draw a design around their name, and used diagrams and drawings to show features of a tape recorder. Pupils develop a good understanding of key artists such as Van Gogh and Monet. The school provides very good opportunities to celebrate every pupil's efforts through the use of an annual art exhibition, where pieces of work are sensitively framed. Parents appreciate this facility.
71. In **physical education** pupils have the opportunity to participate and succeed in most local and district sports competitions. There is good provision for extra-curricular sports clubs that are supported well by the teachers and parents. The school ensures that there is equality of opportunity for boys and girls by having mixed gender teams. Pupils have the opportunity to swim in Year 3. There are good links with literacy and ICT. For example, Year 6 filmed their skeleton dance sequence and imported it into a multi-media presentation with word processed

evaluations and improvement points. The school places a strong emphasis on a healthy lifestyle and positive attitudes.

72. Examples of **design and technology** work in Year 6 are above the expected level. Work is clearly linked to a purpose and ideas are carried through to fruition. During the process of design and making, all ideas are tested and then those that prove to be unsuitable are modified, enhanced or reworked until they are of an acceptable standard. All pupils evaluate their work. In this way pupils learn that only high quality work is acceptable. The way in which books are marked and the quality of the completed work on display, in particular the Year 6 slipper project and the Year 4 chair project, indicate that teachers are working to a high standard. Good use is made of ICT, with Year 4 using a digital camera to photograph chairs and word process evaluations of features of chairs. The school uses whole school projects very effectively to extend pupils' understanding of the practicalities of long term projects. This is particularly good in the beautiful garden and water feature beside the playground, that pupils played a full part in producing.

## Music

Provision in music is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of performance are good.
- Levels of subject knowledge are very good but some whole class discussion is too long.
- The subject leader's experience and competence in music greatly enhance pupils' learning.
- Music is a special feature of the curriculum.

### Commentary

73. It was possible to see only two music lessons, in Year 5 and Year 6. Nevertheless, there is clear evidence from these lessons and other sources that standards of musical performance by Year 6 are above those normally expected. Pupils across the school achieve well in this respect. The quality of singing is good because the teachers are enthusiastic, and they skilfully plan singing lessons that use a good range of techniques to encourage good quality work. There is not enough evidence to judge standards at Year 2, or across the other attainment targets at Year 6.
74. The school has planned carefully to include the expertise of a qualified music teacher whose sole responsibility is the provision in music. She leads and manages her responsibilities well. She is experienced and competent across a wide range of musical features. Other teachers support her very well when there are whole school or group activities, such as choir or hymn practice. All music lessons, from reception class to Year 6, are taught each week by the specialist music teacher. This arrangement has the benefit of ensuring that there is steady progression in pupils' learning as they move up the school. Teaching in the two lessons seen was of good quality, and pupils achieved well. This was because, in both lessons, the work was suitably challenging, and pupils consistently applied themselves to the set tasks. For example, the Year 5 pupils' singing of 'Oom-pah-pah' from the musical 'Oliver' improved as a result of challenging instrumental accompaniment, and the use of hand-clapping exercises to help focus pupils' minds on achieving good quality performance. Whole class sessions are sometimes too long, with not enough opportunities for pupils to contribute to the discussion. Most pupils develop a good understanding of such elements as tone, dynamics, pulse and pitch.
75. The school's use of music as a focus for many of its activities pervades and supports the school's ethos. Many pupils express their interest and enjoyment of musical activities, and a significant minority learn in school to play instruments, such as violin, recorder, guitar and electronic keyboard. Pupils respond well when asked to sing, either in large groups in assemblies, or when performing in the choir. Older pupils confidently choose to sing solos

when such opportunities arise. This both sets examples to others and enhances the quality of collective performances.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

76. It was not possible to inspect any lessons devoted to this subject. The scheme of work for this subject is of very good quality and ensures that pupils cover each aspect systematically as they move through the school. The learning each year builds carefully on previous knowledge and understanding. The school plans for this work very carefully across a range of different subjects, which promotes this learning well within different practical experiences. Visits out of school and visitors into lessons supplement the teachers' work very well. The school council plays a regular role in the life of the school. Its members organise themselves conscientiously and contribute effectively to the wider experiences of the pupils. They develop their personal development very well when they represent the school in formal functions, such as welcoming the mayor of the city when she visited the school.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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