

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MARY MAGDALEN'S CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Seaham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114236

Headteacher: Mrs A Gibb

Lead inspector: Mr D Byrne

Dates of inspection: 5th - 7th July 2004

Inspection number: 257811

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: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 187

School address: Denehouse Road
Seaham
Durham

Postcode: SR7 7BJ

Telephone number: 0191 581 3055
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Fr T Burke
governors:

Date of previous 27th April 1998
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a voluntary aided Catholic primary school situated in Seaham in the County of Durham. It educates 192 boys and girls. The social and economic intake is mixed with a significant number of pupils from disadvantaged homes, although there is also a minority from advantaged homes. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. A below average percentage of pupils is identified with special educational needs, although six need support for dyslexia and three are recorded as being on the autistic spectrum. The vast majority of pupils are of white British background. No pupil requires support for English as an additional language. The school population is relatively stable, with only a few pupils starting and leaving the school at times other than the normal times of admission and departure. Significant partners in the school are the Seaham Education Action Zone and the involvement of staff from the Sports Co-ordinator programme.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
28076	Mr D Byrne	Lead inspector	Science, information and communication technology, design and technology, physical education, personal, social and health education and citizenship.
9981	Mr S Hussain	Lay Inspector	
10991	Mrs C Deloughry	Team Inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum, English, special educational needs.
18027	Mrs S Mawer	Team Inspector	Mathematics, art and design, history, geography, music.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Good teaching results in pupils achieving well by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes to very good levels of personal development, and very good attitudes and behaviour. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory overall, with very good leadership from the headteacher. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good teaching results in children making a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage and achieving well in English, mathematics and science in Years 1-6.
- Standards are below expectations in information and communication technology (ICT) by the end of Year 6 and achievement is unsatisfactory in history.
- Pupils do not effectively transfer their skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT to other subjects.
- Very good leadership by the headteacher is improving the school, but the contribution to management by key staff and the governing body could be better.
- Teaching assistants ensure that there is good provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN).
- A very good ethos results in very good levels of inclusion and good levels of care, support and guidance for pupils.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school life, and behave very well. They respond very well to expectations for them to take responsibility.
- Some exciting curriculum initiatives have been instigated by the Education Action Zone (EAZ) but enrichment in the arts is relatively weak.
- Pupils benefit from good links with parents and the community.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. Standards are higher in English, mathematics and science and teachers now use assessment more effectively. The quality of curriculum planning is better, although more needs to be done to develop links between some subjects.

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	A	B	B	D
Mathematics	A	C	B	D
Science	A	B	A	B

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

Inspection evidence shows that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those identified as being more able, achieve **well** overall across the school. Children make a good start to their education in the reception class, and by the time they start Year 1, they reach standards that exceed the expectations for their age in their personal, social and emotional development, their communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. In Years 1 to 2, standards in the national tests have dipped in recent years, but inspection evidence shows that recent improvements in teaching have resulted in pupils achieving very well by the end of Year 2 in reading and mathematics and achieving well in writing, science and ICT. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been consistently above the national average over recent years and have been boosted further recently. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are achieving well in English and mathematics. Pupils do particularly well in science, but they could do better in Years 3 to 6 in information and communication technology, history and aspects of the arts.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall, and is a key factor in the pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and levels of personal development. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good** overall. Teaching and learning are **good** overall, with particular strengths in the teaching of English, mathematics and science and of information and communication technology in Years 2, 4 and 6. Throughout the school, teachers work closely with teaching assistants and make good provision for supporting pupils with special educational needs. A satisfactory curriculum is satisfactorily enriched through the use of educational visits and visitors, but the provision in the arts is weak. The accommodation and range of learning resources are satisfactory overall, but the lack of a school field makes the teaching of some aspects of physical education difficult. The school provides a good level of care, support and guidance for all pupils. The school effectively involves pupils in evaluating their own performance and values their opinions about aspects of the way the school is run. Good partnerships exist with parents, the local community and other schools and these benefit the pupils' education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory** overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership by constantly seeking ways of improving the quality of education. The leadership of the key staff is satisfactory overall. The senior management team and key staff make an effective contribution to the school's management, but the role of the deputy headteacher is much less than expected and is unsatisfactory. Governance is satisfactory with strengths in the monitoring of finances and the maintenance of health and safety. The governing body's role in challenging the decisions of the headteacher and staff is limited. A very good ethos is created throughout the school with very good levels of inclusion for all pupils.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have **very good** levels of satisfaction with the school. They feel the school is improving and provides a very caring and good quality of education. Pupils enjoy school life and what they are taught. They feel they are listened to and given the chance to be involved in contributing ideas about ways of improving the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in ICT and achievement in history by the end of Year 6.
- Develop and improve the impact of the role of the deputy headteacher on the management of the school.
- Improve the application of the good standards of reading, writing, numeracy and ICT to subjects across the school.
- Strengthen the provision for the arts within the curriculum.
- Develop the role of the governing body in acting as critical friend.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils achieve **well** overall in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Recent improvements in teaching in Year 2 have resulted in very good standards and levels of achievement in reading and mathematics and good standards in writing, science and ICT.
- In Years 3 to 6, both higher-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well in English, mathematics and science, but pupils could do better in ICT, history and aspects of history.
- Pupils do not apply their skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT sufficiently in other subjects.

Commentary:

The Foundation Stage

1. Children start school with standards that are broadly average. In their time in the reception class, most children make good progress and achieve well overall and very well in their personal, social and emotional development. By the end of the reception class, children are reaching standards that are above the expectations for their age in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and their mathematical development. Children achieve satisfactorily in their creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world and achieve the early learning goals¹ in these areas. It was not possible to make a firm judgement about children's achievement in physical development.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	16.1 (17.5)	15.7 (15.8)
Mathematics	16.1 (15.7)	14.6 (14.4)
Science	15.4 (16.9)	16.3 (16.5)

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

2. Between 1999 and 2003, standards in reading and mathematics had been declining overall, although standards in writing had improved. In 2003, standards were broadly

¹ **Early learning goals:** are a set of standards which it is expected that most children will achieve by the end of the Foundation Stage. They are set out into six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development.

in line with the national average in reading, and below average in mathematics, and standards in writing were well above the average. Assessment information over the last five years suggests that there has been a weakness in challenging higher-attaining pupils to do as well as they could.

3. Inspection evidence shows that significant improvements have occurred recently to boost standards. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are now achieving well overall. Standards at the end of Year 2 are on their way up. Standards are currently well above the national average in reading and mathematics and above the national average in writing. Standards in science are above the national expectations. Standards are improving as a result of a number of improvements in teaching in Years 1 and 2 in the last two years. These include:
 - Better quality lesson planning with clear objectives that are shared with pupils;
 - Improvements to the way reading is taught;
 - The very effective use of assessment data to identify the abilities of pupils so that work is set to meet their needs and in particular those of higher-attaining pupils.
4. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good support by teaching assistants and make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. There is no evidence of a difference between the performance of boys and girls.
5. In other subjects, pupils are achieving well in information and communication technology by the end of Year 2. They are confident and competent in using the computer to communicate information and handle data. They are knowledgeable about how to control a programmable toy, and higher-attaining pupils are starting to devise their own multimedia presentations. Standards in ICT are above expectations by the end of Year 2.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.3 (27.5)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.9 (26.8)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.6 (29.4)	28.6 (28.3)

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

6. The trend between 1999 and 2003 in standards at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science has improved at a similar rate to the general improvement seen nationally. Overall standards have been good in comparison to the national average, but there was a period of decline in each subject between 2000 and 2002. In 2003, standards lifted significantly. They were well above the national average in science and above average in English and mathematics. In comparison with schools with a similar percentage of pupils taking free school meals, standards were well above the national average in English and science and above the average in mathematics.
7. Inspection evidence shows that the high standards gained in 2003 have been maintained this year and good achievement is set to continue in future, although projected targets for the 2005 cohort suggest that in this year, standards may dip

because of the natural ability of the class. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of good teaching and the good contribution of teaching assistants. Higher-attaining pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science. There is no evidence of a difference between the performance of boys and girls.

8. In other subjects, the good standards acquired in English and mathematics are not always transferred to other subjects. Pupils' use of books for research, for example, is not as well developed as their good reading skills would suggest. Although by the end of Year 6, pupils make good use of computers to word-process work, prepare multimedia presentations and handle and interrogate data using spreadsheets, their standards in other areas of information and communication technology are below national expectations. In history, pupils could do better and are underachieving.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall, and is a key factor in the pupils' **very good** attitudes, behaviour and levels of personal development. Attendance and punctuality are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and staff effectively promote very good levels of moral and social development and good levels of spirituality.
- Pupils have the confidence to use their initiative and to state their beliefs.
- Pupils care for others and behave very well.

Commentary

9. Pupils are motivated to learn and show great enthusiasm for lessons. In response to the good teaching pupils work very hard and usually try their best. Pupils enjoy playing and learning in an environment that is free from harassment or bullying. Pupils think of others and are considerate and helpful and during events such as playtime, they willingly help others and encourage them to get involved in games. The headteacher and staff work hard to create a safe and secure atmosphere in school with the successful creation of a strong sense of community. Discussions with pupils show that they feel valued in the school and that they are able to express their feelings and views. Pupils develop a strong sense of spirituality. The assemblies contribute to this through planned times for quietness and personal reflection and times planned during lessons enable pupils to think and work quietly. Moral development features strongly throughout school life. Pupils have a good sense of right from wrong. Pupils have a strong affinity with, and respect for, their own cultural backgrounds. They also have a sensitivity and basic understanding of the lives of those from other cultures, but in this area, pupils' knowledge and understanding is only satisfactory. There is no evidence of racism or racist behaviour. Those with special educational needs are totally included in all that goes on. The staff and pupils work well together in order to ensure that each pupil feels valued, regardless of their needs.
10. Personal responsibility is very well developed. Pupils respond well to expectations for them to manage aspects of the classroom and often take it upon themselves to organise or help others, both in lessons and out at play. Pupils show confidence and initiative and willingly support and help others. The developing school council is

starting to be an effective group that enables pupils to have a say in the way the school runs.

Attendance

11. Good attendance occurs as a result of the school creating a culture of good attendance and of arriving punctually. Parents are very supportive of the importance of their children attending school and arriving on time. Unauthorised absence is very low. There have been no exclusions in the last twelve months.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.6	School data:	0.1
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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good** overall. Teaching and learning are **good**. The school provides **good** levels of care, support, advice and guidance. Links with parents, the community and other schools are **good**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** throughout the school and with examples of **very good** and **excellent** teaching in English and mathematics. Assessment is **good overall**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection, especially in planning suitable work and assessing pupils' progress.
- Strong teaching and effective assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage, English and mathematics are key factors in the good levels of achievement.
- Further enhancement is needed to improve the learning in some subjects.
- Reading, writing, mathematics and ICT are not planned and taught sufficiently across the curriculum to support the learning in the foundation subjects.
- Teachers are very successful in the way in which they manage pupils' behaviour and encourage them in their learning.
- Good use is made of support staff to help different groups of pupils with their work.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	7	10	7	0	0	0

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

Commentary

12. Teaching and learning are good. The school has been successful in strengthening the teaching in recent years and in addressing the weaknesses in planning and assessment. As a result, standards and achievement have both improved. The number of very good and better lessons has risen from just over ten per cent at the last inspection to 35 per cent. There are particular strengths in the teaching of English and mathematics, although good teaching was also seen in other subjects. Parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire thought that teaching is good and that their children are working hard. Throughout the school, relationships are very good. Pupils receive very good encouragement and support from adults, and this ensures that they maintain a high level of interest and work hard.
13. The good teaching in reception has been maintained from the last inspection. Teaching focuses particularly well on the development of early reading, writing and number skills and on supporting the children's personal, social and emotional development. It is in these areas of learning that they make the most progress. The classroom assistant provides very good support for the children and makes a valuable contribution to the learning. Relationships between adults and children are very strong and help to create a purposeful learning environment where children receive a very good balance of structured teaching and free-choice activities. The classroom is very well organised with clearly defined classroom routines. In this secure environment, the children learn to think for themselves and plan some of their own activities. As a result, they are keen to succeed and achieve the challenges they are given.
14. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the teaching of English and mathematics is good overall, with examples of very good and excellent teaching observed. Each part of the lesson is well planned with clear objectives and purposeful practical tasks, enabling pupils to learn effectively. Work is closely matched to the individual needs of the pupils. Teachers make good use of introductory sessions to challenge pupils well, with a very good focus on using 'talking partners' to develop pupils' thinking and co-operative skills. All teachers explain the main part of the lesson clearly, employing a good range of teaching methods and resources to help pupils understand. The use of interactive whiteboards in many classrooms is enriching the teaching and learning of English and mathematics very successfully. At the end of lessons, discussions are used well to evaluate what has been learned and to highlight the next stage of learning. The teaching of English and mathematics is very strong in Year 2, where highly successful and imaginative teaching has been a significant factor in helping pupils to achieve well, particularly in raising standards in mathematics this year. Throughout the school, the teaching is also mostly good in science and ICT. Recent training has improved staff confidence in ICT, although standards at the end of Year 6 remain below average. In science, there is a good emphasis on investigations, but pupils are not always given the chance to try out their own ideas and put their knowledge to the test in experiments.
15. Teaching is more variable in the foundation subjects, especially in Years 3 to 6, but satisfactory overall. This is because there are differences in teachers' individual levels of expertise and this affects how successfully they use their subject knowledge to bring the subject to life and help pupils to achieve well. Planning, too, has been weaker in the past in some of these subjects, and important skills have not always been taught systematically through the school. In history, geography, art and design and music in particular there have only been a few recent visits and visitors or

additional activities arranged to enrich the teaching. There are also not enough planned occasions for pupils to practise their writing, reading, mathematics and ICT skills more widely across the curriculum.

16. The teaching is good for pupils with special educational needs and is particularly effective in the teaching of English and mathematics where most support is directed. Individual Education Plans are of a good standard and used well to match work to pupils' needs. Teaching and support assistants are well briefed and work successfully with pupils. The very good support pupils receive allows them to be fully included in all lessons and to achieve well.
17. The procedures in the school for assessing and tracking pupils' progress and achievements in English and mathematics are very good and in science and ICT they are good. Assessment has been strengthened well since the last inspection and is now a successful feature in the drive to improve standards in the core subjects. The analysis of national tests and other assessment data is used well to match work accurately to pupils' abilities. Pupils have clear targets to work towards in English and mathematics and have a good understanding of their progress through the feedback they receive in lessons and the thorough marking of their work. The endings of lessons are also used well to help pupils to assess their own learning. There are still a few inconsistencies in the way in which teachers carry out their assessments in the core subjects, but this is because many of the procedures are still new and not yet securely embedded in practice. The area for improvement is in the assessment of foundation subjects. Although procedures are satisfactory, they are not yet rigorous enough to have had a significant impact on how well pupils achieve.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory**, with satisfactory levels of enrichment. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from a well planned and stimulating curriculum.
- The needs of all pupils are effectively planned for, but in Years 1 to 6, links between subjects are not planned as explicitly as they could be.
- Good provision for those with special educational needs and higher-attaining pupils ensures that all pupils are included in the curriculum.
- The curriculum is boosted by initiatives led by the Education Action Zone, but planned opportunities for enriching the arts curriculum could be better.

Commentary

18. The school ensures that there are very good levels of equality and opportunity for all pupils. A good curriculum for children in the reception class is carefully planned to develop the children's knowledge, understanding and skills in each area of learning appropriate for their age. In Years 1 to 6, detailed planning for English and literacy and mathematics and numeracy ensures that pupils systematically build up their knowledge and understanding of these subjects as they move through the school. Effective planning in English and mathematics makes good provision for the needs of higher-attaining pupils and ensures that these pupils are challenged so that they do as well as they can in these subjects. Good quality provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that these pupils achieve well by making good progress

towards the targets in their individual education plans. In subjects other than English and mathematics, planning gives a good emphasis to the development of knowledge, but only limited attention is given to systematically planning for the development of research and practical skills required to deepen pupils' understanding. There are frequent examples in pupils' work of the application of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, but it occurs in an unstructured way. This reduces the ability of pupils to improve their skills of applying reading, writing and mathematics to a variety of different circumstances. An analysis of pupils' recorded work indicates that this relative weakness in the curriculum reduces the standard of literacy and numeracy in subjects other than English and mathematics.

19. The quality of the curriculum is improving under the leadership of the headteacher. It has been boosted significantly by a number of innovations encouraged by the headteacher and instigated by the Education Action Zone (EAZ). These have raised standards overall in the way that pupils learn, in the way that ICT is used to support teaching and learning, and in the quality of the sports provision in the school. Particularly effective curriculum innovations that have been introduced in recent years include strategies for:
- promoting the way pupils think and develop their ideas through discussions and involvement in problem-solving activities;
 - boosting the use of the ICT as a tool for learning;
 - making good provision for sports through the impact of good links between the sports co-ordinator and school PE co-ordinator.
- 20 Educational visits are used to support learning in some areas, for example in science and history, but in the arts it could be much better. Opportunities for bringing in visitors and making educational visits lack imagination and make little contribution to enhancing classroom learning in the arts. Some after-school activities are provided for pupils. These are well attended, but are predominantly sport-related, although clubs in Spanish and music are currently available.
- 21 The accommodation is satisfactory. Weaknesses in the provision of a suitable outdoor area for children in the reception class have been removed with the new, purpose-built Foundation Stage building. A very effective caretaking team maintain the school building very well. The lack of a suitable outdoor playing field makes it difficult to provide some aspects of outdoor physical education, but links with the sports co-ordinator programme goes a long way to overcome this. Resources are satisfactory overall, although there are weaknesses in some resources for history, the range of fiction books for older pupils in the library is relatively narrow and there are some gaps in software for information and communication technology.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **good**. The school provides **good** support, advice and guidance and has **good** procedures for seeking the views of pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are introduced to school life well.
- Pupils feel cared for because of the good arrangements to ensure health and safety.
- Pupils are given very good advice, support and guidance about their personal development, which is monitored very well.

- Pupils form very good, trusting relationships with adults because of the school's very strong family ethos.

Commentary

22. New children to the school are gradually and sensitively introduced to the school. They are given very good chances to experience the learning routines at pre-school integration sessions. School 'buddies' help to settle all new pupils and this is a good example of the school's family ethos.
23. Arrangements for child protection are satisfactory. The Local Authority's procedures are followed fully and the school has good links with other agencies. General health and safety risk assessments are undertaken as required. The school works closely with other agencies to promote health and safety. For instance, the community police officer makes a good contribution to raising awareness by giving talks on personal safety. Older pupils can take part in safe cycling training and also the 'safety carousel' initiative, where they receive basic training regarding emergencies.
24. There are very good procedures to assess pupils' personal development and good procedures regarding academic achievements. The headteacher has shown very good leadership in these areas. Pupils' records are well detailed and staff use information well to provide advice, support and guidance. Literacy, numeracy and personal development targets are regularly discussed and agreed with parents. These factors make a significant contribution to pupils' achievements.
25. Pupils feel valued and establish very good, trusting relationships with adults in school. They are confident about raising any concerns or worries. There are many opportunities for pupils to make their views known to staff and become involved in the school. The school council is firmly established and members represent pupils' interests well. For instance, the school has accepted their ideas about drinking water in school and designs for the new playground.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with parents, schools and the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have good opportunities to express their views and make suggestions to the school.
- They are very well informed about the school and their children's standards and progress.
- Parents' involvement in their children's learning at school and at home, is good.
- Good links with the community help to enrich the curriculum and support learning well.
- Strong links with secondary schools ensure a smooth transition to the next stage of education.

Commentary

26. The headteacher and staff are very approachable and they are always pleased to discuss parental concerns, for example, at the start and end of the school day, or by appointment. A new initiative was started this year, whereby a questionnaire is sent to

parents and this enables them to influence the way the school is run. The school has recently adopted suggestions about extending community links and arrangements for the start and end of the school day.

27. Parents are very well informed about the school through the prospectus, newsletters and various other publications. Much information is provided about forthcoming work in the curriculum for each class and how parents can help to support their children's learning at home. Pupils' annual reports are very good. Along with target sheets for academic and personal development, they give parents very helpful information about how their children are getting on.
28. The Parents Fundraising Group is developing well and organises many popular events for the school. Many parent helpers also give their time generously to the school. Parents give good support to their children's learning by helping with homework tasks. The school regularly organizes workshops for parents such as numeracy and computers. This helps parents to become better involved in their children's learning.
29. The priest from the local church is heavily involved in religious education and makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development, for example, by leading Wednesday Mass in school each week. Links with EAZ sports co-ordinators enable pupils to receive skills coaching in tennis, gymnastics, tag rugby, hockey and orienteering. In addition, EAZ links also provide learning opportunities in music. Visitors such as the Kinetic Theatre group enrich topic work in science. School trips to places such as the Centre for Life and Beamish Museum make a good contribution to cultural development. The school puts much back into the community, for instance, it often fundraises for charities and good causes.
30. The school works closely with local secondary schools regarding the transfer of pupils' records and induction days so that pupils can be confident about the next stage of their education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory** overall. The headteacher provides **very good** leadership with a satisfactory contribution from key staff. Management and governance are **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a strong sense of purpose and commitment to high standards.
- Whilst key staff effectively manage subjects and areas of provision such as special educational needs, the impact of the role of the deputy headteacher on the school's management is unsatisfactory.
- A very good ethos has been created that values the individual within a strong Christian environment.
- Although the governing body is very supportive of the school, it relies too much on the information provided by the headteacher rather than developing ways of independently keeping an eye on what is going on in the school.

Commentary

31. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the educational development of the school. She is energetically driving the school forward by introducing a number of essential, and in some cases, overdue initiatives to improve the quality of the pupils' education. Standards are rising, and resources and the accommodation are being improved. A revamped mission statement has contributed to establishing a very good ethos across the school that values both pupils' academic and personal development. A culture has been successfully established that does not allow complacency. Generally, staff work as a team to evaluate how well the school is doing and to seek ways of doing even better. A useful management plan has been established that includes strategies for the school's development and improvement based upon effective evaluations. The headteacher makes good use of performance management systems to set targets for all staff and to identify areas for their professional development. This is contributing to a developing sense of teamwork between all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, across the school.
32. The day-to-day management of the school is good and effectively promotes very good levels of inclusion for all pupils. The impact of the senior management team on the school's effectiveness is, however, only satisfactory, and could be better. The contribution of the deputy headteacher to the school's management is far less than normally found and as such, is unsatisfactory. This holds back the pace of change in some areas of the school's development. Good measures have been introduced by the headteacher to improve the effectiveness of subject managers in keeping an eye on standards, teaching and learning. Effective systems have been established to track pupils' progress in the core subjects of English and mathematics. The use of this data is effectively used to identify groups of pupils with particular of needs and to set targets for future achievement. The management of subjects is good in mathematics, ICT and physical education and satisfactory overall in other subjects. Significant improvements have been made in the effectiveness of the management of the Foundation Stage, which is now good and is having a positive effect on the quality of education provided for children in the reception class. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed well. Effective teamwork between teaching assistants and teachers successfully includes all pupils with special educational needs and ensures that these pupils achieve as well as others. The management of the provision for higher-attaining pupils has improved recently, and is good overall.
33. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is supportive of the changes that have been introduced by the headteacher and in the educational direction of the school. There are strengths in the effectiveness of the way that finances are monitored and the monitoring of the quality of the school's health and safety. Governors could, however, do more to independently develop a picture about how well the school is doing so that they can more carefully monitor what the school does and challenge the views and actions of the headteacher and staff.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	405 797	Balance from previous year	28 199
Total expenditure	404 169	Balance carried forward to	29 827

Expenditure per pupil	2 161

the next	

35. Financial management is good. The headteacher and governors work together well to establish whether or not the school is getting the best from its budget. Effective systems are established that evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and support staff and the value of spending decisions related to resources and the accommodation. Funds for special educational needs are effectively spent to ensure that support is successfully directed to pupils with particular need. The school has accrued a comfortable surplus which is earmarked for further development of the curriculum and to improve further the accommodation and resources.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective, and at times very effective, teaching focuses very well on developing the basic skills and enables the children to achieve well.
- Leadership and management, organisation, planning and assessment procedures are good, enabling a significant number of children to exceed the expected levels of attainment.
- Good relationships and high expectations of adults promote very good attitudes in the children.
- Very good curricular planning provides a very good balance between focused teaching and opportunities for structured play.
- There is good quality support for pupils from the teaching assistant, whose skills are well utilised.
- Outside play is restricted because the proposed area is under construction.

Commentary

36. Many children have previously attended a nursery or playgroup and their skills on entry to the reception class are generally average. All children make good progress and achieve well. By the end of the year, most children attain the goals they are expected to reach in all areas of learning, with a substantial majority going beyond this, especially in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision, standards and achievement in physical development because this area of learning was not observed. Children are very well prepared for entry into Year 1. Provision has improved well since the last inspection.
37. Leadership and management are good. The class teacher has a very good understanding of the needs of young children and how they learn. Her teaching is good overall and is often very good. She plans and organises all the activities very well, maintaining a very good balance between teaching the children in well-focused group lessons and providing good opportunities for them to learn and make independent choices in structured play situations. The children respond very positively to her high expectations and their behaviour and attitudes are very good. They apply themselves to their tasks with enjoyment and enthusiasm so that good learning occurs and they achieve their best. A particular strength is the valuable contribution made by the high quality classroom assistant to the learning and teaching of all the children. The team spirit is strong and the particular support she provides for the special educational needs children enables them to be totally included in all activities and to achieve well. The children also benefit from the regular and much appreciated assistance provided by a number of parent helpers, who work very productively, at the direction of the teacher, with small groups. Assessment procedures are good and useful records are maintained of the children's progress. A new outdoor play area for

the reception class is still under construction, so reception children do not have regular access to large equipment and wheeled toys.

38. The quality of teaching in the area of **personal, social and emotional development** is very good, resulting in good achievement by the children. Expectations are high and all the adults set a very good example, treating the children and each other with mutual respect. Standards exceed expectations for their age by the end of the reception class. The well-defined and consistent classroom routines increase confidence and establish feelings of security. The children are thoughtful to the needs of others and are very willing to share equipment and take turns. They show a high degree of maturity when sharing ideas with their partners, listening and responding positively to each other. They can be relied upon to tidy the room and to work well in small groups without direct adult supervision. The good, well-designed and interesting activities provided by the teacher maintain their interest, so they work and play with great enjoyment and enthusiasm and have already developed very good attitudes to learning.
39. A strong emphasis is placed on **communication, language and literacy development**, and because the teaching is very good in this area, the children achieve well. Standards exceed expectations for their age by the end of the reception class. Speaking and listening is a particular strength. The children listen very well to the teacher's interesting and well-focused introductions to lessons and directions for activities. A substantial majority, when responding to questions, answer in full, well-organised sentences that clearly express their meaning. All adults make very good use of the opportunities that arise throughout the day, especially when working with small groups, to extend the children's vocabulary, which is also successfully enhanced by the teacher's skilful questioning techniques. Children make a good start in learning to read. The phonic sounds of letters are regularly taught in a sequenced scheme and the children apply them well when reading and writing. They enjoy listening to stories, and because of the frequent opportunities provided to read to an adult in school, they have all started to read the books in the reading scheme. Parents are very supportive and the children benefit from practising at home. Children are positively encouraged to write and form their letters correctly, so good progress is made in writing skills. Most children advance rapidly from copying letters and phrases to writing independently, with the higher-attaining children confidently writing several sentences unaided.
40. In the learning area of **mathematical development**, the good teaching ensures good achievement by the children. Standards exceed expectations for their age by the end of the reception class. They acquire a good understanding of number, using these competently in practical situations as well as recording them in their books. The teacher adopts a variety of strategies to teach the children to count and add and subtract accurately. These are always presented as good fun and the positive response promotes sound learning. In one very well organised lesson, the children were enthusiastically occupied in estimating and checking their predictions in various number situations and recording their results on a grid. This was a good lesson that prepared very well for the children's future learning in both mathematics and science. The teacher is very well focused on promoting mathematical concepts and vocabulary throughout the day, and very effectively plans the work of the classroom assistant and parent helpers so the children are well supported when working in small groups, ensuring good learning.
41. The children achieve satisfactorily in their **knowledge and understanding of the world** and reach standards by the end of the reception class that are in line with the

expectations for their age. They are introduced to new experiences and ideas in interesting ways, which successfully stimulate their curiosity and enthusiasm, enabling them to achieve in accordance with their abilities. The teaching is satisfactory overall, but was very good in an observed lesson. It is securely based on practical activities which increase the children's interest and deepen their understanding. Using the house corner as a Garden Centre has provided good opportunities for the children to plant and observe how seeds grow. Their information and communication technology skills are developing well and they are beginning to use the word-processor, although most still require some adult support. The teacher enhances the curriculum well by taking the children out into the local environment and on visits further afield in connection with the topics being studied. She has arranged, for example, walks around Seaham, a visit to the fire station, and is preparing the children well for a visit to a wildfowl park. A good range of puzzles, building blocks and construction toys is provided for the children to learn how objects fit together and their appropriateness for different purposes. Through regular opportunities to play constructively with sand and water, the children discover the different properties and possibilities of these resources, as well as gaining an understanding of capacity.

42. It was not possible to observe any direct teaching to make an overall judgement about provision and standards in the area of **physical development**, but analysis of the teacher's plans indicates that the children are being provided with a satisfactory range of experiences. A dedicated outside play area for the reception class is near completion and the children are given two lessons in the hall each week, which are planned for gymnastics, games and dance.
43. In **creative development**, the children achieve satisfactorily and the teaching, overall, is satisfactory, but in one lesson observed the teaching was good. Children reach standards by the end of the reception class that are in line with the expectations for their age. The children are provided with a satisfactory range of experiences using different materials to create collages, paintings and drawings. They mix and use paint with good control to print with sponges and to make *Hungry Caterpillar* pictures. In the very well organised lesson observed, the whole class used finger paints to generate a very large co-operative series of patterns. They did this with much enjoyment, but also with high levels of care and concentration. Good opportunities are provided for role-play in the Garden Centre and the children use this imaginatively and well, adopting the characters of owner, gardener and shopper whilst engaging in inventive dialogue and good cooperative play. No music sessions were observed, but the children sing and investigate sounds by playing percussion instruments as a regular part of their creative experiences.

SUBJECTS IN YEARS 1 TO 6

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good teaching promotes good achievement.
- A strong emphasis on teaching basic skills ensures good learning of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Insufficient use of writing skills in other curriculum areas limits opportunities for writing for a range of purposes.

- Standards in pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good.
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for reading enrichment because pupils are remaining on the reading scheme for too long.
- There is insufficient curriculum enhancement through role-play, drama, visits and visitors.

Commentary

43. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher-attaining pupils, achieve well in both key stages. Inspection evidence shows that standards at the end of Year 6 are currently above average, with an above average percentage of pupils exceeding the standards expected for their age. This judgment indicates that standards at the end of Year 6 are now higher than they were in 2003 and are better than they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils do very well in speaking, listening and reading. In writing, standards are above average but pupils could do better in applying their good skills to other subjects. Inspection evidence shows that standards at the end of Year 2 are currently very good in speaking and listening and above average in reading and well above average in writing. Inspection evidence shows that achievement is rising in Years 1 and 2 in reading, whilst in writing, standards have been rising sharply in the last few years. The improvement is a direct result of improvements in teaching that gives all pupils, but especially higher-attaining pupils, work that challenges and extends them. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys or girls.
44. Speaking and listening skills are very good in both key stages, with listening being a particular strength. Pupils listen very attentively to instructions and explanations so they know what is expected of them and good learning occurs. The innovation of *talking partners* has been very successful and the pupils discuss ideas earnestly and sensibly in their pairs, where they learn much from each other and gain in confidence when sharing their views with the whole class. Pupils express their ideas confidently in response to good encouragement from teachers. Pupils' skills are further developed throughout in Years 3 to 6 so that by the end of Year 6, most pupils express themselves very well. Pupils answer questions and discuss with assurance, usually adopting a precise vocabulary in order to convey their meaning accurately. Although some opportunities are provided for role-play, drama and hot seating, these are not planned on a regular enough basis for pupils to fully develop their imaginative and creative skills through the spoken word.
45. Reading standards are good overall. The skills are very well taught. From a young age, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of letter sounds. These are practised systematically, and pupils develop good skills of deciphering new and challenging words. Pupils in Year 2 are able to use the advanced skills of skimming and scanning texts, and most read with confidence. Reading development is, however, inhibited throughout Years 3 to 6 by the limitations imposed by the reading scheme. Although pupils have access to other fiction books, they are not being offered a sufficiently broad and rich choice once they have reached a suitable level of competence. Teachers use a good variety of texts in literacy lessons and most pupils have books of their own at home or are members of the library. As a result, pupils develop opinions about their favourite authors and titles and enjoy reading.
46. Standards in basic writing skills are very good, particularly in grammar and punctuation. By the end of Year 6, pupils draft and structure pieces of extended writing very competently. A scrutiny of their books, however, shows that they rarely apply their writing skills in other curriculum areas, particularly in science, history and

geography. This means they are not gaining sufficient experience in writing for a variety of purposes and using different genres. Presentation of work is not generally given a high enough priority by the teachers. As a result, pupils write confidently, but do not always take sufficient pride in the quality of the outcome.

47. The teaching and learning of English is good overall. In the lessons observed during the inspection, it was often very good with some excellent teaching in Year 2. Teachers have a good subject knowledge. This helps them to structure their lessons well so that lessons move at a good pace. The activities planned are well matched to the interests and varying abilities of the pupils, providing plenty of challenge so they maintain their enthusiasm and attention. Teachers have very clear and high expectations in English lessons. Pupils respond positively by behaving very well. They benefit from the way teachers share lesson objectives with them and then by evaluating how well the objectives are met. This gives pupils a good insight into their own learning. Marking is good and encourages pupils by including suitable suggestions for future improvement. ICT is satisfactorily used to support learning, with some use of word-processing skills.
48. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A good analysis of test results and the outcomes of monitoring of lessons have resulted in improvements in teaching and very effective new initiatives have been adopted to promote the use of the spoken word, with the headteacher playing a key role in their implementation. Assessment systems are very good and have improved since the last inspection. It is effectively used to inform the planning for both higher-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. More could be done to develop strategies that encourage pupils to apply their good skills of literacy across the curriculum.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. The provision for developing language and literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory overall. The spoken word and reading skills are used effectively in many subjects, but the application of writing skills across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. This is because the expectations for pupils to apply writing to other subjects are too low. The marking of pupils' work in history, geography and science does not always draw attention to pupils improving their use of English.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are achieving well because of good teaching and challenging work.
- Effective leadership and management have ensured that good improvements have taken place since the last inspection.
- Assessment is very good and used successfully to plan the teaching and to set targets for pupils.
- In data-handling in Years 3 to 6, more focus is needed on drawing conclusions and interpreting information in order to raise standards further.
- Further developments are needed to promote mathematics more widely across the curriculum.

Commentary

50. Inspection findings indicate that pupils' attainment is above average overall by the end of Year 6. These findings match the 2003 national test results and the prospective 2004 results. Standards are better than the average attainment at the last inspection. By the end of Year 2, inspection findings show that pupils' attainment is well above average. This shows a marked improvement from the below average national test results of 2003 and the previous inspection. These improvements are due to much better teaching and more challenge for the higher-attaining pupils to enable them to achieve well. Based on their prior attainment when they first started school, pupils of all abilities are making good progress and achieving well, with clear evidence that achievement is accelerated in Years 2 and 6, where the teaching is particularly strong. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
51. Teaching and learning are good overall, with examples of very strong and challenging teaching in Years 2 and 6. In nearly all teaching, the planning is very detailed and caters well for all pupils, resulting in good learning in lessons. Teachers work well with teaching assistants so that pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. All teachers give careful thought to how they will explain ideas in the main part of the lesson and use well prepared resources to help pupils understand. In particular, the use of interactive whiteboards is enriching the teaching and learning in a very imaginative way. There are brisk starts to lessons with lively mental and oral warm-up sessions that capture pupils' interest well. Questions are challenging, enabling pupils to think quickly and accurately. Their mental agility skills are good and they have a secure understanding of mathematical vocabulary. They are taught effectively to think for themselves by using 'talking partners' and to explore different approaches to calculations and explain their solutions. Most pupils are skilled at solving problems by finding the correct mathematical operation and putting their knowledge to the test. The endings to lessons are used very successfully to draw together what has been learned and to help pupils to improve further.
52. In the best lessons, pupils are alert and have a strong desire to learn. Relationships are outstanding. An excellent lesson in Year 2 on learning to recognise right angles in shapes demonstrated the teacher's expert knowledge of the curriculum and her confident and stimulating delivery of each part of the lesson. Practical tasks were very challenging for the different ability groups, including programming a 'floor turtle' correctly to turn in right angles and rotating shapes to make patterns. Pupils not only explored different ways to find the correct answers but also made coherent links with shapes, direction and time. Just occasionally in less successful lessons, the explanations are too quick for some lower-attaining pupils, questions are not always probing enough and the pace is too leisurely for effective learning to take place. A weaker aspect of pupils' learning in Years 3 to 6 is a weakness in interpreting information and drawing conclusions from graphs and charts. Although this is beginning to receive more attention now, the standards are not as high as other areas of mathematics.
53. There is good leadership and management of the subject, and this has had a positive effect on achievement and learning. The new co-ordinator has shown a clear purpose and commitment in tackling weaknesses well from the last inspection and improving standards at the end of Year 2 by raising expectations for the higher-attaining pupils. The headteacher has also played a key role in these initiatives, which have been achieved through the rigorous monitoring of teaching and whole-school training to improve classroom practices. Planning and assessment have improved significantly from the last inspection. There is a strong sense of direction in the leadership of

mathematics and the very good role model shown by the co-ordinator in her own outstanding teaching is helping teachers to have a clearer purpose and higher aspirations to improve standards even more.

54. Assessment is now a successful feature in the drive to improve standards and has been strengthened significantly since the last inspection. Thorough tracking of progress in tests and other assessment information is used very well to match work to pupils' abilities in most classes. Pupils have clear targets for mathematics and know what to do to improve because of the good feedback they receive in lessons and constructive and regular marking of their work. A strong feature of assessment is the way in which teachers use the concluding part of the numeracy lesson for pupils to assess their own learning and to know what they need to do to improve.

Mathematics across the curriculum

55. The skills of mathematics are taught adequately across the curriculum, and although provision is satisfactory, there is scope for further improvement. Not enough occasions are planned for pupils to measure and record accurately in science and design and technology. The use of ICT to extend mathematical skills is being used in a satisfactory way to support number, shape and data-handling, and is improving more rapidly now as resources are being purchased and staff training is improving confidence. Not enough emphasis is placed on promoting mathematics through geography, especially in important areas such as drawing to scale and co-ordinate work. At the moment, the planning to incorporate mathematics into other areas of the curriculum is too informal.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 6 have been consistently above the national average in recent years.
- Pupils develop good skills in scientific activities, but they could do better in gathering empirical data to solve scientific investigations.
- Pupils acquire a good knowledge of scientific terminology, but this is not always reflected in the quality of their recorded work.

Commentary

56. All pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs and higher-attainers. In the 2003 national tests, standards at the end of Year 6 were well above the national average and that of similar schools. Prospective assessment data for 2004 indicates that standards at the end of both Years 6 and 2 are currently above average. Inspection evidence supports the data. Standards at the end of both Years 2 and 6 are higher than they were at the last inspection. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
57. By the end of Year 2, pupils develop a good knowledge of living things, materials and their properties and physical forces and their effects. This is as a result of high expectations for pupils to think for themselves and work things out. The effective

teaching of scientific investigations results in pupils in Year 2 developing a good understanding of scientific enquiry. In response to the teachers' expectations for them to think for themselves, pupils tackle scientific problems with enthusiasm and energy. During a lesson involving the investigation of electrical circuits, conductors and insulators, Year 2 pupils demonstrated a good capacity for systematically testing out ideas and carefully recording their observations to prove or disprove their hypothesis. Between Years 3 to 6, pupils make good progress and systematically extend and develop their knowledge and understanding of science. They acquire a particularly good knowledge of living things and life processes. Pupils develop and improve their knowledge and understanding of scientific investigations between Year 2 and Year 6, but their ability to gain information by gathering data from accurate measurement does not progress as far as it could. The practical activities pursued are predominantly designed to illustrate ideas rather than to find out about new ideas and solve scientific problems. This holds back the pupils' performance in aspects of investigational science.

58. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the content of science but there are variations in the confidence of teachers in planning for scientific investigations. Lessons are well planned, with clear objectives that are shared with pupils. These are used to involve pupils in evaluating what they have learnt and how well they have done. In some cases, marking is also linked to the objectives so that pupils can make improvements in future. Teachers manage pupils very well and pupils behave very sensibly and maturely during lessons. During a well-taught lesson in Year 4, the teacher skilfully drew out pupils' existing knowledge and understanding of electricity. Good use of key words and scientific terminology effectively developed amongst pupils a good knowledge and understanding of the meaning of conductivity and insulators. The quality of recording of pupils' science work varies across the school. Expectations for pupils to apply skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are relatively low and teachers do not plan for pupils to make enough use of applying these basic skills in science.
59. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject is effectively planned and there are satisfactory ways of assessing and recording pupils' progress and attainment. The headteacher has enabled the co-ordinator to have regular release time for monitoring standards, teaching and learning. This is used effectively to identify areas of the school's provision that could be better. Resources are adequate, but ICT resources could be better, for example access to sensing equipment or electronic microscopes. The provision for science has improved satisfactorily since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising as a result of shrewd investment in resources, but older pupils still have gaps in their experiences from their past that depress overall standards.
- The subject is well led and managed and very good links with the Education Action Zone (EAZ) have boosted the quality of provision.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge overall and at times make good use of interactive whiteboards to bring lessons alive.
- Pupils could make better use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum.

Commentary

60. Standards in information and communication technology are above expectations at the end of Year 2, but below expectations at the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, although progress is increasing rapidly as a result of a number of initiatives led by the EAZ, achievement over the key stage has been unsatisfactory. Although pupils are generally confident in using the computer for writing text and in handling data, gaps in the curriculum for pupils in Years 3 to 6 have resulted in some areas of ICT not being taught to a sufficient depth. Since the last inspection, standards have improved at the end of Year 2 but in Years 3 to 6, the lack of steady investment until recently has meant that the subject has not improved as fast as expected, and standards at the end of Year 6 have declined as a result.
61. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with strengths in teaching in Years 2, 3 and 6. Recent staff training has boosted teachers' knowledge and understanding of computers. The introduction of a set of laptops has broadened the opportunities for pupils to use computers to support learning. Some very good use of the interactive whiteboard is very successfully used to bring learning alive in lessons. During a very good lesson in Year 3, the class teacher skilfully employed a whiteboard to project a letter to the class from Minerva as part of work looking at the features of formal and informal letters. The teaching of basic skills also benefit from combining the use of the interactive whiteboard with using the laptops. Because there are enough laptops for one per pupil, individual learning is occurring and this is boosting the rate of learning for all pupils. Pupils in Year 6 develop a good knowledge and understanding of how to create confident multimedia presentations that involve combining texts with digital and animated images linked by hyperlinks. In Years 1 and 2, teachers make good use of classroom computers to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of ICT. Pupils are skilled in composing texts and introducing images from clipart to enliven their writing, for example, in retelling the traditional tale of Goldilocks. Pupils readily use simple databases to record and represent information using charts and graphs. In Years 3 to 6, whilst there are some examples of work of very good standards in the area of communicating and handling information, pupils' knowledge and understanding of modelling, control and the use of E-mail are weak, and lower than expected for their age.
62. The subject is improving rapidly as a result of good leadership and management. Very good links with the EAZ make a significant contribution to improving the school's resources, training staff and developing an effective curriculum and assessment system. Recent improvements in computer hardware have had a positive impact on standards, and gaps in some resources for the curriculum in Years 3 to 6 are being filled. Some spectacular results are occurring as a result of the investments that have been going on in recent years. A group of pupils from all ages have benefited from working with the EAZ funded "innovator". They have developed a very good quality video production that introduces the school to new parents and pupils. The provision for information and communication technology is better than it was at the time of the last inspection, but many improvements are too recent to lift standards at the end of Year 6, even though achievement is rising elsewhere.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63. There are some very good examples of the use of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects, but ICT is only used satisfactorily overall. It is used to support aspects of English, mathematics and art and design in

Year 2. In Years 3 to 6, there are relative strengths in its use for enabling pupils to carry out research into various subjects, for composing and editing pieces of writing and for representing data as part of numeracy-linked activities. There are also weaknesses in its use for supporting learning in science, for example, through using sensors and electronic microscopes and for using E-mail to establish links with other schools.

HUMANITIES

64. **Religious education** is not included in this inspection because of the voluntary aided nature of the school. It was not possible to make a firm judgement about provision in **geography** because no lessons were seen.
65. In **geography**, from discussions with teachers and pupils and an analysis of teachers' planning and pupils' work, it is clear that all elements of the National Curriculum are taught. There is, however, only limited use made of the local area or of educational visits to support learning in Years 3 to 6 to develop pupils' fieldwork skills and enrich their learning. The contribution of geography to enabling pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills is unsatisfactory.

History

The provision in history is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve too little in Years 3 to 6 because the curriculum is too narrow and there is a lack of challenge in the teaching to raise standards.
- Not enough opportunities are given for pupils to promote their writing skills through history, and few links are made with other subjects.
- Resources are unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6.

Commentary

66. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2, but are below expectations at the end of Year 6. Standards have declined at the end of Year 6 since the last inspection. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2, but their achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6 and they could do better. A significant reason for the underachievement is because there have been weaknesses in planning the development of skills from year to year. Little attention has been given to enriching the curriculum through visits or visitors, and resources are inadequate. There has not been enough monitoring of the provision in the past and these weaknesses have prevented standards rising sufficiently by the end of Year 6. In addition, although pupils have some opportunities to carry out research using books and ICT, there is too much focus on filling in worksheets and much less emphasis on developing pupils' skills in writing for a range of different purposes.
67. The teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory across the school, but the examination of pupils' work shows a lack of depth and challenge in the teaching, particularly in Years 3 to 6. A shortage of visits and resources is preventing some teachers from bringing the subject alive and planning interesting lessons. Older pupils

express little interest in the subject and are not motivated enough to work productively on some of their tasks. In Year 5, for example, pupils in their study of the Victorians are learning about children working on the mines. In this lesson, the only resources used to bring the subject alive was a small black and white picture of children working as trappers in the mines and some sentences to be sorted. Although pupils listened politely to the teacher in the lesson, they lacked a keenness to learn and find out more about the past. In contrast, a good lesson in Year 4, enlivened with better resources and a visitor helped pupils to discover the experiences of an evacuee during the war.

68. The new co-ordinator is in the early stages of trying to address the current weaknesses, and her leadership and management are satisfactory. She has made a promising start by improving the planning and is slowly beginning to address some of the weaknesses in resources and lack of visits. She has a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses and clear ideas to improve the provision when history becomes a focus for whole-school development later in the year.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

69. The inspection focused on the provision in **art and design**. It is not possible to make a firm judgement about the provision in **design and technology**, **music** or **physical education**, as not enough evidence was gathered and few lessons were seen.
70. An analysis of school documentation shows that **design and technology** is suitably planned so that pupils are taught each element of the curriculum appropriate to their age and ability. A review of work around the school shows that standards are in line with national expectations by the end of both Years 2 and 6.
71. In **music**, all of the requirements of the curriculum are being covered, but the enrichment of music through visits, visitors and extracurricular activities is limited. However, specialist teachers funded by Education Action Zone have recently worked with groups of pupils on musical activities, including a performance of the story of Babushka. A few pupils also benefit from tuition in the guitar. From the evidence of hearing singing in assemblies, pupils sing strongly and tunefully, their diction is good and they enjoy the activity. They are building up a good range of songs from different countries. In the two lessons observed, there was some evidence of a lack of confidence in delivering all elements of the national curriculum with sufficient expertise to challenge pupils to achieve well.
72. Discussion with the subject co-ordinator for **physical education** shows that the subject is well managed and that there are some good features to the school's provision. Despite the lack of a dedicated school field, pupils have a good chance to participate in a number of sporting events and tournaments, including football, netball, hockey and basketball. The school has enjoyed considerable success in team events in the locality. There is good provision for swimming, with the vast majority reaching the expected standard of swimming 25 metres. Outdoor and adventure games are provided, including an introduction to orienteering. Close and beneficial links with the sports co-ordinator team base broadens the quality of coaching and helps pupils to experience a wide range of sports. Sport provides good links the community. Many interschool sporting events involve pupils participating in events such as the mini-Olympics (athletics) and swimming galas. The school makes good provision for gifted and talented pupils by identifying those with emerging talent. The school is also very

aware of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and encourages those with difficulties to participate wherever they can.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Because planning has been weaker in the past, pupils have not developed their skills to a good level by the end of Year 6.
- Good use is made of the work of famous artists to help pupils to improve their style and ideas.
- A good balance is achieved between teaching art as a separate subject and combining it with other subjects.
- Clay and three-dimensional work are now regular features of lessons, and provision has improved since the last inspection.
- The co-ordinator is aware that further development is needed in assessment and enriching the subject further.

Commentary

73. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are at expected levels, and this is similar to the last inspection. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory for all groups of pupils through the school. Although improvements have been made to planning and teaching methods since the last inspection, the standards are not as high as they could be by the end of Year 6. This is because painting and drawing techniques have not been taught progressively through the school in the past due to weaknesses in planning. Sketchbooks, which are now used more widely to practise and improve important skills and techniques, were used in the past simply to draw pictures and ideas. There are now clear signs of improving standards in Years 1 and 2, and achievement is rising.
74. Teaching and learning is satisfactory, with examples of good teaching in Year 6. A particular strength of the teaching is the way in which good use is made of the work of well-known artists from all over the world as this not only improves pupils' ideas and techniques but also enriches their spiritual and cultural awareness. In Year 6, this was very well demonstrated in the way in which pupils used the styles of several different artists to create their own landscape pictures. A good balance is achieved between teaching art as a separate subject and combining subjects together in lessons. This gives wider opportunities for pupils to experience art and design. A good range of pupils' work in art is well displayed around the school. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and enjoy their lessons, working hard to make their work better. Although there is less focus on the written evaluation of work, there is a good emphasis on evaluating work through discussion, and interactive whiteboards are used well for this purpose. Some good use of the computer extends pupils' opportunities for appreciating famous artists whilst also developing their computer skills. For example, pupils in Year 2 have used a paint programme to create pictures in the style of the artist Mondrian.
75. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Good improvements have been made in the use of clay in lessons and introducing more opportunities to make three-dimensional models and sculptures. The recent sculptures made by pupils in Year 3 show a good awareness of the cultural heritage of their local area by

focusing on ideas associated with the mining industry and the influence of the sea. The enrichment of the art curriculum is limited as there are no extracurricular activities and pupils seldom go on visits or receive any input from visiting artists to the school. Assessment, while satisfactory, is not always used enough by teachers to identify the weaker skills of pupils and put in place strategies to improve standards further.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

76. The school is effectively developing this area of the pupils' development. There is good attention given to developing pupils' awareness of personal safety and the importance of living a healthy life. Pupils' awareness of being a good citizen is successfully developed. The school council enables pupils to have an influence on the school's decision-making and systems such as the mini-buddies where older pupils help younger ones, develops pupils sense of responsibility. Links with significant people in the community involving, for example, a visit to school by the community policeman extends pupils' awareness of their responsibility to the community at large. Although issues related to drugs awareness and sex and relationships are covered as part of the science curriculum, the school policy is in the process of being updated in order to create a more coherent structure to guide teachers.

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	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4

The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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