

INSPECTION REPORT

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

Hexham

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122311

Headteacher: Mrs P E Telfer

Lead inspector: Mrs J Randall

Dates of inspection: 24 – 26 November 2003

Inspection number: 257855

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	161
School address:	Hencotes Hexham Northumberland
Postcode:	NE46 2EE
Telephone number:	(01434) 603791
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Hilary Robson
Date of previous inspection:	21 September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a small Roman Catholic school serving a small rural town and a very wide area of the surrounding countryside. Pupils come from very diverse backgrounds. At the time of the inspection there were 161 boys and girls attending the school with ages ranging from four to nine-years-old. All pupils are of British or Irish heritage and no pupils speak English as an additional language, or are Travellers or asylum seekers/refugees. The percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs (17 per cent) is broadly in line with that found nationally. Their needs cover learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural, speech or communication, and physical difficulties or hearing impairment. No pupils have statements of special educational need. Ten per cent of pupils are in receipt of free school meals. Admissions data show an erratic entry picture with the school population increasing at other than normal admission times and particularly in Years 3-4. Children enter school with a very wide diversity of prior attainment and year groups differ significantly. Prior attainment in the skills of communication, language and literacy is lower than other aspects of children's development on entry to the Reception class. The school achieved the Healthy schools Award in 2003, and the Basic Skills Quality mark and the Schools Achievement Awards in 2001. Since the previous inspection the school has a new headteacher who has been in post for just over a year.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1471	J Randall	Lead inspector	Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage English as an additional language Art and design Geography History
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28320	R Willey	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Music
31175	A Allison	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

This is a very effective school, giving very good value for money. The leadership, management, curriculum and teaching and learning are very good. These features, combined with the very high expectations of work and behaviour, and the very good provision for personal development, give rise to very good achievement for all pupils. Care and concern for all pupils and adults as individuals are also a key to the school's success.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- teaching and learning are very good and give rise to very good achievement for all pupils;
- attainment is well above average in reading and writing in Year 2 and in English and mathematics in Year 4, and above average in mathematics in Year 2;
- provision for pupils' personal development is very effective and pupils confidently live up to the very high expectations that the school has of their effort, behaviour and respect for all;
- the leadership and management are highly effective in promoting a team vision and sense of purpose in evaluating and improving the skills of all staff and provision for pupils;
- the very good curriculum and the opportunities for learning outside the classroom add very significantly to pupils' personal development and achievement;
- resources in Reception and Years 1-4 are in need of some improvement.

The improvement since the previous inspection is very good. Overall standards have improved, particularly in mathematics and information and communication technology, and the significant improvements in teaching, learning, leadership and management are key features of this. All issues raised in the previous report have been well addressed, particularly those relating to assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress, and this initiative has supported the raising of standards very well.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	
reading	A	B	A	A
writing	B	D	A	A
mathematics	A	A	A	A*

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.

A means that results were in the highest five per cent nationally*

Overall achievement and attainment are very good. The school often has a large proportion of lower-attaining pupils on entry and has been particularly successful in raising the attainment of this group whilst still challenging the average and higher-attaining pupils. Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 are well above average when compared with all schools and show a significant improvement in writing. In relation to similar schools they are well above average in reading and writing and in the highest five per cent in mathematics. Inspection findings are that standards in the present Year 2 are well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics, despite the year group having a larger than usual group of pupils with special educational needs. In Year 4, standards are well above average in English and mathematics. This represents significant progress since entry to school, when the overall prior attainment of this group was judged to be below average, and also since the national tests in 2002, when standards in reading were above average and in writing below average. Pupils in the Reception class already show progress in their skills and understanding, particularly in communication, language and literacy, and most are on track to attain or exceed the nationally expected goals in all areas of learning for this age group. The attainment of pupils in Year 1 who have just left this class is above average in English and mathematics. **Pupils' personal development is very good.** Pupils' relationships, confidence,

self-esteem and attitudes to learning are very good and the school works very hard indeed to achieve this. Attendance is very good and all these features are very supportive of the very high standards that the school achieves in academic and personal development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is very good. The quality of teaching and learning is very good across the whole school. Most lessons are very challenging and teachers have very high expectations of behaviour and participation. They use many different strategies to gain and keep attention and to add interest and fun to learning. Work is well matched to the needs of all. **The overall quality of the curriculum for all pupils is very good.** Very good opportunities are provided for broadening and enriching the curriculum, both within and away from the classroom, and these contribute considerably to the very high quality of learning and to achievement. Of particular note are the wide range of visits and visitors and the opportunity for personal development through outdoor and adventurous activities. Resources across the school are in need of refreshing and updating. Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. The school maintains very good links with parents, other educational establishments and the community to the benefit of pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The very high quality of the leadership by the headteacher has developed a very effective team of staff that are committed to working together to improve their own practice and that of the whole school, and to raising standards and achievement. The governing body supports and challenges the school very well. Management, particularly of the school's limited financial resources, is very successful in supporting the aims and targets resulting from the school's self-evaluation of all aspects of school life and development.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents like the faith school that is deeply rooted in the community and the values this provides. They appreciate the standards and achievement, the behaviour and the care within the school. **Pupils** enjoy the school and are happy. They believe that teachers are kind and fair, and they particularly value the opportunities to learn from visits to places of educational interest, the adventurous activities and the practical curriculum that provides interest and choice.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

In the context of this otherwise very effective school the most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- improve the quality of resources in Years 1-4, and in the Reception class improve the quality of the existing resources for learning and also the range of resources.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are very good and have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils achieve very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall achievement is very good.
- Standards are well above average in reading and writing in Year 2 and in English and mathematics in Year 4, and above average in mathematics in Year 2.
- Attainment in science is above average in Years 2 and 4.
- Attainment in information and communication technology is above that expected nationally in Years 2 and 4.
- Most children attain or exceed the nationally expected targets at the end of the Reception class.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.3 (16.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.7 (14.1)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.3 (17.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

All levels of the National Curriculum are awarded a points score. The average score for all pupils taking the tests and assessments is used to grade schools each year.

1. **Overall achievement is very good.** The very broad and enriched curriculum supports this well because pupils want to learn. The school often has a large proportion of lower-attaining pupils on entry and it has been particularly successful in raising the attainment of this group whilst still challenging average and higher-attaining pupils. **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 are well above average** in all three subjects when compared with all schools and show a significant improvement in writing. In relation to similar schools, they are well above average in reading and writing and in the highest five per cent in mathematics. Inspection findings are that **standards in the present Year 2 are well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics**, even though the year group has a larger than usual group of pupils with special educational needs. **In Year 4, standards are well above average** in English and mathematics. This represents significant progress since entry to school, when the overall prior attainment of this group was judged to be below average, and also since the national tests in 2002 when standards in reading were above average and in writing below average. The school has worked hard, as a team, to improve the writing skills identified in its self-evaluation, and the results show that this work has been very successful. In science, attainment in the present Year 2 and Year 4 is above average. In information and communication technology, the improved resources and teachers' skills now result in attainment in Years 2 and 4 above that normally expected nationally.
2. The successful arrangements for teaching the lower-attaining pupils as a set for English and mathematics, and for challenging the average-attaining pupils alongside the higher-attainers, has raised the attainment of all these groups. Average and higher-attainers are often challenged by open-ended investigations or pieces of work that offer much scope for pupils to

extend their efforts individually. Pupils identified as gifted and talented are similarly challenged and, on occasions, individual arrangements are made for them. Lower-attainers have benefited from the careful and clearly targeted teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and achieve very well because of the school's high level of concern to meet the needs of all pupils and because of the well-prepared teaching and other support that they receive.

- The present group of children in the Reception class already show very good progress in their skills and understanding, particularly in communication, language and literacy and skills, and most are in line to attain or exceed the nationally expected goals in all areas of learning for this age group. The attainment of pupils in Year 1 who have just left this class is above average in English and mathematics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance and punctuality are very good. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are very good. Pupils' personal development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very high expectations for conduct and behaviour.
- Attendance is very good.
- The school develops in pupils a real desire to learn.
- Pupils develop confidence, self-esteem and respect for others, and have very good relationships with each other and with adults.
- A rich curriculum and many first-hand learning opportunities for pupils promote very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.1	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.

- Pupils are enthusiastic to attend school and do not like being absent. They are punctual and lessons start promptly. Parents are very well aware of the importance of good attendance and all absences are fully explained. Attendance is well above the national average. No pupils were excluded in the last school year.
- Pupils like school very much; they feel secure, self-assured and confident. They are polite, helpful and considerate. They respect each other even when adults are not present. They show great interest in their work and immerse themselves fully in what the school provides. It was a joy to witness their attitudes as they practised songs for Christmas with great enthusiasm.
- Because of the very clear expectations, pupils behave very well. Inappropriate behaviour is always challenged. They are calm, display self-control and maintain their behaviour when not under direct supervision. No instances of disruption were observed. Very good relationships are evident. The school functions as a harmonious community where friendship, happiness and tolerance are promoted.

7. Spiritual development is very good. The head teacher rightly claims that this is the school's 'central pillar'. It pervades the whole curriculum and ensures that each and every pupil is valued. Acts of worship create good opportunities for reflection. Prayer is frequently used in classrooms and pupils show concern and compassion for others. The singing in preparation for the Christmas gathering showed sensitivity and warmth. Spirituality is fostered through many subjects. Bread making with Reception pupils engendered a reaction of wonder as the dough rose, and the joy of literature was transmitted to pupils in Year 2 by the excellence of the teaching. In discussion times pupils reflect on their feelings, for example what makes them happy and sad.
8. Moral development is very good. Pupils develop a strong sense of right and wrong and an understanding of what constitutes acceptable behaviour and why the school values this. They are encouraged to be responsible for their actions. Role-play is used well to help pupils understand that their actions have consequences for other people. There are many opportunities for pupils to learn about others less fortunate than themselves and to give practical help. Displays such as the one featuring posters for peace help them to begin to understand their role as citizens in today's world.
9. Social development is very good. Classroom routines are well understood and contribute significantly to the harmonious working atmosphere. The school's promotion of value and respect for all was clearly reflected in a pupil's very positive and sensitive comment about, and caring attitude towards, another pupil with special educational needs who comes from a neighbouring school and attends the class part-time. Pupils listen to and respect contributions made by others whether in a whole school, class, group or paired activity. They speak confidently in front of their friends, for example when presenting weather reports based on parts of the world that have hurricanes. They are beginning to use their initiative, and value the opportunity to learn from mistakes. Pupils engage very well in the responsibilities given to them and carry them out with pride. They are beginning to learn from each other and from their own research, for example in using atlases and making use of the Internet in geography. Older pupils demonstrate a caring attitude to younger ones and enjoy responsibilities both in class and around the school. Clubs are well supported by both boys and girls. Children in the Reception class make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development and most would be expected to meet or exceed the national targets in this area of learning.
10. Cultural development is very good. The curriculum affords pupils a wide range of cultural experiences. They learn about other faiths and beliefs in religious education and about famous people and events in history. Pupils in Year 2 talked very confidently and knowledgeably about Florence Nightingale and her work in Scutari. Music, art and design and literacy lessons contribute very well, as do history and geography. Both the many visitors coming into school and the numerous educational visits widen pupils' cultural experiences. There are many very good planned opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of cultures around the world, but not as many to learn about cultural diversity in Britain. When opportunities do arise, however, teachers make good use of them, particularly in music, geography and history.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. The curriculum is very broad and enriched and the very good provision for personal development is an integral part of all the school's work. This, combined with the very good quality of teaching, contributes significantly to pupils' achievement. The accommodation is good. The resources for learning across the school are sufficient in quantity but are in need of refreshing and updating, and in the Reception class the range also is limited to satisfactory. Care, guidance, support and the links with parents and the community are very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 1-4, many links are made between subjects and these extend learning well.
- Teachers have very high expectations of effort and behaviour and motivate pupils very well.
- The overall pace and challenge in lessons are very good.
- The use of the assessment procedures to target work to individual needs is very good.
- Lessons are very well planned and prepared.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very good.
- The teaching of communication, language and literacy skills in the Reception class is excellent.
- The quality of resources sometimes adversely affects the quality of learning.
- Teaching assistants are not always fully used in whole-class sessions.
- Marking does not always give pupils targets for improvement.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6 (20%)	14 (47%)	6 (20%)	4 (13%)	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. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is very good overall. In the Reception class there is a suitable balance between teacher-led and adult-supported activities and those where children initiate their own learning, although opportunities for this aspect are hindered by the range and quality of resources. However, the teacher is very adept at using the resources available to the best advantage and supplementing these from outside sources. The quality of teaching in communication, language and literacy skills is excellent and, despite this area being the weakest in the assessments on entry, children are already demonstrating significant progress and interest. Extensive records are kept in the Reception class and these are used very well to target teaching. The nursery nurse and the trainee teaching assistants all add considerably to learning as their work is very well planned and their skills developed and used fully. The teacher has a very good understanding of the requirements of the latest national guidance for this age group.
12. In Years 1-4 teachers have very high expectations of pupils' effort and behaviour and this is securely underpinned by the school's provision for personal development. Teachers motivate pupils very well with a variety of teaching strategies, and practical work particularly supports the very good learning. The secure links made between subjects reinforce learning and provide many opportunities for pupils to use the basic skills in speaking and listening, reading, writing and information and communication technology in many interesting and relevant ways. This strategy has been particularly supportive of their improvements in writing. The extensive use of visits and visitors makes learning come alive for pupils and pupils themselves commented on their appreciation of this. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, and the teamwork between all the teachers in the efforts to improve both their own performance and the achievement and attainment of pupils is impressive. Teachers talked with pleasure about their work in the school and the leadership they receive from the headteacher. The overall pace and challenge in lessons are very good. Small differences in the level of pace and challenge are the main reasons for the differences between lessons graded satisfactory or good and those that were very good and in the very good and excellent lessons pupils' achievement was particularly high. On a very few occasions the quality of

learning was satisfactory or good rather than very good because resources were old and worn.

13. Lessons are very well planned and prepared and securely based on the school's very good procedures for assessing, recording and tracking pupils' attainment and progress. This detailed knowledge allows teachers to match work very closely to the needs of different groups of pupils. Those pupils assessed as gifted and talented or higher-attainers are well challenged, often with open-ended investigational tasks. Work for pupils with special educational needs is closely matched to their individual education plans. These pupils are fully included in all aspects of the lessons, for example in whole-class questioning by the teacher and when checking on learning at the end of a lesson. The additional help through intervention programmes, supported by trained parent volunteers, makes a significant contribution to the progress that these pupils make. Very good help is provided by the teachers and, in some lessons, by the learning support assistants, who make notes about the progress of the pupils in literacy and numeracy lessons to help the teacher plan for subsequent lessons. Teaching assistants are not always used as well in some lessons as others and this under-use also prevented some lessons from being very good or excellent. The school is currently focusing on this aspect of teaching and its improvement.
14. Homework makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Marking is always up-to-date but some teachers are better than others in giving pupils targets for improvements. The school is aware of this and it is an area of current focus.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum for all pupils in the school is very good. The curriculum is founded on very good provision for the personal and social development of all pupils. Extensive opportunities are provided for broadening and enriching the curriculum, especially through sport and the arts. The accommodation is good. Resources across the school are generally satisfactory, but good in English, science and information and communication technology.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The breadth and richness of curricular opportunities are very stimulating.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is very good.
- Value for all, including provision for pupils with special educational needs and those identified as gifted and talented, is very good.
- Provision for sport and the arts is very good.
- Provision for raising pupils' awareness of life in our own culturally diverse society is not yet securely embedded in the curriculum although many incidental opportunities are taken to foster this.
- Reception class resources are satisfactory to meet the demands of the curriculum but many are unattractive and the range is unexciting.
- Resources across the school are generally satisfactory but are old, worn and dated; they are good in English, science and information and communication technology.

Commentary

15. The curriculum and resources have improved since the previous inspection, particularly in relation to information and communication technology and the secure outdoor area for the Reception class. The firm foundation on which the curriculum is built is the high quality provision for personal, social and health education. There are timetabled sessions where pupils sit in a circle to discuss their feelings about particular issues, often stimulated by a glove puppet, but this is only a part of how the school provides for pupils' personal and social growth. This aspect of the curriculum pervades every aspect of life in the school. It is this that so effectively promotes the maturity and very positive attitudes to school of all pupils and enables them to achieve very well. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award that

is closely associated with personal, social and health education and the Basic Skills Award for its work in English and mathematics.

16. Pupils enjoy coming to school and talk with confidence and maturity about their experiences. They particularly value the opportunities for outside visits and pupils in Year 4 talked with tremendous enthusiasm about a visit to 'Bede's World' and were well able to say how it improved their understanding. Links between subjects are very well developed and Year 4 pupils recognised and discussed these with maturity. For example, they told of the enjoyment they had when making Greek patterns using a computer program and how they enjoyed the Anansi stories as part of learning about Uganda. Pupils in Year 4 now have an opportunity to learn French. Pupils want to learn and this ensures that, as they move through the school and on to their next school, they are ready and well equipped to meet new challenges.
17. The range of visits and visitors to the school provides a wealth of experiences that add significantly to the quality of the curriculum. A notable feature of this enrichment is the number of opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in sports and in music. For example, the school is part of a local sports initiative. Qualified coaches bring their expertise to, for example, soccer, dance and gymnastics. Through the music curriculum and the provision for singing and for learning musical instruments, pupils have many opportunities to perform for their peers and for adults. They also participate in drama activities in the classroom and for a wider audience.
18. All pupils benefit from this very rich curriculum. The school identifies those pupils who may have special educational needs or are gifted and talented and makes very good provision for them. The strategies to improve the pupils' writing, including implementing Brain Gym, Thinking for Learning and Philosophy for Children (which are practical activities designed to improve pupils' broader thinking skills), have led to a significant improvement in standards. The school's provision for pupils to gain an understanding of other cultures around the world is very good and features in most subject planning. However, the provision to ensure that pupils gain an understanding of life in culturally diverse Britain is not as securely embedded in the curriculum planning but opportunities are exploited as they arise.
19. The accommodation in the school is good. The outdoor area for Reception children is still being developed and further resourcing is needed for this. Resources across the school are old, worn and dated except in English, science and information and communication technology, where they are good. In the Reception class resources are satisfactory to meet the demands of the curriculum. Many are unattractive and the range is unexciting and limits the curriculum, although the teacher is adept at finding ways around this. The school is aware of the issue in resourcing and is dealing with it as quickly as the budget allows.

Care, guidance and support

Care, guidance and support are very good. Welfare, health and safety are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school shows a very high level of care and concern for all its pupils as individuals.
- Pupils develop trusting relationships with adults.
- Pupils' personal development is carefully fostered.
- Support and guidance for pupils are very good because of the very high quality procedures for assessing and tracking all aspects of development, and the school's very good knowledge of each individual pupil.

Commentary

20. The school provides a very caring environment where pupils feel safe and are happy. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when this aspect was judged as satisfactory. Relationships with adults are excellent. Pupils are known very well as individuals. If they have a problem pupils are very confident they can go to an adult and get help. There is an impressive ethos of trust in the school. Nobody is excluded from activities. The school operates as a supportive family. Child protection has a high profile. The school ensures that this issue is handled sensitively and most effectively. Staff always work in the best interests of all pupils to safeguard their welfare and intervene to protect children from harm. An example of this is the care taken when pupils access the Internet. The school ensures very well that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment. Much in evidence is the promotion of healthy living as part of the 'Healthy School' status.
21. The school has very good procedures to monitor attendance, behaviour, and academic and personal development. The information from this is well used to provide targeted support to all pupils. This has a considerable effect on the achievement of pupils, both academically, and in the significant development of their personal qualities. The school reviews the progress of pupils with special educational needs very carefully. Individual education plans highlight key areas for improvement for pupils, with very concise targets, although occasionally these are insufficiently specific. Good behaviour and attitude to work are recognised and rewarded accordingly. There are excellent induction arrangements for children before entry into the Reception year because of the very close links with the neighbouring private nursery.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents, and the community are very good. Links with other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The contribution of parents to pupils' learning at school and at home is very good.
- Parents have a high regard for the school.
- There are very strong and most effective links with the local community, including the church.

Commentary

22. The very good links with parents and the community and the good links with other schools and colleges are an improvement since the previous inspection. Parents are well informed by regular newsletters. Useful information is provided for new parents and the prospectus meets all requirements. There are several opportunities to receive information on their child's progress throughout the year. Information for parents whose children have special educational needs is very good. The annual reports to parents on their child's progress are informative and include targets for improvement. The school ensures that parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept very well informed and are included in discussions as soon as possible. Parents are invited to meetings when the individual education plans are reviewed so that they know what progress has been made, what the next targets are and how they may help pupils at home.
23. Parental views are most positive and they are very pleased with what the school provides. There is a strong sense of partnership because there is mutual trust and confidence. Parents feel their views are taken seriously and if they are concerned about anything they are confident to approach the school for resolution. Parents help in school and are involved in a range of activities. The Friends of St Mary's Association provides significant financial support. Relationships between parents and staff are very good and parents find staff to be very approachable.

24. There are close links with the local church and the priest is a frequent visitor. Pupils attend the church regularly for events, for example to take part in a mass once a month to which anybody in the local community is invited. The many visitors from the local community contribute significantly to the achievement of pupils. For example, the Reception class used the help and support given by a recent visit from Ron the Baker, which they found interesting, enjoyable and where they learned much about bread. The school uses the local community very well to enhance learning.
25. Links with the middle school, to which pupils transfer, are good, supported by appropriate transfer of information, visits, curriculum links and shared events such as shared worship by Year 4 and Year 5 pupils. The school uses its partnership with its local school group effectively. A significant partnership with the nearby private nursery benefits both establishments and there is a shared system of record keeping. The school currently has two trainee teaching assistants.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. Governance is very good and all legal duties are fulfilled. The very high quality leadership of the headteacher inspires other staff. The headteacher is very well supported by all the staff. The school's commitment to meeting the needs of every pupil is outstanding. Management is very good. The headteacher and permanent staff manage very well. The actions taken help the school to improve and to raise standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The impressive vision, very high aspirations and sense of purpose of the headteacher are shared well by all other staff and governing body.
- The school is committed to value for all because of very high level of concern for all pupils.
- Very thorough and accurate self-evaluation is based on the monitoring of school performance in national tests, internal assessments and all other aspects of school life.
- Thorough reviews of staff performance and target setting improve performance by focusing team efforts on improving teaching and professional development.
- The governing body challenges and supports the headteacher and the staff very well.
- Very good financial management helps school achieve its educational priorities.

Particular aids or barriers to raising achievement.

Everyone – staff and governing body – working together as a team, is a very strong factor in the rising standards being attained by pupils.

Commentary

26. The impressive vision, very high aspirations and sense of purpose of headteacher are shared well by all other staff and the governing body. All staff set very good examples for pupils, especially in promoting the very good relationships in the school, and this makes a very significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development. The school's policies and planning indicate a real concern to provide well for all pupils. This aim is reflected in the classrooms by the teachers, whose very good planning incorporates interesting and challenging tasks, matched very well to the prior learning of all groups of pupils. The school's concern extends to pupils with the highest level of special educational needs as two pupils from a local special school each come to St Mary's on one morning a week. The subject leaders play an important part in developing their subject, particularly through the annual audit of the subject and a rolling programme of checking the quality of teaching and learning and in leading new developments.
27. The school's self-evaluation is very thorough and realistic. It is very closely linked to the standards attained by pupils. The school analyses the results of national tests very well and

checks on the progress of all pupils to see whether they are making the progress predicted on the basis of assessments. This information enables the school to identify targets for the school development plan very effectively. The decision to improve resources and implement teaching strategies to improve standards in writing, particularly of boys who may be underachieving, exemplifies this, and its success is demonstrated in the much improved national test results in writing. The school's self-evaluation is also closely linked to a thorough review of staff performance and target setting to improve this performance. The review of staff performance is not just for teachers. Students working for a teaching assistant qualification, together with all non-teaching staff, have targets that will help them to improve their work to the benefit of the school. The main points for action from the previous inspection have been tackled successfully overall, though the school recognises that the resources, particularly in the Reception class, need to be improved further.

28. The governing body fulfils its role very well by the way it both challenges and supports the school. It is in a very good position to do this because there is a programme of termly visits to the school by pairs of governors with an identified focus. The outcome of the visits is reported back to the governing body clearly and concisely. As a result, these reports, together with the reports of the headteacher, ensure that the governing body has a very good understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas for development. This enables it to play a significant role in prioritising the budget. Finances are managed very well, as shown by the elimination of a deficit budget caused by an unexpected reduction in funding. The school is very aware of the need to tackle the issue of updating resources and is achieving this as fast as the budget will allow. This has been well achieved in English, science and information and communication technology, with mathematics and the outdoor area for the Reception class rightly being a current focus. When taking decisions, very close attention is paid to 'Best Value' principles. This attention ensures that the governing body is very well informed about standards in the school compared with other schools. Additionally, spending decisions, such as changing to a different contractor for grounds maintenance, have benefited the school because the service has improved.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	309,633
Total expenditure	296,058
Expenditure per pupil	1,701

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	13,319
Balance carried forward to the next	13,575

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

29. The quality of teaching and learning in the Reception class is very good in all six areas of learning, except in communication, language and literacy where it is excellent. The provision has improved since the previous inspection. The teacher has a very good understanding of the latest national guidance for this stage and manages a team, comprising a nursery nurse and two trainee teaching assistants, very well. There is a good balance between activities led or designed by the teacher and those where children initiate learning for themselves and experiment, explore, create and imagine. However, some opportunities for these aspects of learning are restricted by resources that are old, worn and dated, and also by the narrow range of resources. The teacher makes very good use of the resources available and is adept at using resources obtained externally to compensate. Ongoing assessment is used very well to track children's progress, and the comprehensive system of record keeping is a very useful tool for ensuring that children make as much progress as possible. Strong links have been forged with the private nursery next to the school. Shared systems of assessment and record keeping and for making sessions work alongside each other ensure that transfer into Reception for these children is as smooth as possible.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This aspect of learning provides a very good foundation for the work that takes place in Years 1-4 and ensures that children settle into school life very well.

Commentary

30. Children have quickly learned classroom routines and respond very well to the teacher, who has very high but appropriate expectations of their behaviour and participation. They learn to take turns and to listen to each other and relate confidently to adults. In an excellent lesson, the teacher used a puppet to teach these skills and children confidently expressed their feelings. By careful questions and discussion, the teacher extended their thoughts, vocabulary and sentence structure and children made secure gains in confidence and in understanding. They enjoyed making faces to match pictures and words to represent emotions such as 'happy' and 'angry'. They learn about hygiene when they make bread. They gain a good understanding of other cultures from topics such as that relating to the Jewish faith. A child from a local special school integrates well with the class for one session each week. Most children are on track to achieve or exceed the nationally expected goals for this area of learning by the end of the Reception year. Evidence from the group of children who have just entered Year 1 shows that these targets were exceeded last year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All adults ensure that development in this area of learning is part of all that takes place.
- The books chosen for group reading add greatly to enjoyment and success.

Commentary

31. Every opportunity is taken to extend the vocabulary and sentence structure of children by careful and sensitive interaction. New words are discussed and shown in written form, for example those relating to feelings, as part of a group discussion session. Although this aspect of learning is the weakest for this year group on entry to the Reception class, before the end of the first term children are already talking well with adults. Children work in groups with a teacher and higher-attaining children already pick out the key words of the week. The very well chosen group-reading books allow both for the teacher to read the page and for children to join in the text in the speech bubbles as part of this. This adds much to the enjoyment and children can take part in reading a whole story at once. Because this takes place in groups all children are highly involved. All the work on learning to recognise the most common 'high frequency words' takes place within the context of the story and so has greater meaning for the children. Children copy sentences written for them by adults to go with their pictures, and there are many opportunities for children to attempt to write for themselves. Higher-attaining children write simple phrases by themselves. Children paint and form letters in many different media and relate these to the sounds at the beginning of words. They listen to stories using headphones. The class has already made significant progress since starting school and most will reach the nationally required goals by the end of the year. More than half the class are likely to exceed them. The group of pupils who have just left the Reception class shows attainment above average.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher is very adept at developing this area of learning through all activities.
- Resources need updating.

32. Counting and other aspects of mathematical development are an integral part of the school day. For example, at register time, children counted back with the teacher to work out how many were present when five were absent. Higher-attaining children already recognise and count to 10 or beyond. Most children match figures to sets of objects and understand 'one more/less'. A very active playground session set this learning very well into a game. The teacher very successfully taught many facts relating to solid shapes and children were introduced to 'cube', cylinder, and 'cuboid'. Her very good rapport with children, combined with humour and skilful use of children's own comments, ensured very good learning in this challenging session. Most children counted and compared faces, edges and corners; many remembered much of the more challenging vocabulary and some children coped with 'pyramid' and 'circular face'. Some resources are old and worn and the facilities for children to learn through working with sand and water, for example, need updating. Most children are on track to meet the nationally expected targets in this area of learning and more than half are likely to exceed them. The pupils just into Year 1 demonstrate attainment that is above average.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The many and varied opportunities for children to learn from visits and visitors enhance learning significantly.

- A weakness in resources, particularly in 'small world' resources, prevents the curriculum from being very good.

Commentary

33. The current topic about bread, built on several visits from 'Ron the Baker', is well enjoyed by children and significantly develops learning about the world around them. Evidence from planning and photographs shows that the use of visits and visitors adds extensively to children's interest and knowledge. Computers are used well and children have many opportunities to develop skills in the use of these and in other aspects of information and communication technology, for example, through listening centres. Resources are old and dated and the classroom does not have enough 'small world' equipment for children to explore and create imaginative games with small animals, vehicles, people and houses for example. However most children are on track to meet the required targets.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher does her best to provide as wide a variety of experiences as possible with the resources available.

Commentary

34. The new outdoor area is in the early stages of development and the school realises that, as yet, this is under-resourced but is tackling this as the budget allows. The class uses both the main hall and the playground when possible for physical activity. In a session observed in the hall, children were using bikes and plastic cars to negotiate around markers. The lack of space was very restricting and the vehicles themselves were too small for children of this age. The nursery nurse taking the lesson did very well to provide enough challenge for the lesson to be worthwhile, given the limited resources available. Within the classroom, children learn to manipulate, pencils, scissors, brushes and the computer mouse well. The classroom lacks resources such as large and medium-sized blocks with which children can build imaginary structures, for example, and a sufficient and challenging range of construction equipment and tools. Children are likely to reach the nationally expected goals for most of this aspect but learning is restricted to satisfactory overall.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for music and art are many and varied.
- Opportunities for children to be creative and imaginative are restricted by the range and quality of resources.

Commentary

35. The classroom provides many opportunities for children to paint, draw and model. They successfully designed, made and decorated bags for their bread. During the time that Reception children joined with pupils in Years 1 and 2 to practise for the Christmas gathering, they sang well for their age and enjoyed the range of very well-chosen songs. The role-play area (at the time of the inspection, a baker's shop) provides many opportunities for children to imagine and pretend and it adds well to learning in mathematical development, speaking and listening and knowledge and understanding of the world. The weaknesses in resources

mentioned in earlier paragraphs limit the opportunities for children to create large and small structures to match their stories and imaginative work, and to make models and create scenes with 'small world' equipment. Children are likely to reach the required targets in this area of learning but not to exceed them because of the shortcomings in resources.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The attainment of pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 is well above average.
- Teaching is very good and contributes significantly to the very good progress and high achievement of pupils.
- The use of assessment for tracking the progress of pupils and setting targets for groups of pupils is very good, although pupils, other than those with special educational needs, do not yet have individual targets.
- All pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject.
- The subject is led and managed very well.
- Marking, although satisfactory overall, does not contain enough guidance to pupils on how to improve.

Commentary

36. Standards in Years 2 and 4 are well above average in all aspects of English and are similar to the judgements of the previous inspection. This very good achievement is partly due to the thorough analysis of the results of national and optional tests and to the use of this information to identify aspects that require improvement. For example, the school has improved provision for boys who appeared to be underachieving in reading and writing, for pupils who have special educational needs, and for pupils identified as gifted and talented. Another reason for the improvement is the use of test results to set challenging targets for the school, for classes and for groups of pupils. The very significant improvement in writing of pupils in Year 4 since they were in Year 2 is testament to the strategies for improvement implemented by the school.
37. Standards in speaking and listening in Year 2 and Year 4 are well above those expected nationally. There are good, planned opportunities for pupils to further their speaking and listening skills. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 1 enacted a puppet play and lower-attaining pupils discussed their thoughts and feelings about different characters in the story, listing words that described different characteristics. All were praised for their contributions. The confidence that pupils gain means that they are keen to contribute their own ideas more and more as they get older.
38. Standards in reading are well above those expected nationally. Teachers inspire pupils very well by choosing interesting texts for literacy lessons. Another reason is the very effective use of guided reading lessons. There was an outstanding example of this with a group of average-attaining pupils in Year 4. The teacher's approach was both imaginative and very challenging, resulting in excellent gains in their learning. Teachers also set a very good example when reading aloud. Older pupils, including those who have special educational needs, talk enthusiastically about books. This love of literature is helped because of the additional experiences the school provides, such as visits from a storyteller.
39. Attainment in writing is well above average. The very well planned lessons ensure that pupils have very good opportunities to practise writing in a range of styles. In a Year 3/4 class of

lower-attaining pupils, including several with special educational needs, pupils learned well how to write instructions in sequence about how to catch a spider. Strategies to increase the vocabulary of pupils and to help pupils to express their feelings to make their writing more interesting are used very well.

40. Teaching is very good overall. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Planning is very good. Teachers ensure that all pupils know what they should know or be able to do by the end of the lesson and use questioning effectively to check on the learning. This enables teachers to plan challenging tasks that are matched to the prior attainment of pupils very well. Teachers and learning support assistants help pupils who have special educational needs very well. Learning support assistants know what is expected during the lesson and note carefully the progress pupils make and where they still have difficulty. All staff expect high standards of work and behaviour and give every possible encouragement to pupils. Marking, however, whilst satisfactory overall, is inconsistent. The best marking provides good guidance on how pupils may make further progress, with many examples of this in Year 4. In the lessons observed, the main difference between the very good or excellent and the good teaching is the brisk, almost relentless pace throughout the lesson and the better match of task to prior attainment that enables all pupils to cover more ground and so make better gains in their learning. The school recognises this and also realises that the next step is to provide individual targets for which pupils themselves can take some responsibility.
41. The subject is led and managed very well. The subject leader has a very clear vision, knows just what should be done to raise standards even further and is very well supported in this by all staff. There is a clear understanding of what will improve pupils' learning opportunities and steps are taken to put this into practice. The subject leader also checks the quality of teaching and learning by observing lessons and providing very clear, structured written feedback that identifies the strengths of the teaching and those areas that could be improved. This is another reason why teaching has improved since the previous inspection. In consequence all pupils make very good progress and achieve very well.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

42. The school provides many good opportunities for pupils to improve their attainment in English. There is an emphasis on providing opportunities for all pupils to speak and listen, to practise their reading skills and to write in other subjects. For example, pupils sit in a circle to discuss their feelings about issues such as friendship, giving reasons for what they think. They research information about their work in other subjects and have many opportunities to write. The provision for pupils to use and extend skills learned in literacy lessons through the range of opportunities is one of the reasons all pupils achieve very well.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in mathematics are above national average in Year 2 and well above in Year 4.
- Teaching and learning are very good; lessons are well planned and taught at a good pace.
- The school is very effective because it makes collective decisions about its approach to mathematics.
- Leadership and management are good and assessment, recording and tracking procedures allow the school to analyse the performance of each pupil and to take action if progress is insufficient.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good because of the support given in the classroom in Years 1 and 2 and the setting arrangement in Years 3 and 4.
- Whilst resources are sufficient in quantity, their age means that their quality is often poor.

Commentary

43. Standards have risen since the previous inspection and are now above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 4. Pupils achieve very well because the school uses the National Numeracy Strategy effectively, adapting well it to meet the specific needs of pupils. In a lesson in which pupils from Years 1 and 2 were asked to recognise fractions as half and quarter turns, tasks were well adapted for each group so that each was properly challenged but none was daunted and unable to attempt the work.
44. Teaching and learning in mathematics are very good. The clock faces being used in the one satisfactory lesson seen were so old that the hands did not stay in place, affecting both teaching and learning and detracting from an otherwise good lesson. Teaching assistants are not always used as fully as they could be to maximise learning. Teachers' own subject knowledge is very good and they focus well on developing the mathematical vocabulary of their pupils. The aims for each lesson are shared with pupils at its beginning and revisited during the concluding minutes, giving teachers the opportunity to check pupils' understanding of what has been taught. Teachers give good, clear explanations and instructions and keep pupils alert by asking penetrating questions that challenge their thinking, whilst giving them good opportunities to explain their strategies. They constantly check that pupils follow and are ready for the next step. Lessons proceed at a very good pace and teachers have high expectations of their pupils. Across the school, there is a very good emphasis on practical activity so pupils have to think for themselves, particularly in mathematical investigations, and this contributes to the high standards they attain. There is much discussion before moving into formal recording of work and this supports good understanding of mathematical concepts. Marking is up-to-date and includes numerous comments of praise or encouragement. There are, however, few comments that challenge pupils' thinking or tell them how the work might have been improved. Homework supports pupils' learning well.
45. Leadership of the subject is good. The school has adopted a team approach to decision making for the subject that ensures total commitment by all staff and a smooth transition from year to year for pupils. The quality of teaching and learning are checked and targets set. Assessment, recording and tracking procedures allow the school to analyse the performance of each pupil and to take action when necessary. The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and the good relationships these pupils enjoy with both teachers and support staff help to foster an atmosphere in which pupils feel secure and unafraid of making mistakes. The needs of pupils on the gifted and talented register are also recognised. Unfortunately, because of budgetary constraints, until recently the school has not been able to dispose of worn-out resources but is aware of this and is tackling the issue as fast as the budget allows.

Mathematics across the curriculum

46. Pupils use their mathematical skills efficiently in other subjects. In design and technology, for example, they weigh and measure and in science they are confident when using tables, tallies and graphs, often representing these in computer generated form. In geography also, they use co-ordinates when doing map work and in history they construct timelines. Pupils in Year 4 commented on the accuracy in measuring required to make their 'pyramid' Christmas cards.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Years 2 and 4.
- The investigative approach to the subject helps to capture and maintain pupils' interest.
- Teaching is very good overall.
- Resources have been improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- Marking does not always indicate how pupils might improve their work.

Commentary

47. The investigative and practical approach to the subject used by all year groups is the key to the good and improving standards attained in science. This is in itself an improvement since the previous inspection when this approach was not uniform across the school. Pupils in a mixed Year 1 and 2 class, working in groups, explored with interest and enthusiasm the relationship between friction and force before reporting back to the whole class. They wrote sensible predictions of what would happen during their tests and explanations of what actually occurred. The concept of fair testing is also introduced early, so by Year 3 pupils automatically apply it to their investigations, for example about the behaviour of magnets. They commented that their test would be fair as long as 'only one thing is changed'. Pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of the main strands of the subject, of the use of scientific equipment and of recording their results in a variety of ways, including data handling on computers. As a result, they learn to think scientifically and can readily apply their knowledge and skills to new ideas and concepts.
48. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. In the lessons seen during this inspection, it was never less than good and is very good overall. The pace was brisk and teachers had high expectations of both work and behaviour. Teachers display good subject knowledge and present work in interesting ways that capture pupils' imaginations. In an excellent Year 4 lesson, for instance, the teacher greeted the class wrapped in many layers of warm clothes and reading 'School burns money'. So began a lesson about measuring temperatures and the use of thermometers and sensors that was well focused on how the caretaker ensures appropriate heating for the school. This lesson also demonstrated very good use of support teachers, who had been well briefed, so that they could give added value to the lesson. The school's own lack of resources had been circumvented by borrowing the sensors from a local middle school so that computers could be used as an integral part of the lesson. Marking is done regularly, but whilst many affirming comments are added, few indicate how the work could have been improved. Homework is used well to help pupils continue their investigations outside the classroom and to involve parents in their learning.
49. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader has managed her budget well to improve resources since the previous inspection. These are well located in a central store. She monitors pupils' performance carefully, tracking the performance of each, although targets are set for the year group as a whole rather than for individuals. Pupils are assessed at the end of each topic and a portfolio of pupils' assessed work is developing well and providing a good source of reference for all staff.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment and achievement have improved and are now good across Years 1-4.
- The quality of teaching and learning are good.
- Classroom computers are now used well and information and communication technology is used to support learning in many subjects.
- Systems for assessing pupils' learning and progress are now in place.
- Teaching and learning in the computer suite are hindered by the lack of an interactive whiteboard and networking for the computers.

Commentary

50. Standards are above those expected nationally in both Year 2 and Year 4. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when pupils in Year 4 were making unsatisfactory progress and attaining levels below that normally expected. All required aspects are fully covered, including aspects of control technology such as using programmable toys. The school is well resourced with computers, software and a large computer suite.
51. The quality of teaching and learning is good. This again indicates an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was satisfactory. Teachers now have secure information and communication technology skills and use these well. They have high expectations of pupils and maintain a good pace of learning. Good management focuses pupils' attention on the lesson task and they question pupils well, which helps to assess the learning that takes place. Key vocabulary is introduced in Year 1 and developed well as pupils move through the school. During the inspection pupils in Year 1 were learning to use a word bank to drop words into their writing. Most could do this successfully and many could extend their work into interesting sentences. Pupils generally show a good understanding of the tasks set and are enthusiastic when tackling them, as was demonstrated when pupils in Year 4 used a 'flood fill' tool and progressed to using a grid to locate shapes and 'flood fill'. They work well individually and in pairs, more competent pupils readily giving help and advice to their peers. Teachers use overhead projectors to help pupils to read with the teacher.
52. It was noted at the time of the last inspection that class-based computers were underused. This is no longer the case. As pupils in Year 2 said, they use computers 'a lot' and good links are made with other subjects. The assessment of pupils' progress was described as unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. A simple system for assessing pupils' attainment is now in place. The subject leader knows that this now is ready for further refinement and development. The quality of teaching and learning in the subject is hindered by the lack of a facility whereby all pupils can see one large screen, or of networking for the computers so that they can all be used for demonstration. A full class of pupils has to gather around one computer if the teacher wishes to demonstrate a new skill and not all pupils can see the screen satisfactorily. The suite is also used to accommodate parents and pupil sessions run by a teacher from a neighbouring school using national funds. This recent innovation is a very good feature of the links with parents and the community and contributes to the raising of standards.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

53. Pupils in Year 2 produce graphs to illustrate the data they collected about the effects of friction on the speed at which a car could travel; those in Year 4 use sensor equipment with interest to measure the temperature of bowls of water. As well as these links with science, pupils use information and communication technology in literacy lessons to help with spelling as well as writing with the word processing packages. The school's digital camera is used

by pupils to record many activities in subjects as diverse as design and technology and physical education, and Year 1 pupils listened to a story on tape. Pupils research topics in history and geography using the Internet.

HUMANITIES

History and geography

Commentary

54. No lessons in either **history or geography** were observed because of the limited time available and the nature of the school's timetable. Examination of photographic evidence and discussion with pupils indicate that a very wide range of interesting and exciting work is covered well. Pupils learn many subject skills from practical activities. For example, at the Yorvik museum, pupils worked as 'archaeologists' while 'excavating' artefacts. Following a visit to St Mary's island and lighthouse, they used geographical terms well to describe the main features. In discussion, pupils in Year 4 were full of praise for the interesting visits that support the curriculum, declaring that the first-hand and practical experiences 'help you to remember it for life'. These pupils gave many examples of the use of literacy and art and design and information and communication technology skills used as part of their work. The subjects make a very significant contribution to pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology, physical education and music

The time available and the nature of the school's timetable meant that these subjects were briefly sampled during the inspection. Insufficient lessons were seen to make judgements on provision.

Commentary

55. In **art and design**, the portfolio of work put together to illustrate expectations of attainment in each year group and the work displayed on the walls indicate that all aspects of art and design are taught successfully. The contribution to pupils' social and cultural development is very good. Pupils are introduced to the work of a variety of famous artists and to art from around the world. Information and communication technology skills are clearly built into the planning, where a variety of programs add an extra dimension to the curriculum.
56. Planning in **design and technology** indicates that National Curriculum requirements are fully met. Discussions with pupils in Years 2 and 4 indicate that pupils enjoy the subject and Year 4 pupils recalled several tasks that they had done. The subject leader has established a small but well-organised supply of tools that are safely stored. Materials for use in the subject are adequate. A portfolio of work and photographs has been compiled to illustrate the range of activities in the subject across the school.
57. Planning for **music** indicates appropriate coverage of all requirements for the subject. The well-organised, part-time subject leader has introduced a commercial programme designed to assist non-specialist musicians to teach music lessons and has supported this with an assessment system to record what pupils achieve. Pupils have many opportunities to learn an instrument. The singing heard in assemblies and in preparations for the Christmas gathering was well above that normally found nationally, being both tuneful and vigorous. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 sing in two-part harmony with very good attention to pitch, tone and intonation. The very high quality of teaching by the headteacher in these sessions was the key feature of this success.

58. In **physical education** planning documents and photographic evidence indicate that the curriculum meets all National Curriculum requirements. The curriculum is enriched significantly by the opportunities the school provides. There are after-school clubs where pupils can practise and extend their skills. Through a local sports partnership, pupils and staff benefit from expert help that puts the school in a good position to raise standards. The school also provides very good opportunities for older pupils to participate in outdoor and adventurous activities at local centres. Outside and indoor accommodation for physical education is good. The lessons seen and photographic evidence showed that all pupils enjoy the subject and apply themselves well to the tasks. The school makes very good arrangements for pupils to learn to swim and to develop confidence in the water. Most pupils swim a minimum of 25 metres and all have basic water safety skills by the time they leave at the end of Year 4.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education.

Provision in personal, social, and health education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This aspect of the curriculum is an integral part of all that the school does.

Commentary

59. The school teaches this subject as part of religious education and science, and in distinct discussion lessons known as 'circle time', where the school has very successfully adapted a formal programme to meet its own particular needs. Although the school has no definitive sex education programme, sensitive reference is made during science work on growth and change and, when appropriate, in response to pupils' questions. Drugs awareness is similarly embedded in the schools' science programme and in the discrete lessons. Pupils are made aware of the helpful and harmful nature of drugs, the need to ensure their safe use and the dangers of smoking. In other lessons pupils discuss the dilemmas connected with making social and moral choices and engage in games and activities that enhance their self-esteem, self-confidence and social awareness.
60. The quality of teaching is very good and this aspect of learning is an integral part of all that the school does. Many lessons often begin with thinking exercises such as those in 'Brain Gym'. A very good lesson in Year 3 led to pupils identifying those skills needed for future life at work and to setting targets for their learning now to achieve these skills. Pupils were encouraged to be ambitious and to make relevant choices towards achieving ambitions. The maturity of pupils for their age was demonstrated well in the sensitive discussions. All staff play a very important role in the subject's development and it adds significantly to pupils' personal, spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

