

INSPECTION REPORT

ST OSWALD'S RC (VA) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Whiteleas, South Shields

LEA area: South Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108718

Headteacher: Mrs I Pallas

Lead inspector: Mr G Cooper

Dates of inspection: 6 – 8 October 2003

Inspection number: 257898

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	241.5
School address:	Nash Avenue Whiteleas South Shields
Postcode:	NE34 8NS
Telephone number:	0191 5367922
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Brewster
Date of previous inspection:	30 March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is set in a context of a former mining and shipbuilding community in the Tyne and Wear conurbation. It has a Christian foundation and enjoys a close relationship with its parish church. It holds the Healthy Schools award and a Schools Achievement award for 2001 and 2002. National census data suggests an area of comparative deprivation, although the school admits pupils from an area wider than the immediate catchment. Almost all pupils come from a white British background. There are no pupils learning English as a new language. The proportion of pupils with identified difficulties in learning is about average for schools nationally. Most challenges to learning are in the category of moderate learning needs but the school is able to admit a small number of pupils with physical barriers to learning. Very few pupils join or leave the school at times other than the usual time of admission and leaving. The school operates a large nursery. About half of the children attending the nursery transfer into the main school and others to a neighbouring primary school. The school provides a family learning programme for parents, family numeracy and National Curriculum standard test workshops. Attainment on entry to school varies a great deal from year to year. Overall, children join the school with a level of acquired knowledge and skills below those expected of other children of similar age.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23647	Mr G Cooper	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology
19740	Mr A Smith	Lay inspector	
31175	Mr A Allison	Team inspector	English Geography History Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language
11419	Mrs J Underwood	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Foundation stage

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Oswald's is a **very good school** that has **high expectations** of the standards achieved by pupils. It is led wisely. Purposeful management and smooth administration support its high quality provision. Teaching is consistently good, leading to productive learning and achievement. The school gives **very good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English, mathematics and science that are above average when pupils are seven and eleven.
- Very good leadership and management within a very positive Christian ethos.
- High quality behaviour, attitudes and personal development; the school is characterised by excellent relationships and a strong partnership with parents.
- Good teaching and learning that gives very good support to a full and well-enriched curriculum.
- There is some inconsistency within very good practice in marking.
- Significant improvements have been made in the nursery and reception classes giving children a good start in their school life.
- Provision for the development of pupils' understanding of their own culture is very good but there are insufficient opportunities to enhance pupils' knowledge of life in a rich and ethnically diverse society.

Good improvement has been made since the previous inspection. The school has responded well to the key issues of that inspection. Furthermore, standards of attainment have continued to rise above the national trend of improvement, previous strengths have been maintained and intensified, while teaching and learning, the curriculum and leadership and management are all better than previously.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	C	B	A
mathematics	C	D	C	A
science	D	C	C	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.*

Achievement in the school is good. Currently **attainment in English, mathematics and science is above average when pupils are seven and eleven.** The school's analysis of the unpublished National Curriculum standard test results for 2003 show attainment for that group **of Year 6 pupils to be well above average.** Where there is sufficient inspection evidence, standards in other subjects are in line with those expected for pupils of a similar age, and well supported by the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and by pupils' use of their competency in information and communication technology. Children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress towards the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception. There are no significant differences between the achievements of boys or girls, or among pupils from different backgrounds.

Pupils' personal standards and qualities are high and relationships are excellent. This results from **the very strong promotion of their personal development** by the school. However, insufficient is done to promote an understanding of other cultures. Pupils are **positive about their**

learning. They **behave very well**, in the classroom and beyond it. They are quick to take responsibility. **Attendance is satisfactory.** An increasing proportion of parents take their child on holiday during term time. A small number of pupils are late for school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a very good quality of education. This stems from **good teaching and learning.** A **very full and enriched curriculum, very good strategies for measuring and using progress** and an **excellent learning environment** all have a strong effect on what pupils achieve. The strengths in teaching are that teachers plan well and have very good relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils find lessons interesting; they concentrate and behave very well. This means that good use is made of time available and a good volume of quality work is produced.

The school takes every opportunity to enhance the curriculum through special events, visits out of school and the use of visitors into school. The provision for personal, social and health education is excellent. This is a significant stimulus to learning. The school has a very strong partnership with the community, especially with its mother church. This relationship gives a strong point of focus for the work of the school in promoting pupils' understanding of their responsibilities to themselves and others. This provides them with good insight into what they need to achieve.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are both very good. Governors play a good role in the work and life of the school. The headteacher's role is very strong and well established. There is a very clear sense of direction to the school's work that is well supported by all members of staff. Very good management ensures that the school runs in an orderly and calm manner, well calculated to give strong support to teaching and learning.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are wholeheartedly behind the life and work of the school. Most significantly, parents believe their child likes school, makes good progress, is well taught and the school is well led and managed. A small minority would like to feel better informed about their child. The inspection team finds that the school provides the usual range of meetings, newsletters and reports to parents. Additionally, the school is quick to discuss any worries with parents and is open to parents who need further consultations. Pupils are enthusiastic about school life. Typically, commenting on why their behaviour in school is so good, pupils said, 'It's because we have good teachers'. They believe they achieve well and the inspection team confirms that this is so.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- achieve consistency in the quality of marking;
- the provision for pupils' understanding of life in a richly diverse society.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is very good. Children enter school with acquired skills and knowledge below those of others of similar age. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. They are on course to **match the goals set for them by the end of reception in personal, social and emotional development, creative and physical development.** However, they are **not on target to match the goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.** Overall, pupils make very good progress through the school and by the time they are **seven and eleven, standards in English, mathematics and science are above those expected of pupils of similar age.** School standards in National Curriculum tests are improving faster than the national trend of improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good achievement includes the achievements of gifted and talented pupils and those with identified learning difficulties.
- Pupils make progress consistently from the Nursery class through to the time they leave school at the end of Year 6.
- Standards are above those expected in English, mathematics and science; good use is made of basic skills of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and growing use is made of pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) competency.
- Despite good provision in the foundation stage, children are not on target to achieve the goals set for them in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world by the end of Reception.

Commentary

1. Children enter school below the expected level of skills and understanding for their age. They make good progress as they move through the Nursery and Reception class and most acquire the goals expected for the end of Reception in personal and social development, creative and physical development. However, despite good teaching and good provision, their progress does not enable them to match the goals for communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.
2. The tables below show the average points scores for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in their National Curriculum tests in 2002. Both seven year olds and eleven year olds achieved standards that matched the national average. Standards in recent years have frequently exceeded the national average. The school has analysed the results of its 2003 tests. Although these have yet to be officially validated, information available to the school indicates standards well above average. The school's results have improved year by year recently at a rate that exceeds the national rate of improvement. It is no surprise that the school won national awards in 2001 and 2002 that took account of its improvement in results. The 2003 results indicate an even greater leap.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002¹

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.0 (16.3)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.6 (14.9)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	17.2 (17.8)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.8 (27.5)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	27.4 (25.7)	26.7 (26.6)
science	28.2 (28.2)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. It is a feature of school achievement that pupils reach the standard expected for their potential. Many pupils do better than this. For example, few pupils do not work at least at the expected level for their age. This is a mark of the success of the school's provision for special educational needs. Much of the school's success in raising standards has come about since teachers were able to rely on the skilled work of learning support assistants. It is also clear that national strategies for the teaching of English and mathematics have made a significant impact on standards achieved. Teachers have a very good idea of where their gifted and talented pupils are and what they need to do to raise their expectations. These pupils gain the higher levels of the national curriculum of which they are capable. Overall, throughout the school, pupils are working at standards in English, mathematics and science that exceed those expected for their age. Where there is sufficient inspection evidence to make a judgement on standards in other subjects, attainment is at least at the expected level. Good use is made of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. Suitable links are made across subjects, for example, in the way reading time and the time made available for the development of reading skills is used to support learning in science, history, geography and religious education. This is a very good strategy. Also pupils' written tasks take good account of their developing English and mathematics skills. There is also evidence that growing competency in ICT is beginning to be used to support other subjects. For example, work was seen to support data handling in mathematics and science. The school sets very challenging targets for the achievement of its Year 6 pupils. The targets for 2003 were surpassed. The current group of Year 6 pupils is well on course to achieve their targets.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour at school are very good. Overall provision for social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is **very good. This is a strength of the school.**

Attendance is **satisfactory**. This mirrors the parental opinions and shows some improvement from the previous report. This level of provision contributes very well to the personal development of all pupils and plays a significant part in their attainment and achievement overall.

¹ *Average point scores:* pupils are awarded a point score for the levels they achieve in National Curriculum standard tests. Average point scores are the average of points awarded for all the pupils in the school.

The main strengths and weaknesses in this aspect are:

- The excellent relationships between pupils.
- The school's very good provision for spiritual, social and moral development that leads to very good relationships and very positive attitudes around the school.
- The involvement of pupils in the life and work of the school, for example, in the support they offer others.
- There is limited evidence of the celebration of different cultures found within society.
- Concerns about the attendance of a small group of pupils who are taken on holidays during term time and about the punctuality of the small number of pupils who turn up for school late.

COMMENTARY

4. The attitudes in the school are very good. Relationships among pupils are excellent. They get on very well together in lessons, during break and at lunch times. Pupils care and support each other very well. The school has successfully involved pupils in the generation of, and thus acceptance of, school, class and playground rules for positive behaviour. However, a very small number demonstrate less acceptable attitudes to good behaviour and respect for adults in classrooms when the school's positive behaviour system is not as effectively used by staff.
5. Pupils are eager to accept responsibility in and around school, doing jobs and aiding teaching staff. For example, older pupils enjoy assisting younger children at lunchtime and in the playground. They take on their responsibilities in a mature fashion and look forward to further involvement in the life of the school. Pupils have high levels of respect for staff and property. For example, the tidiness of the school and lack of any graffiti is in part due to the pupils' ownership and pride in their school.
6. The whole-school policy on behaviour is clear, with systems for both rewards and sanctions as applicable. Pupils' positive behaviour is consistently acknowledged. The very good role models provided by the staff promote a great awareness in pupils of the consequences of their actions. There is a very high regard for moral and social development. The understanding of right and wrong, fairness and honesty are taught through planned personal, social and health education across the school. The school is successful in creating an environment that is free from any form of oppressive behaviour. There are effective strategies for dealing with any incidents of bullying or harassing behaviour. It has not been necessary to exclude any pupil from school in recent years.
7. The opportunities for pupils to gain insight into values and beliefs in order to develop their spiritual awareness are very good. As well as providing time for reflection, assemblies help the pupils to feel part of the whole-school community. Each week pupils' successes are celebrated. Circle time² helps pupils to begin to appreciate their own worth and to raise their self-esteem. Lessons such as science, art, and mathematics, produce moments of awe and wonder.
8. The provision for both moral and social development is very good. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and the pupils rise to the challenge. Moral issues are used as assembly themes and discussed in circle time. Older pupils look after the younger children in Reception and many form lasting friendships. There are a range of responsibilities that pupils take on, including the role of house captain and members of the school council (*the ECO council*) concerned with the protection and preservation of the environment.

² Circle time: when pupils sit in a circle and take turns to discuss matters that are important to them and their personal development.

9. The provision for cultural development is good. Pupils have a fuller understanding of the world around them as they study the local area and various topics in history and geography. Art and music also play an important part as pupils study the work of a range of artists and listen to music from all over the world. However, there is limited evidence of pupils being made aware of the diversity of cultures to be found within this country. This is an area for further development.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is satisfactory and close to the national average. An increasing number of parents take holiday during the term and this affects overall attendance figures. A small number of pupils are frequently late for the start of school. The table below shows the attendance figures for the school. The school rigorously monitors these and strives to make parents and pupils fully realise the importance of full and punctual attendance.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.2
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.5

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 very good. Central to this is excellent provision for personal, social and health education. The curriculum is very good and enriched *well*. The school knows its pupils very well, tracks and supports their academic and social development efficiently. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Many lessons are very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. This improves on the quality of teaching at the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Planning for lessons is very good; this includes the way resources and the skills of learning support assistants are used.
- Teachers have uniformly high expectations and give pupils great support and encouragement.
- Behaviour is very good in all parts of the school; this is the result of high quality relationships and provision for pupils' personal development.
- Every effort is made to ensure that all pupils are included in all the school's learning opportunities.
- Pupils work hard, try and concentrate very well; their excellent relationships among each other means that they cooperate well and get through a good volume of well informed work.
- While some marking is high quality and helpful to pupils, some is less well placed to promote further progress.

Commentary

10. The table below shows that more than three out of four of lessons were good or better and that about one in three were good. About three lessons in every 20 were satisfactory and no lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	14 (33%)	22 (52%)	6 (14%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

11. Teachers plan copiously and comprehensively for lessons. Planning begins with a long-term overview of the areas to be taught during the year. Literacy and numeracy are planned in a style similar to but not identical to the national strategies for numeracy and literacy. The school has adapted the strategies very effectively. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is good and this ensures that pupils acquire a good range of skills in English and mathematics. Where there is sufficient evidence, teaching is good in all subjects seen. Medium term plans identify what the intended objectives are to be and what resources are going to be necessary. Short term plans successfully focus on the objectives and how work is to be evaluated and assessed. Individual needs are considered and tasks are frequently adapted to the specific needs of different pupils. Consideration is also given to the way some pupils should be supported to attend to their specific learning needs, through the work of learning support assistants. Because all probable contingencies have been well thought through, lessons go confidently and briskly and resources are well organised and available.
12. Behaviour is always expected to be good. Pupils recognise the quality of their lessons and taken them seriously. They know that their work needs to be careful, accurate and neat, and it is so. They know that they have to listen hard and concentrate on what the teacher and other pupils are saying. When they are told what their tasks are, they know that they are expected to settle quickly and get on without fuss. Teachers have great skill at raising pupils' expectations of themselves. It is no accident that pupils, discussing behaviour one lunchtime, explained that behaviour is good because 'we have good teachers'. There is frequently a stream of well-deserved praise from teachers and support assistants. This gives great encouragement to pupils and ensures that they stay engaged and well focused on the work they have to do. The school is very clear that its ethos, the environment and atmosphere for learning, is of prime importance. It makes very good provision for this. All staff are wholly committed to the quality of relationships and the way in which pupils are valued and cared for. This is a considerable positive factor in the quality of learning.
13. The school believes strongly in equality of opportunity and the inclusion of all in the learning opportunities available. This is clear in the way teachers cater for the needs of those who have the potential for higher attainment. They get the work that makes demands of them and challenges them. It is clear in the way pupils with learning difficulties are supported and encouraged, and in the way teachers ask challenging questions of both boys and girls, expecting pupils to explain their thinking. This keeps all pupils engaged, on task, working hard and concentrating. Pupils enjoy working in pairs and groups and they are productive in this because relationships are so good. The good teaching and the good learning response means that pupils work accurate and carefully and they complete a meaningful amount of work.
14. Teachers have some good strategies for assessing the work pupils do. They have a good understanding of the progress they are making and how measurements of progress can be used to make even more progress. Question and answer sessions are lively and helpful. However, marking is inconsistent. Some marking is very good, praising effort, acknowledging what has been done well, explaining how the work can be better and sometimes asking challenging written questions to get pupils thinking even harder. Some of the best marking is done alongside the pupil. Some marking is discussion with the pupil about the next target.

However, occasionally marking is not well calculated to move pupils on in their thinking. Occasionally, there is no comment to remind pupil and teacher of what has been said and discussed. Some marking, for example, at times in science, does not get to the heart of the learning objective. At times, marking praises pupils for neat work, or corrects spelling, when the scientific content of the work has not been fully understood.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum for all pupils in the school is of a high order. The curriculum is founded on excellent 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.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Outstanding provision for personal, social education that underpins the whole curriculum.
- High quality enrichment through an extensive range of visits, visitors, sports and the arts.
- Overall breadth and balance of the curriculum that leads to good standards of achievement.
- Very good strategies to ensure that all pupils are included and receive high quality provision, especially those with special educational needs.
- Insufficient attention to preparing pupils for life in a richly diverse society.

Commentary

15. The very firm foundation on which the rest of the curriculum is built is the outstanding provision for personal and social education. The school follows a very good scheme of work that is delivered through timetabled sessions, but this is only a part of how the school provides pupils' personal and social growth. This aspect of the curriculum pervades every aspect of life in the school. The maturity and very positive attitudes that the school promotes so effectively through personal and social education is the cornerstone that enables all pupils to achieve very well.
16. The school ensures that all pupils benefit extensively through the richness of opportunities provided. The range of visits, both day visits and the residential visit to the Lake District by older pupils, provides a wealth of experiences that add significantly to the quality of the curriculum. Notable features of this enrichment are the number of opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in sports and in drama. Qualified coaches – parents and outside agencies – bring their expertise to, for example, soccer, hockey, swimming and tennis. Some of these opportunities are during lesson time, whilst others are extra-curricular activities, mainly after school, but for pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, at lunchtime. This provision is of particular benefit to a pupil identified as being gifted and talented in sports. Drama is a notable strength of the school. Through lessons and opportunities to perform in assembly to parents and in local theatres, pupils extend their speaking and listening skills, their appreciation of literature and grow in confidence as their self-esteem is raised.
17. The breadth and balance of the curriculum provided is of a high order, ensuring statutory requirements are met. This includes the very good delivery of the National Literacy Strategy, enhanced by speaking and listening, reading and writing opportunities in other subjects. The National Numeracy Strategy is delivered well. The outcome of the successful implementation of these national strategies is that pupils attain standards above national expectations and achieve very well. However, one aspect of the curriculum is underdeveloped. While the school ensures that pupils have a knowledge of and respect for cultures overseas, insufficient attention is paid to preparing pupils for understanding life in our own richly diverse society.

18. A thread that runs through all aspects of the curriculum is the school's high level of concern to ensure that it caters for all groups of pupils. As a result, provision for pupils identified as having special educational needs is very good because the early identification of possible

learning difficulties leads to very good planning and the provision of learning support assistants to ensure that these pupils receive their full curriculum entitlement. Equally, pupils identified as being gifted and talented and boys who may underachieve in reading and writing are catered for very well.

Care, guidance and support

The care, guidance and support for pupils are **good** overall and support pupils' learning well. The school's monitoring of achievement and pupils' personal development is **very good**. The involvement of pupils in the school's work and development is **very good**. Health and safety procedures are **good**. This positive level of care contributes well to the security and welfare of all pupils and plays a significant part in their attitudes and confidence overall.

The main strengths and weaknesses in this aspect are:

- Very good relationships exist between pupils and staff.
- Induction arrangements for pupils into school are very good.
- The school's good provision for support, advice and guidance of pupils.
- Improving the attendance of pupils with a lower attendance record, paying particular attention to pupils taking holidays during term time.
- Greater rigour in risk assessment and actions to benefit pupils, staff and visitors to school.

Commentary

19. Staff care very well for their pupils and there are very good relationships between all staff and pupils. For example, the trust that exists between pupils and lunchtime supervisors is beneficial in generating a safe and well-organised lunch period. These relationships generate a very secure and supportive atmosphere with a warm family ethos embracing all pupils. The school listens carefully to what pupils have to say about their work and other opportunities, acting on their views to make improvement to pupils' school life.
20. The happiness of the pupils features highly in the school's ethos and the school works hard to ensure it achieves this end. Pupils enjoy coming to school and the vast majority are very eager to please their teachers. They work hard in lessons and strive continually to achieve well.
21. Child protection is considered rightly as a high priority and those responsible are suitably trained to overview the whole-school approach towards constant watchfulness. There are rigorous systems in place to support and improve pupils' attendance and punctuality, which include the involvement of outside agencies. However, they are not yet totally effective in persuading parents not to take pupils on holidays during term time and in improving the punctuality of a small minority who arrive late to school.
22. The governing body has adopted the local authority's policy on health and safety. It carries out risk assessments both internally and externally in a regular pattern, although greater rigour would improve some minor aspects of identification of potential risks.
23. Arrangements for children to enter school life are well planned and effective towards helping children to settle quickly. Although there is no school council at present, there are suitable routes for dialogue with the school. There is an 'ECO council' where pupils are able to discuss issues of environmental importance to the school. Also, there is a private suggestions box that pupils may use to communicate with school if they do not wish to speak directly to staff.
24. Teaching staff know their pupils' individual qualities and backgrounds very well. Consequently all pupils feel extremely well supported and have very high trust in their teachers sufficient enough to be very confident in discussing any concerns they might have about anything.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership with parents is **very good**; links with the local community are **very good**. Links with other schools and colleges are considered to be **good**. These positive links are of a high order in supporting the positive relations existing between parents and the school for the enrichment of pupils' learning.

The main strengths and weaknesses in this aspect are:

- Parents have very positive views about the school.
- Information for parents is good.
- The school seeks to fully involve parents in pupils' learning.
- Strong relationships between the school and the community include very strong church links and good links with business in the area.
- Currently parents are not informed about termly topics in class, and an opportunity is missed for parents to be more involved with their child's work at school.
- Some targets in annual reports lack consistency and impact.
- The attendance and punctuality of a very small number is a concern to the school.

Commentary

25. Parents' views demonstrate pleasure in what the school provides. They have great confidence in the school's ability to fully develop their children's learning skills. They consider teaching to be good; their child likes school, makes good progress and is expected to work hard. Parents believe that all are treated fairly and are encouraged to become mature and responsible. The school has sought parents' opinions about various aspects of the school and considers their responses carefully. The school is efficient at dealing with parental expressions of concern and handles very rare complaints with tact and skill.
26. The information provided by the school to parents is good. Currently the school does not produce a termly topic list of class activities for parents to participate in supporting their children. The parent/teacher meetings, along with pupils' reports, give parents a clear picture of how their children are progressing. However, they are less precise in setting detailed future targets for pupils and parents to aspire to.
27. The school has generated meetings to aid parents' understanding of current teaching methods. These help parents in better supporting their children's learning at home. Parents support their children well with their homework. This encourages pupils' progress and extends the learning that takes place in the classroom, for example, their development in reading spelling, mathematics and research skills.
28. A solid core of volunteer helpers in school makes a positive contribution to the success of teaching in the classrooms. A significant number of ex-pupils make requests to return to the school for work experience from high school, indicating their positive memories of learning and very good relationships with staff.
29. Good links are made with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer. Close liaison is in place for children in the Nursery who transfer to another school rather than to St. Oswald's. The school provides work experience for students and regular training placements for Nursery nurses. However, there is little link with initial teacher training. Given the strengths of the school, this is a valuable opportunity missed.
30. The school has very good links with the church and there is regular contact through Masses, Harvest Festival, carol service and singing. The equally good links with the local community include visits to various local areas, participation in local charity events and participation in such as the local Arts week and local public performances. Harvest Festival gifts are

distributed to elderly residents of local sheltered accommodation. The elderly are also invited into school for school performances. The business community is well involved with the school. One example is the supply of a full football strip by a local firm. Donations from a local printers and a plastic vending company are very much appreciated and used beneficially by the school.

31. The school has attempted to make parents aware of the consequences of taking pupils on holiday during term time to their own children and the effect on the whole class. There are also a small number of pupils who do not come to school on time. The school is looking to find further methods to make improvement in both of these areas through greater parental awareness and involvement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The school is led purposefully. All staff share a clear vision of what the school should be like. It is managed very effectively, ensuring the pupils have very good opportunities to achieve the best possible standards. Governors have a good view of what they want the school to be like and take a responsible and committed part in supporting its sense of direction. Leadership and management have improved since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good and she is well supported by other key staff.
- Management of the school is very effective.
- The school has high shared aspirations on behalf of its pupils and inspires both staff and pupils to do well.
- Team work and the teaching of a full and rich curriculum are very good.
- The school knows its strengths and areas for development very well; it gives good structure and support to the continuing development of teachers' training and skills, good use is made of self evaluation and the close analysis of data to support rising standards.
- The school sets high standards for pupils through good role models and commitment to equality of opportunity and the inclusion of all.
- Governors rely a great deal on the strengths of the headteacher.

Commentary

32. The school is led very effectively. The headteacher has a clear understanding of what the school should be like and could be like. This is well expressed in what happens in practice and in what is planned as its next stage of development. She is very well supported by all members of staff; teaching, learning support assistants and those who ensure that the school runs smoothly and healthily on a day-to-day basis. The governing body gives good support. Governors are very committed to the school and knowledgeable about its strengths and areas for development. They fulfil their statutory duties. However, there are times when they rely too much on the expertise of the headteacher. For example, she produces the first draft of their annual report to parents and although they know the school well, they have no formal structure for paying focused visits to the school. Very good management documents and policies set out clearly what everyone's role is. Management tools such as the school improvement plan are very secure and identify what needs to be done next to complete the developments required. All staff and the governing body contribute to the plan at one level or another. Very good use is made of opportunities for the professional development of staff to support them in their effectiveness. Very good use is made of the performance data available to the school, for example, the results of National Curriculum tests. A very clear and penetrating analysis has shown how the good attendance of individuals leads to higher achievement in tests and how frequent absence leads to lower achievement. At a time when

an increasing number of pupils are taken on holiday during term time, this is a valuable piece of self-knowledge. The school's self evaluation is very accurate and is well calculated to keep standards rising and the provision of the school improving.

33. Because leadership and management are both very good, the school expects a great deal of its pupils. In the canvassing of their views of the school, both parents and pupils agree that this is so. As a result, pupils and staff work extremely hard. Teachers are determined to work as a team to secure the best possible provision for the pupils. Because pupils respect their teachers and the quality of lessons, they try extremely hard in class. The school is thoughtful and active in seeking interesting activities within the curriculum to inspire pupils to do well. This is the case in lessons, but also in the wealth of experience the school offers to pupils outside lessons. Additionally, pupils know that the school is committed to being fair to all in making sure that everyone has the chance to benefit from the activities available. It is also a characteristic of the school that no one is missed out, whatever their background, gender or ability. The school is very good at ensuring that pupils are aware of the needs of all that come from different ethnic origins and that all are included.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	581,394
Total expenditure	576,112
Expenditure per pupil	2,351

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	69,201
Balance carried forward to the next	74,483

34. The school spends an amount of money per pupil that is about average for similar schools. A considerable balance is being carried forward into the next financial year. This is a product of the school's careful financial planning and its determination to make improvements to the facilities available to pupils. The money is already committed in the current financial year to the school's extensive building programme. The staff of the school and the governing body are very aware of those considerations necessary to provide best value for the funds available to the school. Given the quality of leadership and management, the very good educational provision it makes and the standards achieved by pupils, the school gives very good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school provides a stimulating and exciting area for children to learn in.
 - The quality of teaching is good and frequently very good.
 - A good range of activities is provided.
 - Very good use is made of nursery nurses.
 - Very good relationships are created between staff and children.
 - Children are on course to achieve the early learning goals³ in personal, social and emotional development, creative and physical development but not in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.
 - The school would benefit from more formal liaison between Nursery and Reception particularly for planning and sharing ideas.
35. The provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. Most children are admitted in the September of the year in which they have their fourth birthday. Presently there are 62 children attending the Nursery either for a morning or an afternoon session. The following September about half the children transfer to the Reception class within the school, the rest to a nearby school. The Nursery is a very attractive area with lots of displays of children's work and photographs of their activities. It is a stimulating and exciting environment. Children are happy and well adjusted to the demands of the school. There is a secure outdoor area, at present used by children to explore wheeled toys but later specific activities will be planned. The Reception area, separated from the Nursery by the school hall, has its own outdoor play area. This is a grassed area and not very practical when wet. Because of the distance between the classes, working closely together is a little more difficult. A good range of resources supports the children's learning across the Nursery and Reception classes.
36. **Attainment is below the expected level on entry to the school and children make good progress** through the Nursery and Reception classes. They achieve well, developing a basis grasp of numbers and letter sounds. Many children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, creative and physical development. However, despite good provision and teaching that is consistently good or better, fewer will achieve the goals in communication, literacy and language, mathematical development or knowledge and understanding of the world.
37. The quality of teaching overall is good, with some being judged very good. This is an improvement since the previous last inspection. Teachers in both the Nursery and Reception, and their nursery nurses, work as teams and plan together. However they do not as yet plan regularly as a unit. This is an area for development. Liaison between Nursery and Reception was an issue in the last inspection: much has been done to address this issue. Planning is closely linked to the Early Learning Goals (the expected levels in the areas of learning achieved by the end of the Reception). All adults supporting learning in either the Nursery or Reception class know exactly what they have to do because they liaise closely with their class teachers. Teachers' knowledge and enthusiasm motivates the children to succeed and also ensures tasks build on previous experience and skill so that children develop appropriately.

³ Early learning goals are the expected levels in the areas of learning achieved by the end of the reception year.

Questioning is used effectively to ensure full involvement in the tasks and to extend children's knowledge. The use of day-to-day assessment ensures children are challenged, be they higher or lower attainers.

Personal, social and emotional development

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is good. This reflected in the way children are learning to respect each other, share resources, take turns and play together.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- A good range of activities to encourage children to relate to each other;
- The good selection of costumes for Reception children to dress up in when involved in role-play activities.

Commentary

38. In all activities, adults encourage children to explore and develop their vocabulary. Often they provide a role model to help children learn the social skills of relating to each other and playing together. This has a positive effect on their learning as the older Reception children become more articulate and confident. The youngest children do not yet play together. Rather, they play side by side. However, some of the older children in the Reception were observed playing together in the quiet area outside the classroom. They were re-enacting well-known nursery rhymes such as Little Miss Muffet, and Old King Cole: all were very involved together. In all group sessions children are encouraged to wait their turn. The majority of Reception children are good at this but many of the younger children in the Nursery are still too keen and call out. Teachers encourage the children to listen to each other and share their thoughts. Reception children listen well and are keen to respond. All children enjoy coming to school and are aware of what the teachers expect of them. In all classes they are taught to clear away and look after resources. A particular feature of children's development is the encouragement to their role-play activities stimulated by the good choice of dressing up costumes available.

Communication, language and literacy

Provision in communication, language and literacy is good because it encourages children to become articulate and confident speakers, to enjoy sharing both story and reading books and to be able to start to write down their thoughts and tell stories.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The range broad range of activities to stimulate children's interest.
- Adults provide good opportunities to extend children's vocabulary.

Commentary

39. In the Nursery, children enjoy books and often wander into the quiet room to peruse the books. They retell the story in their own way. Although they handle books carefully a few "read" them upside down! Children enjoy making cards for their family and "writing" inside them. There are examples on the wall of their first attempts at writing. Apart from one example these children are still exploring scribbling or making marks. One child showed an awareness of letter shapes. Adults encourage children to develop vocabulary as they experience a range of activities. In the Reception class, children enjoy "*Dear Bear*" and are keen to respond to teacher's questions. They describe how the girl in the story might feel; "*nervous*" says one child. Children think how Miss Muffet might have written to the spider – '*Go away!*' '*Would you like to be my friend?*', for example. The children enjoy books and they

are very confident to recite favourite nursery rhymes. A group of children retell the story of "Dear Bear". Higher attaining children are just beginning to recognise a few words in their reading books. Others use the pictures to answer questions about the story. Although provided with many opportunities to explore writing for different purposes, few children are able to write recognisable letters. Some make marks and translate them into a sentence. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about books and this motivates the children to learn.

Mathematical development

The provision for mathematical development is good. In the Nursery many opportunities are used to encourage children to extend their understanding.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good opportunities are provided to develop mathematical skills.

Commentary

40. Every opportunity is used to encourage children to count. In the Nursery, the teacher uses a monkey puppet to motivate the children – they really enjoy counting the number of monkey jumps! This adds fun to the lesson and keeps them focused. Two-dimensional shapes have been used to create pictures. Children in the Reception count confidently to ten and many are capable of counting further. They explore "one more than" a number. Number rhymes add another dimension to children's learning and all join in enthusiastically. Mathematical learning is supported by an appropriate range of activities that help to develop counting skills.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The extensive variety of topics.
- Good range of visits and visitors.

Commentary

41. Children enjoy a range of topics relating to *ourselves, people who help us, growth* and many others. Mums visit to show children how to bath a baby. Among other visitors are the local police, school nurse and the local priest. Children use the local area, looking at different types of housing, shops where they buy vegetables for cooking, the local church and the library. These first hand experiences help to enhance the children's curriculum and develop an understanding of the world around them. Children enjoy using the computer and show how well they can control the mouse.

Physical development

Provision for physical development is good. Children experience a wide range of activities that help them to develop the relevant skills in writing and movement.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- A good range of experiences to develop relevant skills.

Commentary

42. Children are given many opportunities to develop physically. They enjoy sessions in the outdoor area, confidently riding on tricycles and other wheeled toys, or in the hall, moving to music. They are developing good spatial awareness and move around the hall with confidence, enjoying and responding to the music. Other skills are developed through colouring, cutting activities and sticking. Tools are used with play dough, rolling pins and shape cutters. Most children hold a pencil correctly but few are forming recognisable letters, even in the Reception class.

Creative development

Provision for this is good as children explore different media, role-play and singing familiar rhymes.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The broad range of media explored.
43. Children in the Nursery enjoy painting, printing with different vegetables or making a collage using autumn colours. Those in the Reception Year explore colour and use glitter glue to make a spider's web. All children enjoy singing many familiar rhymes and number songs. The Reception class children benefit from the skills of a pianist to accompany their singing. Many examples of children's art are displayed in both the Nursery and Reception classrooms. Both the Nursery and Reception classes provide children with role-play areas so they can make up stories and pretend to be a character. For example in the Nursery, children used the "*home corner*", pretending to give the teacher a cup of tea, and in the Reception children were characters from various nursery rhymes.

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 6 is above the standards expected nationally.
- The richness of the curriculum, including the opportunities to use English in all subjects and most notably in drama is a key factor in the very good achievement of all pupils.
- Teaching is good and contributes significantly to the standards attained by the pupils.
- The use of assessment for tracking the progress of pupils and setting targets for groups and individual pupils is very good.
- All pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject.
- The subject is led and managed very well.
- Marking, though satisfactory overall, does not contain guidance to pupils on how to improve often enough.

COMMENTARY

44. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average in all aspects of English. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. This confirms the results of National Curriculum tests that have risen overall since the previous inspection. The standards found during inspection partly because a strong feature of the leadership and management of the subject is the thorough analysis of the results of national and optional tests and 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, 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 groups and for individual pupils, who know what they have to do to improve, and then tracking the progress that pupils make towards these targets.

45. Standards in speaking and listening in Year 2 and Year 6 are above national expectations. There are good, planned opportunities for pupils to further their speaking and listening skills in lessons. The teacher gives pupils in Year 1 time in lessons to respond to questions and provides good encouragement for lower-attaining pupils. The confidence pupils gain means that they are keen to contribute their own ideas more and more as they get older. For example, pupils in Year 5 are quick to put ideas forward for the appearance and personality of a new character in a story.
46. Standards in reading have improved and are above those expected nationally in Year 2 and Year 6. This is because teachers motivate pupils well by choosing interesting texts for literacy lessons, for example *'Tom Tiddler's Ground'*. Teachers also set a good example when reading, as shown in a Year 6 class when the teacher read from *'Sheep-Pig'* by Dick King-Smith. This encourages pupils to emulate them when they read aloud. Older pupils, including those who have special educational needs, talk enthusiastically about books and have favourite books and authors. This love of literature is helped because of additional experiences the school provides, such as visits from an Irish storyteller.
47. Attainment in writing is above average overall. The thorough, flexible use of the National Literacy Strategy ensures that pupils have very good opportunities to practise writing in a range of styles. In a very good lesson in Year 2, pupils learned how to compile lists and instructions. Strategies to increase the vocabulary of pupils and to use words to make their writing more interesting are used well. As a result one pupil in Year 6 began a poem entitled *'The Tiger'*:
*'Big, brown eyes, watching, waiting,
Hidden by the long grass'*
48. Teaching is good overall and is very good in Year 2 and Year 6. 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. Challenging tasks match 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 targets are specified in individual education plans 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 and Year 6. In the lessons observed, the main difference between the very good and the good teaching is the brisk, almost relentless pace throughout the lesson that enables all pupils to cover more ground and so make better gains in their learning.
49. The subject is led and managed very well. 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 one of the reasons that teaching has improved since the previous inspection. In consequence standards have risen.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. The school provides many high quality opportunities for pupils to improve their attainment in English. The National Literacy Strategy is implemented very effectively and flexibly. There is an emphasis on providing planned opportunities for all pupils to speak and listen, to practise their reading skills and to write in other subjects. For example, in geography, pupils in Year 2 write about why they would or would not like to live on an island, and pupils in Year 6 research the River Tyne using a CD-ROM. One of the most significant contributions to promoting speaking and listening skills is found in the very well taught drama lessons. The school is rightly very proud of the experiences provided for all pupils to perform both in school and in local theatres that not only enhance speaking and listening skills very well, but also make a very effective contribution to their personal development. The provision for pupils to use and extend skills learned in literacy lessons through the extensive range of opportunities is one of the main reasons why all pupils achieve very well.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- In the work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above average.
- Achievement is very good as pupils come from below average attainment on entry into school.
- The quality of teaching is good and often very good.
- Relationships are very good.
- High expectations and challenge.
- Good use of learning assistants.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Good use of marking but inconsistent at times.

Commentary

51. Standards are average at the end of Year 6, according to the results of the National Curriculum tests for 2002. However, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level 4 and above in the tests for 2003 has risen, with an even greater increase in the percentage achieving level 5. The low percentage of level 5's in the 2002 tests was highlighted by the school as a priority for improvement. The school's strategies for improvement were successful. Overall improvement in standards is above that recorded nationally. Although girls tend to perform better than the boys there was little evidence to suggest this was so during the inspection. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection, with a dip in 2000 and rising to present standards.
52. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2, according to the results of the National Curriculum tests for 2002 and are likely to be similar in 2003. Thus standards have been maintained at a high level since the previous inspection.
53. In the work seen during inspection standards are above average. All pupils make good progress and achieve very well. Many enter the school attaining below the expected level and go on to achieve the expected levels. Some make better progress and achieve standards above those expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs often make very good progress as they frequently achieve the expected levels. Pupils develop appropriate skills across the mathematics curriculum, including solving word problems and a limited use of the computer. This is area for further development to ensure computer use is planned and that programs used relate to the lesson objectives.

54. The quality of teaching is good overall with some examples of very good teaching. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was judged to be mostly good. Teachers' enthusiasm and knowledge help to motivate pupils to succeed. Questions are used effectively to extend or reinforce pupils' knowledge. Because of very good relationships and teachers' praise and encouragement, pupils are confident to respond and to explain their method of arriving at the answer. Planning shows tasks carefully matched to the needs of the pupils. Lesson objectives are shared and then discussed at the end of the lesson to see they have been achieved. In lessons where there is additional learning support, support assistants have a positive effect on the learning of those in their groups. Relationships between pupils are very good and they work well together, sharing resources and helping each other. For example, in a Year 6 lesson pupils discussed in pairs what a particular line graph might represent. Pupils enjoy the quick-fire mental questions at the start of most lessons. Most lessons are brisk and provide appropriate challenge for all pupils, especially where teachers have high expectations of pupils' success. Additional sessions for those pupils who find mathematics difficult are provided and have a positive effect on their achievement by the end of Year 6.
55. Assessment data is analysed in depth and highlights weaknesses in pupils' achievements. Regular assessment also gives teachers clear guidance when target setting for each pupil. This has helped to raise standards. Examples of assessment being used during lessons were observed in two lessons when teachers stopped their class working to explain a concept not fully understood. When pupils returned to their task, success was ensured. Although there is a marking policy, marking in the subject is not consistently constructive and helpful. This is an area for further development.
56. There is an enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject leader who has had the opportunity to observe teachers in their classrooms. Lack of such monitoring was criticised in the previous inspection. Data analysis is important to the school and regularly carried out, giving valuable information to help set targets.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. There is evidence of mathematics being used in other areas of the curriculum such as data handling in science and geography, measuring in design and technology and science. However, although pupils experience a range of computer programs, this is an area for further development, particularly with the older pupils.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**. Pupils achieve standards that are above those expected of pupils of similar age. The quality of teaching is good and pupils learn well as a result. The curriculum is good and well enriched. Leadership in the subject is effective. Good improvement has been made since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Above average standards achieved, both in National Curriculum tests and in the work seen.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Very good behaviour gives impetus to the amount of work and quality of work pupils do.
- There is a good focus on scientific methodology in the curriculum.
- Good leadership ensures direction and effective resourcing.
- Some marking does not help pupils extend their learning.

Commentary

58. Standards of attainment are now above average both for pupils at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. The 2002 results indicate that almost all Year 2 pupils gained the level expected for their age but that many more than usual achieved the higher level possible. The 2003 results indicate further improvement. Until recently, boys have performed below the level of boys nationally. In 2002, boys and girls together achieved average results. The results for 2003 Year 6 pupils now show attainment significantly above the level expected, with many pupils, both boys and girls, gaining the higher levels possible. The work seen during inspection confirms that school standards are above average overall. Pupils have a growing understanding of the nature of learning in science. They make predictions and test them. They extend their understanding of scientific investigation and how to test scientific hypotheses. Good opportunities for discussion give pupils with learning difficulties scope for talking about their understanding. Many achieve the standard expected for their age, despite barriers to learning. Higher attaining pupils have the chance to explain their level of understanding in some detail using appropriate scientific vocabulary in their explanations. This was particularly the case in a lesson in Year 4, where pupils accurately explained the reasons behind their hypotheses about the insulating and conducting properties of a wide range of materials.
59. The teaching is good and many lessons are very good. Teachers plan well, they make good use of their subject knowledge and this enables lessons to be taught confidently and with pace. This keeps pupils on their toes, engages and interests them. Opportunities are well planned into lessons to take account of the different needs of pupils, and those with learning difficulties frequently get tasks modified to their needs. At the same time, there are ample opportunities in the tasks planned for higher attaining pupils to make good use of their study skills, especially when using literacy and numeracy skills as researchers, investigators and in recording their work. There is a great deal of mutual respect between teachers and pupils and this results in an enthusiastic approach to work and very good behaviour and attitudes. Behaviour is the result of outstanding whole-school encouragement of a healthy attitude to work and study. It has a very strong impact on the quality and quantity of work produced by the pupils. They get through a great deal in the time available. The teaching of ICT has a growing influence in the standards pupils achieve.
60. The curriculum is good and well enriched by the range of activities. It is supported by a suitable policy and long term plan that ensures efficient coverage of topics across the year groups. There is a clear whole-school emphasis on developing a scientific methodology and encouraging the good use of scientific vocabulary. An appropriate range of resources is available for the activities undertaken. Good use is made of the local area, and, for example, pupils visit a nearby supermarket when they study healthy diet. The subject is effectively managed by an experienced subject leader. The one factor that detracts from provision in the subject and the standards achieved is that marking is inconsistent. Some marking is very good, valuing and praising effort and correctness in scientific thinking. Some teachers ask penetrating questions after their marking that lead pupils on in their thinking and reasoning. Some marking is not done against the learning objectives for the activity. For example, at times praise is given for neat work or spellings are corrected and no comment made about the scientific content of the work. The school makes very good use of its data from the analysis of National Curriculum tests but some other measurements of pupil progress, as in the work marked, are not used to challenge pupils and set new objectives for further learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is good and has improved since the previous inspection. Standards are in line with those expected of pupils of similar age. Overall, pupils achieve well. There is a considerable whole-school improvement plan to further enhance provision in ICT. A new subject leader has established a very clear action plan to move the subject on.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The good use of specialist teaching and facilities.
- The effective use of laptop computers as a 'mini-suite'.
- Pupils' growing confidence in the use of their ICT capability.
- The breadth of the curriculum.

Commentary

61. The school does not have the accommodation available for a separate room dedicated to the teaching of ICT. It has made effective arrangements to compensate for this and to enable larger groups of pupils to use computers. On the one hand, pupils use a nearby specialist facility at the 'Open Learning Zone'. This offers pupils the opportunity to use very advanced and sophisticated technology, not normally available for pupils of this age. For example, Year 6 pupils enjoyed an enthralling control and modelling lesson where they learned to programme a set of traffic lights using some very advanced technology. These pupils quickly achieved the expected levels in this aspect of ICT. Early in the series of lessons pupils were well on course to exceed the expected levels for their age. This lesson was very competently taught by the learning zone's resident tutor and ably supported by the school's ICT subject leader. On the other hand, pupils also benefit from the school's strategy of 'pooling' laptop computers in the classroom. Although not all pupils can use a laptop at the same time, more can have access to computer technology than would otherwise be the case. This has the benefit of giving pupils more intensive practice than using the usual two or three computers in the classroom. Pupils with the potential for higher attainment now get access to the computers and appropriate software they need. Those with learning difficulties get good support so that they make appropriate progress.
62. The curriculum is good and well taught. It is well structured to ensure that pupils access the full programme for ICT. There are examples on pupils' saved work files of word processing, the use of spreadsheets to solve mathematical problems, the presentation of data and making 'Power Point' presentations combining different media. It capitalises on teachers' growing confidence in the use of ICT. Good use is made of ICT for work displayed throughout the school. Older pupils' personal files are saved to CD ROM and pupils access a wide range of CD ROMs for research purposes. The subject is led well by an enthusiastic and well-informed subject leader.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63. ICT is well used for a range of activities across the curriculum. It is used to present work in English, making good combined use of pupils' word processing skills and their writing skills. It is effectively used as a support to learning basic skills in English and mathematics. There are numerous examples of ICT being used for the presentation and interpretation of data. Pupils use their research skills in science, history and geography in accessing information stored on CD ROMs.

HUMANITIES

64. It was not possible to make overall judgements about standards in geography and history or about teaching and learning. Only a few lessons were seen, and this early in the school term, there was insufficient recorded evidence to make secure judgements. The evidence available suggests that provision for geography and history is very good. Standards in history in Year 6 are similar to those expected nationally.
65. In both subjects all pupils benefit from being taken on educational visits, such as that undertaken by younger pupils to the local shops to support learning in geography, or by older pupils to a museum to consolidate learning in history. Older pupils also experience a

residential educational visit to the Lake District, about which they talk enthusiastically, that strengthens their knowledge and understanding of the similarities and differences between their own and other localities. Visits by local people who recall their experiences of World War II bring history to life for all pupils.

66. Year 6 pupils talk very enthusiastically about history. They have good recall of their earlier learning about the Ancient Greeks and even more so about the Victorian topic. This is partly because some drama lessons link very closely to history. This was very clearly shown in a very good drama lesson with pupils in Year 5. The outcome was that all pupils became much more aware of, and able to empathise with, the plight of orphan children in the Victorian era. The importance of the work of Dr Barnardo became very real to them.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

67. No lessons were seen in design and technology and only one in art and design. It is not possible to make secure judgements about overall standards achieved or about the quality of teaching. However, the samples of art work available and art displayed around the school and the pupils' design and technology plans and evaluations show that they enjoy a full curriculum. The limited evidence seen suggests that standards of attainment are at least in line with those expected of pupils of similar age.
68. The limited evidence available implies that pupils make good progress. In art and design, pupil profiles, the work in their sketch books and work on display show that they benefit from working in a range of different media, including textiles and work in three-dimensions, across an increasingly sophisticated range of topics. There are good examples of work to show how, for example, pupils' skills in drawing the human form develop and mature with increasing confidence in the use of line, tone, shade and added detail. In design and technology, there is a clear indication that pupils learn a design and make process and use an increasing range of materials and tools. Pupils' evaluations of their finished work shows that they are required to think critically about what they have made, although for some pupils, their response to the question, '*What could you have changed to make it better?*' results in the answer, '*Nothing*'.
69. A broad and well-balanced programme of study for both subjects fully covers the requirements of the National Curriculum. The subjects benefit from a good range of resources, including the use of some quite demanding tools and materials for design and technology. Good and enthusiastic leadership has ensured that there is effective guidance and direction to the curriculum and that appropriate resources are readily available.
70. It was not possible to make firm judgements about the standards in all aspects of music by the end of Year 2 or Year 6 because most lessons observed were singing. The standard of singing is good. Pupils enjoy the activity and participate with enthusiasm. Year 2 pupils are able to sustain a simple two part round, whilst Year 6 sang a song with two different parts. The sound was pleasant and tuneful, with some expression. Words were clear, and long notes held. When singing their favourite hymn in assembly everyone sang with great gusto!
71. In Year 5, pupils' explored the use of tuned and untuned percussion to make a piece of music in a similar style to Mussorgski's *Ballet of the Chicks*. The end result, although very different, as the chosen music is a piano piece, was effective in evoking the hatching and development of the chicks interspersed with a cock crowing!
72. Pupils make good progress, particularly in singing and as they move through the school develop the necessary skills. In the previous report pupils' response to music was good. It is now better as they are so enthusiastic when they are involved in a musical activity.
73. The quality of teaching seen was good. Teachers' enthusiasm motivates the pupils to achieve, and because of high expectations the pupils rise to the challenge. Lessons are brisk.

Questioning is used effectively to reinforce or extend pupils' learning. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils consequently they are confident to play for the class. They also know their efforts are appreciated. For example in Year 5 as each group perform their contribution to the class composition criticism by their peers is sensitive and helpful. Pupils also work very well together, collaborating closely, as they compose their music.

74. Although there is no member of staff with a background of expertise in music, the pupils continue to receive a broad musical education. The headteacher holds the role of subject leader in a temporary capacity. Pupils enjoy performing in concerts, class assemblies and out in the community, particularly at Christmas. Brass lessons are also available.
75. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about aspects of the subject other than games. The reason standards in games are above national expectations is that the school provides many opportunities both within and outside the school day for pupils to practise and extend their skills. The school provides hoops and balls for pupils to use during break-times. There are lunch-time soccer skills sessions for pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, taken by parents who are qualified soccer coaches, and after-school sessions run by school staff and staff from outside agencies. The enthusiasm with which pupils participate in these activities is shown by the fact that over 80 pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 attend an after school sports session taken by staff from an outside agency. The inter-school competitions enhance pupils' personal development because they promote team spirit and self-esteem very effectively.
76. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about teaching and learning, but in lessons seen in Year 2 and Year 6 taken by an outside tennis coach, teaching and learning were very good and it was clear that pupils achieve very well. A feature of the Year 6 lesson was the provision for a pupil identified by the school as gifted and talented.
77. Each year all pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 have the opportunity to learn to swim. This is a very good feature because of the nearness of the school to the sea. Also, older pupils have the chance to go kayaking and exploring gorges, activities that enrich the provision very well. As a result almost all of the current Year 6 pupils swim at least 25 metres and have an understanding of basic water safety. Many pupils are much more competent than this.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education and citizenship

Provision in personal, social and health education is **excellent**. The area of study is very well led. It provides the groundwork for much of the school's provision in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development that has such positive outcomes in the life and work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The sense of purpose and direction to the area of study.
- The whole-school commitment to personal, social and health education.
- The award of the 'healthy school' standard and the work towards the 'eco-school' award.
- The successful outcomes in pupils' personal development.

Commentary

78. The area of study is led with determination. The subject leader believes that personal, social and health education is an area of study central to all that the school believes in. This provides a very strong focus for all members of staff that goes far beyond the lessons provided by the school. It pervades the whole of school life. There is a very clear programme of study which links to science and to the diocesan agreed syllabus for religious education.

Within the programme links are made with sex and human relationships within a Christian context and with drugs education. The school makes good use of visitors such as the school nurse and the community police officer. The programme includes lessons about personal responsibility within the context of citizenship. The school has striven hard to achieve the 'healthy school' standard and continues with its work on conservation as it moves towards the 'eco-school' standard. Pupils are enthusiastic about their yellow re-cycling bins.

79. Although only one lesson was seen, there is a great deal of evidence in the way pupils conduct themselves consistently well day by day throughout their school life, that this area of study has a profound impact on the work of the school. It plays a large part in the response of pupils to all lessons, in their very positive attitudes to work and in their very good behaviour. This is a school where 'common-sense' prevails, but only as the result of much hard work and commitment. The school provision in personal, social and health education does much to enhance the quality of learning and the standards pupils achieve.

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	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	1
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
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	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	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).