

INSPECTION REPORT

St Patrick's RC VA Primary School

Langley Moor

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114268

Headteacher: Mrs M Spedding

Lead inspector: Neil Tonge

Dates of inspection: 13 – 15 October 2003

Inspection number: 257912

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	87
School address:	Goatbeck Terrace Langley Moor Durham
Postcode:	DH7 8JJ
Telephone number:	0191 3780552
Fax number:	As above
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Miss M Thompson
Date of previous inspection:	29 June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Langley Moor St. Patrick's is a Roman Catholic Aided Primary School in the parish of St Patrick's, located in the village of Langley Moor on the outskirts of Durham City. Pupils come from a mixture of private and local authority housing situated in two main villages. There are 89 pupils (51 boys and 48 girls) at the school, which represents a decline in numbers from a high of 124 in 1998. The decline is a general feature of the area. Overall, the school draws on homes of above average socio-economic circumstances. The school has approximately 11 per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average of 18 per cent. Children are almost exclusively from white British heritage and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. Eight percent of pupils have special educational needs, which is below the national average. There are no pupils with statements of special needs. Attainment on entry varies from year to year between average and above average. There are exceptions however, even to this general pattern, for example in 2003 when 9 out of 16 pupils had special educational needs. Pupil mobility is not a significant factor.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1157	Neil Tonge	Lead inspector	English; English as an additional language; geography; history.
9399	Roger Hawkes Watts	Lay inspector	
30651	Margaret Entwistle	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; Special educational needs; information and communication technology; science; mathematics art and design; design technology; music; physical education.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. Standards are well above the average and achievement is good because teaching is good. The level of care for individual pupils is high and this results in pupils enjoying school and working hard. The school is satisfactorily led and managed, which nurtures a shared commitment to succeed. The expenditure per pupil is high. **As a consequence, the school provides satisfactory value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The pupils are attaining well above average standards in English, mathematics and science because teaching is effective.
- Pupils' achievement is good because teachers' plan to meet the different levels of abilities in their classes, although they need to ensure consistently that all work for lower attaining children is appropriate for their level of attainment.
- Relationships within school are very good and as a result pupils have very positive attitudes to their work and behave very well.
- There is commitment to the inclusion of all the pupils but there is a need to improve the provision for children with special educational needs.
- The school is soundly managed but there is a need to further develop the role of all coordinators as subject leaders.

Since the school was inspected in 1998 the rate of improvement has been good. The quality of teaching has improved significantly; management planning is detailed; curriculum planning is now effective and parents receive regular information about the school. Furthermore, the school is attaining very high standards and the pupils are achieving well.

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

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

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 6.

In the Foundation Stage, the children are on course to exceed the goals that they are expected to reach by the end of reception because their curriculum is well planned and taught.

At the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards in English, mathematics and science above the average and their achievement is good. This is because teachers have good subject knowledge and very high expectations of their pupils. Standards of attainment in history and geography are above average, while in art and design, design technology and information communications technology they are average.

At the end of Year 6 standards attained by pupils are well above average in English, mathematics and science and their achievement is good. In geography and history, standards of attainment are above average, while in information and communication technology (ICT), art and design and design technology they are average.

It was not possible to make judgements on music and physical education because of the timing of the inspection schedule.

The pupils have positive attitudes to school. They want to learn because lessons are interesting and the teachers motivate them to want to succeed. Standards of behaviour are very good throughout the school and at all times. The attendance rate at the school is good and there is very little lateness.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils, overall, is good. In moral and social it is very good, whereas in spiritual and cultural development it is satisfactory. Pupils work happily together and show tolerance and respect because they are encouraged to do so. They understand the difference between right and wrong because the school has very high expectations of behaviour and the pupils respond well to these demands.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils and as a consequence they produce well-presented and accurate work. Children get a very good start to school in the Foundation Stage. The teacher plans interesting and challenging activities, which enable the children to make very good progress. The standard of good teaching is maintained throughout the school and accounts for the very high standards pupils attain by the end of Year 6. Staff have a very good relationship with their pupils and this encourages children to give their best. The planning, teaching and assessment of literacy and numeracy skills, in particular, are good and is the reason why standards in these core areas have been maintained at a high level. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good but there is a need to set them more precise learning targets and to monitor their progress more regularly. Occasionally, teachers do not set appropriate work for low attaining children.

Overall, the school offers a satisfactory broad and balanced curriculum but one that could be enriched. Literacy and numeracy skills are well developed across the curriculum but some aspects of information and communications technology need further development.

Partnership with parents is good. They are kept satisfactorily informed about their children's progress and welcome the opportunities they have to talk to the teachers. This ensures that the home supports the work of the school well and this partnership promotes children's achievement. The school provides good individual care for its pupils but could be improved by recording risk assessments and health and safety checks, as well as tracking pupil progress more efficiently by collating assessment information on to one file.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher leads a well-motivated staff that work effectively together. All teachers have several coordinator roles but not all have an overview of standards in their subject responsibilities. This limits the opportunity to identify aspects for improvement. Governors are committed to the school and well informed. As a consequence, they effectively help to shape the direction in which the school is going. They spend carefully, but need to follow this through to ensure that their spending decisions are effective in raising standards. **Overall, governance is satisfactory.**

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils enjoy coming to school because they know they are cared for and the teachers want the best for them. Parents hold the school in high regard.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that all coordinators have an effective overview of standards in their subjects.
- Improve the quality of individual education plans for children with special educational needs.
- Ensure that lower attaining pupils consistently have work set that is within their capabilities.
- Provide an outside play area for children in the Foundation Stage.

And to fully meet statutory requirements in health and safety and risk assessment.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards in the Foundation Stage are well above the goals expected for children of this age and their achievement is very good. At the end of Year 2, standards are above the average and achievement is good. By the end of Year 6 standards are well above the average and achievement is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science are well above the average by the end of Year 6 because of good teaching.
- Very good standards have been maintained over time because of teachers' good subject knowledge and high expectations of their pupils and the overall good leadership of these subjects.
- Standards attained in writing are the weaker element of English.
- Overall pupils' achievement is good because of the careful tracking of pupils' performance and the effective action given to those pupils in need of extra help, although the process would be more efficient if all the information was collated on to one file.
- Standards in history and geography are above those expected nationally and achievement is good because of detailed teaching guidance, enthusiasm of teachers and pupils' literacy skills.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

Commentary

1. Pupil numbers are small and the attainment of one pupil has therefore a significant proportional effect on overall results. In general terms, however, attainment on entry fluctuates from year to year but it is usually either broadly average or above average. There are exceptions however, even to this general pattern which needs to be taken into account in assessing achievement and standards, for example, in last year's Year 6, when 9 out of 16 pupils had special educational needs and the current Year 3 pupils of whom a third are lower attainers.
2. By the time pupils' leave the school, they are either above or well above the average, dependant upon the ability on entry. Their achievement is therefore good. For example, in last year's Year 6 cohort (2003), despite the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, they nevertheless attained well compared to the expectations for their age. In the current Year 3, pupils exceeded the target estimates based on their attainment of the Early Learning Goals. In this year's Year 6, 9 of the total of 11 pupils, of which 9 are boys, are projected to attain the higher level 5s. They are well on course to do so and this is likely to place the school well above national averages and similar schools.
3. Pupils make a very good start in the Foundation Stage, particularly those pupils who have attended nursery. Assessment information at the end of Reception shows that these pupils normally exceed or greatly exceed the goals that are expected for children of this age. This is because their curriculum is well planned with interesting and challenging activities, particularly those which develop their language and literacy skills. Relationships are very good and this provides a safe and secure environment in which children can explore and develop with confidence. The school can afford very little additional adult support but a parent helper comes into class regularly and this is helpful in developing the Foundation Stage children's language skills. The absence of an outdoor play area however, limits the children's opportunities to further develop physical skills and imaginative play.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	19.2(15.2)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.2 (14.3)	15.2 (14.8)
Mathematics	17.8 (14.6)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. In Years 1 –2, pupils make good progress and achieve well because teaching is well structured and activities are interesting. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and the school is quick to provide additional help where it is needed. Small classes mean that teachers know their pupils well and can provide work appropriate to their needs.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.9 (29.6)	27 (27)
Mathematics	28.9 (29.3)	26.7 (26.6)
Science	30.4 (30)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 16 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. By the end of Year 6 pupils' standards are well above the average both overall and at the higher-level 5 and all pupils achieve very well in comparison with similar schools. Standards in writing are the slightly weaker element in the tests and the school has identified this as an area for improvement. Nevertheless, the overall above and well above average attainment is primarily because of good teaching. Above all, teachers have high expectations and pupils rise to the occasion. Small classes too, mean that the teachers can give a great deal of individual support to their pupils and their performance is carefully monitored so that help can be provided when it is needed. Pupils' with special educational needs also make good progress and achieve well for this reason. Occasionally, work for lower attaining pupils is too difficult and results in some incomplete work.
6. Most pupils with special educational needs achieve well over time. For instance, in 2003, a good proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the Year 6 class achieved higher than anticipated results in the end of year national assessments. This is because the teachers' expectations of all pupils are high and pupils with special educational needs respond to this as well as the rest. During individual lessons, however, these pupils do not always succeed in fully understanding the tasks set, and struggle to complete them, even though by the end of Year 6 they have achieved well.
7. Attainment in geography and history is above the average expected for pupils at the end of Year 6 because of the enjoyment that both teachers and pupils have for these subjects and the good literacy skills which pupils bring to bear on their understanding. Lessons are well planned and interesting.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils have good attitudes towards their school and behave very well. Their personal development is well promoted by the school.

Strengths and Weaknesses

- Overall attendance is above the national average and very few pupils are late each morning. There is little unauthorised absence.
 - Attendance monitoring procedures need improving to come into line with official recommendations.
 - Pupils are interested in their work and the life of the school. They accept responsibility willingly.
 - Pupils' behaviour is very good in all aspects of school life. There is little bullying and the school acts quickly to resolve any problems that occur.
 - Pupils are encouraged to respect others and to know right from wrong.
 - Pupils are not sufficiently aware of cultural traditions other than their own.
8. Registers are taken correctly and the school is strict on obtaining reasons for absence. However, security guidelines on the need to contact parents on the first day that a pupil is absent without explanation, and to maintain a record of pupils who arrive or leave between registrations, have not been followed.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	95.6	School data	0
National data	94.1	National data	0.5

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

9. Almost all parents state that their children enjoy school. Pupils agree, and can think of little that would improve it. They are attentive in lessons and keen to answer questions. More mature pupils raise questions themselves. Pupils willingly accept the responsibilities offered, for example, older pupils act as reading partners for those in the reception class. Behaviour is very good, in lessons, assemblies, the dinner hall and on the playground. Pupils are considerate towards others and teachers rarely have to speak sharply to them. There were no exclusions last year.
10. The school rightly prides itself on the positive ethos. Pupils respond with equal respect to all staff, whether teachers or lunchtime supervisors. They are encouraged to understand the effects of bullying and racism and respond with good sensitivity to these issues. Where an occasional incident does occur, the school reacts effectively, involving both the pupils and their parents to resolve the problem and prevent recurrence.
11. The school is starting to raise pupils' social awareness and citizenship further through the personal, social, health and citizenship education programme. Pupils are encouraged to discuss their feelings and problems in 'circle time', a structured discussion forum, and this is improving their speaking and listening skills, as well as social, moral and spiritual development. A school council is in the early stages of formation. Pupils clearly understand right from wrong and can talk about their feelings and the impact of their actions on others.
12. Spiritual awareness is developed in assemblies but whilst their spiritual understanding of the life of the church is good, it is not yet sufficiently extended across the rest of their work and in their ability to consider and defend their own independent values and judgements. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of their own culture, including music and art and gained through visits to local museums. They are encouraged to look at their own city through the 'Beautiful Durham' art competition, in which several pupils have received local awards. This is largely a mono-cultural school, with very few ethnic minority pupils. The opportunities that pupils have had to study other cultures found in modern Britain have had a very limited impact on their knowledge. For example, Year 6 pupils could not name any festivals from

either Islam or Hinduism, despite the fact that we were approaching the annual celebration of Diwali.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	87	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Pupils achieve well because of the good quality of teaching; the very good relationships, which foster positive attitudes to learning; the good care it provides for its pupils and the good relationship the school has with its parents.

Teaching and learning

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good because teachers have good subject knowledge; high expectations of their pupils; set clear learning objectives for lessons and have good relationships with their pupils.
- As a result of the good teaching pupils are positive about their learning, make good progress and achieve well.
- Teachers need to ensure that work set for lower attaining pupils is appropriate to their levels of attainment.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational need is satisfactory overall but there is a need to improve the quality of individual education plans for pupils and to provide written reviews of their progress more regularly.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 18 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	11	4	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.

13. This good quality teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection when a high proportion of lessons were unsatisfactory. Parents agree with this positive picture of teaching. The determination of teachers to do their best for their pupils' shows in the professional interest they take in how best they can help children to learn. Continuing professional development makes an important contribution to the good teaching and follows appropriately on performance management reviews.
14. During the inspection, lessons were at least satisfactory and more frequently good or very good. This factor coupled to good achievement of pupils in tests and work seen during the inspection supports this overall judgement. Teachers' use their knowledge about what pupils can do generally well, particularly in English, mathematics, geography and history.
15. Teachers' planning of lessons is invariably good, particularly in English, science, geography and history. Learning objectives for the lessons are clearly stated and understood by the

children and work for different years and abilities are well constructed in the mixed age classes. In a good maths lesson, the teacher helped pupils to clarify their knowledge and understanding in a good summary session. Where teachers have a particular flair for a subject the rate of learning is particularly good. For example, in a Year 2 art lesson, the teacher enthused the pupils so well that they bubbled with excitement, producing good sketches and paintings which showed sensitive use of tone and colour. Teachers have good subject knowledge, as was apparent in a good Year 5 science lesson when prediction and fair testing were explained well and incorporated into the process of investigation. Teachers ensure that pupils understand the purpose of their learning and their prior knowledge. This was effectively done in a good information and communications technology lesson in a Year 3 class when the teacher checked out what pupils had learnt previously and how they would build upon this during the course of the lesson. However, some work set for lower attaining pupils is pitched at the average in the class and this results in them not always being able to complete work.

16. Teachers' relationships with the pupils are very good and this motivates pupils to want to learn. Teachers find opportunities to raise the esteem of pupils, for example, when lower attaining pupils are encouraged to contribute. Teachers use constant and appropriate praise and as a consequence pupils feel their efforts are valued and they make considerable effort to do well. On the very rare occasions when behaviour falls short of expectations, it is always carefully explained why.
17. Teachers are skilled at teaching literacy and numeracy skills and are interpreting the guidance for the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy to the best benefit of their pupils. Pupils develop these basic skills in other subjects of the curriculum. There were some good examples of extending pupils literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, for example, when pupils in Year 4 wrote of the experiences of evacuees during World War II.
18. Pupils respond well in lessons. This is a consequence of the good expectations that teachers have for their pupils and the praise and encouragement they give them to succeed. As a consequence, pupils produce work of a very high presentational standard and they are attentive during explanations by teachers or other members of the class.
19. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. It is good during the initial, introductory phase of lessons because the teachers include them well. They ask them carefully framed questions and are vigilant about checking their understanding as the lesson develops. However, in most lessons, there is no additional adult support, so that despite extra focussed input from the teacher during the lesson, they sometimes find the work too difficult. This is also because the targets in individual education plans are very general, and do not offer specific teaching approaches for pupils who have fallen behind in reading, writing or number. The time available for small groups of pupils to work with a specialist support teacher is very small: 30 minutes each week. For many of the pupils this is sufficient to improve motivation and confidence. However, for the lowest attaining pupils, such intense, focussed teaching of letters and sounds, for example, needs to be more regular. Assessment and feedback is mostly informal, although the SENCO has a clear picture of how the individual pupils on the special educational needs register are progressing.

The curriculum

The school has a satisfactory curriculum that meets statutory requirements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is soundly based and carefully designed to meet the needs of most pupils of different ages and attainment within the school's mixed-age classes.

- The emphasis upon reading, writing, mathematics and science enables pupils to reach high standards in these subjects.
- There is good continuity between the reception year, infant and junior phases, and between the end of primary and the start of secondary schooling
- The recently improved provision for ICT is enriching the curriculum in other subjects and increasing pupils' motivation.
- The procedures for pupils with special educational needs do not provide enough support to teachers and pupils on a day-to-day basis.
- The school does not do enough to enrich the curriculum with a sufficiently regular programme of outside visits or visitors into school, in order to add vibrancy and relevance.

Commentary

20. The strength of the school's curriculum is that it is designed to ensure that pupils in all year groups encounter an appropriate curriculum that often challenges pupils to succeed well beyond the usual expectations for their age. This is because teachers plan on a two-year cycle that avoids repetition and ensures progression. Transition from the reception class to Year 1, and from Year 2 to the junior phase, is seamless. No time is lost. Expectations are high because each teacher has a very clear idea of the next stage of learning, as the composition of their class varies from year to year, often straddling key stages of the national curriculum. Lessons are often set at the higher year group level, especially in English, mathematics and science. The pupils respond very well to this and reach a very high standard in these subjects.
21. The school has acted well upon its evaluation of provision for information and communication technology. The newly installed suite of computers is of high quality, and gives all pupils very good access to information technology. Its use is increasing week on week, as teachers incorporate ICT experiences into lessons such as science, mathematics, history and geography. This is enriching the work in these subjects and increasing pupils' understanding of the flexible uses of ICT.
22. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory because of the care that teachers take to include them well in lessons, so that they feel fully involved. However, the provision of extra support through planning based upon individual education plans, and through additional classroom support from assistants, is unsatisfactory. The targets on individual educational plans are too general to be of use in planning specific lessons, and are not reviewed and changed regularly enough. The work of the parent helper is, rightly, concentrated in the reception class, so that intervention during lessons relies upon the class teacher's time allocation for special educational needs groups. They benefit from working in very small groups for a short session each week with a specialist support teacher, but there are few feedback mechanisms so that the class teachers can build upon this support during the rest of the week.
23. The school provides a number of extra-curricular activities and out-of-school visits and these make a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' learning, but no better. They tend to cluster around sporting activities and historical places of interest. Recently, good links with the feeder secondary school have awakened interest in community musical events, and there has been the occasional theatre visit and a puppet theatre has worked within school. However, as a small school within a tight community, it makes too little use of outside help by regularly tapping into the expertise of museums, art galleries, artists, science centres and so on. As a result, pupils rarely have the chance to 'expect the unexpected' and creativity; imagination and originality are not strong enough features of this school's life.

Care, guidance and support

Staff have very good relationships with pupils which promotes a high standard of pastoral care but health and safety procedures are unsatisfactory. The school gives good support and guidance for pupils based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development and involves pupils in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Individual pupils are well cared for and can always turn to someone they trust for advice and support.
 - Health and safety and risk assessment procedures are poorly documented.
 - Induction arrangements for new pupils are good.
24. At the time of the previous inspection, there were no health and safety or child protection policies. The latter has been rectified but the generic Health and Safety policy adopted by the school does not clearly identify responsibilities or schedules of assessment of risks and hazards. Although the premises are checked for hazards, there is limited recording which would allow progress on action to be systematically monitored. Risk assessments are carried out for off-site excursions but nothing is recorded, as required in the latest regulations.
25. Almost all pupils in the survey agreed that there was always an adult they could turn to if they had concerns. Conversations with pupils confirmed that they could rely on staff to resolve minor conflicts and personal worries. Staff know the pupils very well and support them individually. Good tracking procedures enable the school to identify pupils early and provide them with the appropriate help. This system would be made more efficient if the information was collated onto one file. Targets are set for pupils in English and mathematics, although pupils' knowledge of what they are is variable. Special education needs pupils make good progress but there is a need to improve the targets set for these pupils and to review their progress more regularly. However, small classes, linked to the good knowledge teachers have of the abilities of their pupils ensures that pupils make good progress and achieve well. When they have particular problems, for example, with behaviour, the school seeks help and guidance from appropriate outside agencies.
26. The school gives parents and children a good introduction to the school when they start, so that children can quickly and happily settle into the routines of school life. The new class council system is starting to consult pupils about how their school should improve. When possible, action is taken of things they suggest.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents and links with the community contribute satisfactorily to school life. Pupils benefit from good links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides good information to parents about the curriculum.
- Parents provide good support at home for their children's work and work well with staff to raise their standards but the annual pupil reports provide insufficient advice to parents on how to help their child improve.
- Some statutory documents are missing some required information.
- Transfer to secondary school is smoothed by good liaison between the staff.

Commentary

27. Parents are given good information, both when their child begins school, and throughout their time there, about what is taught, and how it is taught. Regular newsletters keep them up-to-date with practical information. The annual pupil reports meet statutory requirements but are sometimes too brief and do not describe how the pupil needs to improve in such a way that parents can give support. The reports describe their personal development well. The prospectus gives comprehensive information to parents of new starters but omits the required attendance data and the governors' annual report to parents does not report the national test results in the correct format.
28. Most parents hear their child read at home and give appropriate support with homework. Virtually all parents attend the formal consultation evenings when their child's work is discussed with the teacher. Many parents attend performances given by the children and the 'Friends of St Patrick's' raise valuable funds.
29. Most pupils' transfer to a single secondary school and staff from there liaise well with teachers to ensure that the move is as smooth as possible. In the summer term, a 'bridging curriculum' is set up by secondary staff coming to the school and pupils given work to complete before they start in September. Some pupils also attend the summer schools held at the secondary school. Secondary staff support St Patrick's teachers in subjects like music and lend equipment for science and design technology.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governance of the school is satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governance of the school is satisfactory because governors are satisfactorily informed about the performance of the school and are actively involved in helping to shape its future.
- Leadership is satisfactory because the headteacher has developed a shared commitment to succeed by all in the school community.
- Management is satisfactory because there are sound systems in place to monitor the progress of the school particularly in the core subjects. However, there needs to be a more consistent approach to the work of all coordinators so that they can develop an overview of standards in their subject responsibilities.
- Parents are confident in the quality of education offered by the school.

Commentary

30. Overall, the governance of the school is **satisfactory**. The governing body is committed to the continuing improvement of the school and has a sound understanding of the school's performance, which enables it to help shape the direction in which it is going.
31. The headteacher and other key members of staff provide satisfactory leadership for the school and this is a view shared by the vast majority of parents. The system for promoting the quality of professional development is good. Most importantly, the headteacher's commitment to the welfare of staff and the inclusion of all in the school community has resulted in a shared commitment to succeed.
32. There are satisfactory management systems for the school to use in monitoring its own performance and reflecting on areas for development such as writing, although there is a need to ensure effective written records for health and safety issues and for risk assessments. The senior managers have initiated a detailed curriculum, which covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education, the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy and requirements such as personal, social,

health and citizenship education but it could be enriched further. Most importantly, the school has put in place a satisfactory tracking system to monitor the progress of its pupils, although this could be made more effective by collating the information onto one file. Nonetheless, this documentation provides useful information about the standards achieved in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science but is not sufficiently developed in the foundation subjects.

33. The School Management Plan accurately lists the priorities for the school. The effect of subject leaders on standards and achievements in the subjects is generally good but they all have several subject responsibilities to lead and, although they are given some time to devote to this during the school year, it is difficult for them to establish an overview of standards in the time allotted.
34. The head teacher is the school's SENCO. This means that she can liaise effectively with all of the teachers in the identification and progress of pupils with special educational needs. She knows and cares for the pupils extremely well, stays in close touch with their parents and knows of changes in circumstances that may affect their learning. There are weaknesses in the formalisation of some of the school's procedures, however. Parental signatures on individual action plans are not routinely required, and individual education plans are not reviewed as often as nationally recommended, although there is regular informal discussion between all parties. There is no written sharing of assessment information and feedback between the weekly support teacher and class teachers, although the small numbers involved lessen this as a concern. There is a need for greater sharing of expertise and resources for special educational needs teaching across the school.
35. Governors endeavour to get the best value from their spending, for example, in their purchase of ICT equipment, and they take great care that quality resources match educational objectives. This practice, however, does not yet extend to systematically providing criteria to determine whether spending is effective.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	216,657	Balance from previous year	29,032
Total expenditure	228,992	Balance carried forward to the next	-12,265
Expenditure per pupil	3,200		

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

FOUNDATION STAGE

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average; the children achieve especially well in personal and social development, reading and writing, and well in mathematical development.
- Teaching is good, especially in numeracy and literacy sessions.
- Children get off to a good start in the national curriculum because they benefit from the teacher's good quality joint planning for both Year 1 and reception pupils.
- Relationships between teacher and children, and with the rest of the school community, are very good.
- The lack of a designated outdoor play area restricts opportunities for large-scale activity in all areas of learning.
- The support from trained assistants is too small to allow for the adults to intervene purposefully in the play and investigative activities that are planned.

Commentary

36. **Provision for personal, social and emotional development is very good.** The teacher creates a welcoming ethos, setting a very high standard of mutual support and trust. As a result, the children work together as a class very well, and are secure in their dealings with others. They understood beautifully how to relate to Year 6 pupils who visited their classroom to share books with them, behaving impeccably and thoroughly enjoying the chance to 'test' their knowledge of letters and sounds. There is a suitable programme of induction, with good links to the local nursery and with parents. As a result, all can start full time in early September. Parents are well involved in their children's learning through the system of home-school reading diaries and the letters/sounds sheets that they practice at home. Almost all can already dress and undress independently. The children are given responsibilities and take classroom tasks seriously. The teacher has very good strategies for managing behaviour, so that she teaches a very attentive group of little learners.
37. **The children achieve very well in communication, language and literacy.** They reach a good standard in speaking and listening and reading and a very good standard in writing. This is because the teacher has a very good knowledge of how to teach the early stages of literacy. Because the class includes Year 1 children, she allocates a set time to literacy each day, but makes the whole-class introduction suitably short, snappy and full of fun. There is no sign of inattention or restlessness as was noticed at the time of the last inspection. The teacher succeeds in teaching both year groups within this framework, because she knows what should be the next step for each small group of pupils in both year groups. Her questioning ensures that reception pupils learn as well as do the older children, and they often achieve well beyond what might be expected. For instance, they learned the meanings of the words 'label' and 'caption' and were able to explain how they helped us to understand information on the wall or in an information book. The lively practice with letters and sounds (phonics) gives the children a way into reading for themselves, because the teacher shows them how to apply what they know in order to read unfamiliar words. An examination of a sample of stored work from 2002-3 shows that most children achieve very well. Most pupils can write at least two or three correctly punctuated, connected sentences, and the highest achieving children can write a short paragraph of connected ideas. Most children have a very good sense of a sentence as a unit of meaning. They can also use phonics well to spell unknown words. Almost all achieve the learning outcomes expected for their age, and a large group are working well above this level.

38. **Teaching in mathematical development is similarly good**, and the children reach easily the expected goals for their age and much edge beyond this. They achieve well because every lesson is made to count. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and as the mathematics coordinator, is keenly aware of the importance of practical experience and solid understanding. Children concentrate well during the lively joint sessions with Year 1 pupils, and learn at a very fast rate in some sessions. By the end of an early lesson on shapes, children could name some solid shapes and were beginning to explore the faces and edges because of the carefully chosen activities to follow up the introductory discussion with practical experience. However, because of the limited amount of additional support available, she is not always able to monitor and support each child and group of children as she would like. This means, too, that there are lost opportunities for the development of number and shape through play and construction activities.
39. **Pupils' physical development is largely good**, apart from in the aspect of using tools and materials, and in developing a sense of space. This is because the terrain of the school makes it difficult to create an outside area where bicycles and wheeled toys can be ridden, or large equipment and tools used safely. When the reception pupils are taught within the formal hall setting of a PE lesson, their movements, even early in the year, are at a level expected by the end of the reception year.
40. **The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good**, especially the historical element. A key reason for this is that the teacher takes time and trouble to assemble interesting artefacts, such as a dolly tub, wash-board, flat iron and clothes, so that pupils can develop an understanding of everyday life in Victorian times. The home corner and role-play area each re-enforces the learning that takes place in the focussed teaching session. The teacher makes full use of the computer suite and of the classroom computer, so that all pupils reach the expected levels well before the end of the year. There is less evidence of designing and making, and of investigation and exploration, and these elements are inhibited by the lack of an outdoor area where messy, untidy activities can take place. This is a serious drawback to the provision for the children under five. Very few observations were made of creative development. The home corner is well organised to foster the imagination, and regularly linked to the current topic. However, it is not possible to make a secure judgement on this area of learning.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, pupils attain above the national averages in English.
- Pupils' presentation of work is of a very high standard.
- The school tracks the progress of its pupils well, identifies their needs early and puts effective programmes of support into place for them.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Writing is the weaker element in English, which the school has identified as its priority for improvement. The action taken by the school is showing signs of improvement in this respect. A more systematic audit of writing opportunities in other subjects would improve standards in writing still further.

Commentary

41. The 2002 National Test results showed that by the end of Year 6 standards were well above average standards nationally and average when compared to similar schools. A similar

picture occurs at the end of Year 2 and at the end of the Foundation Stage. However, writing is the weaker component in the English tests and for this reason the school has identified raising standards in writing as their main priority. Nevertheless, pupils' achievement is good in English overall because they enter school with broadly average or above average attainment and by the time they leave they are either above or well above the average, depending on their respective attainment on entry. As a consequence, achievement is good. This is due to effective teaching and sound systems for tracking pupil progress. Small classes too, enable the teacher to provide considerable individual help for children.

42. Unconfirmed results for 2003 show that the school has sustained this good performance, despite well over half of the pupils having special educational needs. Attainment in the current Year 6 is very high and 9 of the 11 pupils (9 in the group are boys) are already attaining standards at the higher level 5. In particular, writing is showing good signs of further improvement and the gap between the reading and writing results is narrowing.
43. The pupils make good progress because of good lesson planning, which effectively takes into account not only the different abilities but also the requirements for different years in mixed age classes. This was well exemplified in a good Year 6 lesson, in which the teacher had not only made the objective of the lesson on journalistic styles of writing very clear but above all had planned an appropriate range of activities for the different levels of attainment including the Year 5 pupils who are part of the same class. Teachers' questioning was very good. Questions were distributed well around the class to encourage wide participation, including lower attaining pupils. Furthermore, the questions were designed not only to draw out knowledge from the pupils but to also develop their inferential and reasoning skills. An effective summary session drew together the main teaching points based on feedback by the pupils.
44. Teachers have good subject expertise as a result of the National Literacy Strategy. This enables a better continuity and progression in the development of pupils' literacy skills. This long-term improvement is a consequence of the good teaching and the early identification of where help is needed and the support given in booster classes and extending the opportunities for writing in English lessons. The development of literacy skills is evident in other subject areas but is not yet planned systematically. Marking is good overall and provides pupils with a clear knowledge about what they need to do to improve. Occasionally, however, some work is marked too heavily and does not emphasise the most important aspect of the work that needs improving. This can prove particularly discouraging to the lower attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. This is achieved by early identification of their needs and the effective help given by class teachers. The provision for special educational needs however, could be improved with clearer targets related to the pupils' needs and ensuring regularly recorded reviews of their progress are made.
45. Pupils speak confidently and in detail. Confidence in speaking "in public" develops well through many opportunities for pupils to take part in assemblies, performances and presentations in class. Because of the good working atmosphere and interest in lessons pupils learn a lot by listening to each other and sharing ideas.
46. Pupils understand how books are organised in the library and can find the appropriate information readily. They use literacy hours well to improve the pupils' reading skills. Nearly all pupils read their own and other pupils' writing accurately by the end of Year 6 and can use dictionaries and thesauruses effectively to improve the quality of their work. The use and development of reading in other subjects is good and contributes well to the standards the school attains in reading. In geography and history, for example, pupils use a wide range of reference books and sources to gather and select information.
47. Throughout the school, teachers use literacy lessons well to build up pupils' experience of writing in a wide range of forms. For example, they write stories, letters, brochures, drama scripts and poems. Standards of spelling are good because marking becomes a

conversation between teacher and pupil, encouraging development of these areas. Handwriting and presentation are of a very high standard because teachers insist that work is presented well, no matter what the level of attainment of the pupil may be.

48. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Reading and writing are well taught. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and frequently good. Teachers implement the literacy strategy well and flexibly but also have the skills, enthusiasm and confidence to use direct whole class teaching very effectively. This is one of the main reasons for pupils' good achievements. Other important strengths of teaching are: very good relationships which encourage pupils of all levels of attainment and backgrounds to contribute well to learning in class; very good preparation, organisation and management of learning; and good expectations of what each pupil can achieve. This powerful combination stimulates high quality, purposeful language development that pupils greatly enjoy.
49. Good leadership and management of the subject has produced good standards. This is because of very good teamwork, thoughtful exploration of needs and priorities and immediate responses to them.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. **The development of literacy skills in other subjects is good.** There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills in other subject areas. Teachers, for example, encourage pupils to provide feedback orally on the work they have been doing. These are cogent, well-reasoned explanations, which help pupils improve their speaking skills. Pupils are given many opportunities to give oral presentations to the whole school in assemblies, performances and to discuss their aims in 'circle time' where they learn the value of listening and building on what their peers say.
51. Pupils are required to read extensively in most subjects from a variety of formats. They too, have a wide experience of writing in a variety of styles, for example, when they write a recount of an experiment in science or produce a piece of persuasive writing in geography on tourism. In history too, they are required to read and understand a range of source material and record their findings in pieces of analytical and discursive writing. However, while many of these opportunities to extend literacy skills exist they are not formally included in other subject schemes of work, which would contribute to raising standards still further.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in mathematics are high, so that pupils attain very well both in national testing and in their regular work.
- Teachers plan effectively for the mixed age, mixed attainment classes, so that older pupils are properly challenged and younger pupils often gain insights into higher level work.
- Standards of presentation and computation skills are particularly high.
- Behaviour in lessons is very good, so that pupils can concentrate and learn without disturbance.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their skills to a range of problems and contexts, including those in other subjects.
- Pupils with special educational needs sometimes struggle to complete work that is too hard for them.
- The co-ordinator does not have enough time to monitor achievement in the subject.

Commentary

52. Since the last inspection, standards have risen. Recent results in national testing at the end of year 2 shows that all but a very small minority of pupils are operating at the higher end of the expected level, or above, which is better than most schools, including those in similar circumstances. The Year 1 and Year 2 teachers use well-chosen recording booklets and other materials to help pupils towards formal, independent methods of recording. Higher attaining pupils set out three figure calculations accurately and with understanding. Lower attaining groups succeed because of the carefully structured approach to their learning. Because teaching is good across the school, there are no dips in progress and junior pupils continue to achieve well. Standards by the end of Year 6 are very good, despite the drop in test results in 2003 because of the high number of special needs pupils in that year group. All of the current Year 6 and many Year 5 pupils are working successfully at a higher than expected level 5. The teachers' high expectations in all classes often bring the standards of the average group up to the best and prepare younger pupils well for more demanding work.
53. Understanding of the number system and accuracy in calculation work is very good. For instance, by Year 6, most pupils' books show confident long multiplication calculations to two decimal places and familiarity with decimal equivalents of fractions. They also reach good levels of understanding of shapes and measures such as angle measurements, and of patterns and probabilities in sets of data. This is because teachers give good, clear explanations and instructions, and routinely demonstrate on flip charts and whiteboard how to build up charts or set out calculations. They keep the pupils alert by asking penetrating questions to challenge, and constantly check that pupils follow and are ready for the next step. They use the adopted commercial scheme to help them in setting work at the right level for each year and attainment group. However, because of the wide range of age and aptitude within each class, special needs pupils in Years 3 to 6 sometimes struggle with follow-up tasks that are too hard for them. Individual action plans do not identify strategies or resources to help with planning for pupils who find numeracy difficult and there is no additional in-class support.
54. Curriculum leadership is sound. The co-ordinator is up-to-date with national developments, and gives a clear steer to the subject across the school. However, she holds only a partial picture of teaching and learning in the subject. She does not have the opportunity to monitor teaching regularly, nor to make effective use of the tracking data held in school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

55. Pupils are taught to deal with 'real life' problems in numeracy lessons and in tests, but do not often enough have the chance to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects, and beyond the school boundaries. This limits their capacity to reason out problems, or to undertake mathematical investigations for themselves. It helps to explain why they are less good at developing oral and written explanations of their strategies in mathematics lessons.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is good with some very good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very good: Year 6 pupils attain very well in national tests and achieve well in lessons.
- Pupils' knowledge base is very good, because teachers research their teaching well.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and very keen to learn during science lessons, particularly in Years 5 and 6 where teaching is very good.
- The quality of written recording in science lifts the overall standard of science work.

- Enquiry skills are sound, although as yet they lag behind pupils' high level of scientific knowledge and thought.
- Teachers do not consistently make the best use of information and communication technology in science teaching.
- The co-ordinator does not have enough time to audit and lead further improvement in the subject.

Commentary

56. High expectations of all year groups and attainment groups, is the key to the high standards achieved in science. This begins in Year 1. Pupils are expected to communicate what they know about animals and plants or a range of materials, in very suitable ways for their age. As a result, the Year 2 teacher can lead them efficiently into writing their own explanations of what they find out in science lessons. They progress from explaining why a battery is safe to use, to a more formal reporting upon a test for the 'stretchability' of various fabrics. Pupils in Years 3 - 6 make good progress in developing written explanations, and in recording using graphs, charts, annotated sketches and diagrams. By the age of eleven, pupils relish increasing their factual knowledge about science, and are determined to understand and recall difficult concepts such as the difference between 'pollination' and 'fertilisation'. They explained this well in a lesson, proudly using the sophisticated terminology of flower parts. This high level of challenge to all ability groups helps to explain the very good test results, even for lower attaining pupils. In the unpublished results for 2003, two thirds of the pupils with special educational needs reached the expected level for their age, whilst almost half of the class exceeded it.
57. Enquiry skills are developed to an appropriate level, and are at least as good as in most schools, and better in some respects. Investigations are an integral part of the teachers' medium term planning. Nevertheless, this is an area for further improvement. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 were all able to create a valid, fair test of the factors needed for germination, had produced measurable results and could usefully evaluate the effectiveness of each other's tests. However, a weaker feature was the pupils' ability to explain their findings in scientific terms, although very good questioning was pushing them hard towards this. Work in books across the school shows that written reporting of experiments mostly involves listing, outlining, noting and describing, rather than predicting, evaluating and making connections to existing scientific knowledge. The school knows that it must sharpen the assessment of pupils' enquiry skills in order to ensure consistently high challenge in this area. Similarly, the co-ordinator, who is also the ICT co-ordinator, knows that as yet, teachers are not exploiting the recently improved access to computers during science lessons, although this is improving rapidly. Year 5 and 6 pupils' learning was deepened and challenged through watching a 'movie loop' to illustrate the reproduction process in plants.
58. The co-ordinator has done well to maintain the good improvement since the last inspection. She took on the role a year ago and has built well upon the work of the previous co-ordinator. As deputy head teacher, ICT and design technology co-ordinator as well as science coordinator, she has a lot to do, and does it well. However, although she has monitored teaching and trawled through sets of books, she has not had time to develop an appropriate assessment system for the subject, especially for enquiry skills, and does not have a complete picture of pupil achievement through access to the school's tracking systems.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory and improving quickly.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are broadly in line with those in most schools.
- Pupils are currently making fast progress at present, because of the improved access to computers and good focussed teaching of skills.
- The new computer suite is a very good resource, is well used, and represents good value for money.
- Pupils in Year 5 and 6 are still catching up on some ICT competencies
- Teachers do not yet exploit ICT sufficiently in other subjects, although this is improving fast.
- Assessment in ICT is under-developed so that progression and challenge are not ensured.
- Leadership of the subject is good.

Commentary

59. The co-ordinator and head teacher have worked together to raise the profile of ICT within the curriculum and to improve provision and standards in the subject. Although there are some weaknesses, standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average, as they are for those at the end of Year 2. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection, in real terms, because national expectations are so much higher than in 1998.
60. Prior to July 2003, the pupils achieved steadily, despite having limited access to computers. Scrutiny of a portfolio of work shows the teachers' determination to deliver the nationally recommended scheme of work for ICT. They succeeded best with the younger pupils, largely because national requirements are more achievable by the end of Year 2. Year 2 pupils begin Year 3 able to use the keyboard and mouse; and they can create and edit text using the shift, delete and enter buttons, as well as create charts and simple graphs. As the work became more ambitious, progress slowed for older pupils prior to July 2003, but all pupils in school are now achieving well. There are several reasons for this accelerated rate of progress:
- the computer suite and interactive whiteboard greatly facilitate skill-teaching;
 - teachers have trained to up-date their skills and are enthusiastic;
 - teachers had given pupils a basic grounding in the ICT curriculum during the 'lean years' that is now standing the school in good stead.
61. As a result, the present Year 5/6 class have experienced using a 'screen turtle' to create a series of commands in order to control movement, used a graphics package to check for anomalies and are very familiar with all the functions of tool bars and menus. This is helping them to benefit quickly from the facilities of the computer suite and to learn new skills at a good rate. Some gaps remain. Most of the above work was done at a fairly simple level, with not enough opportunity for practice and consolidation because of the limited access. There is little evidence of using sensor software and although pupils are beginning to evaluate and assess their work, critical thinking about ICT usage is at an early stage. Nevertheless, during the lesson seen, all the Year 6 pupils were operating at a sound level as they created a multi-media presentation on 'insects' for younger children. Teaching for ICT is now good, because teachers' favoured 'direct' style lends itself well to the use of the interactive whiteboard to demonstrate and explain, followed by immediate practice on the computers. The next step is to further develop teaching through ICT to enrich the wider curriculum.

62. Leadership of the subject is good. The coordinator has a clear knowledge about teaching and learning in the subject and has been instrumental in setting up the suite, along with the head teacher. She ensures its use by timetabling for 'pure' ICT lessons and as part of literacy and numeracy sessions. Informal requests for use are increasing fast, so that throughout the week, lines of pupils wend their way towards the suite! It is likely that ICT will soon be enlivening learning across the curriculum to the extent that it should. Moreover, teachers do not yet assess and record pupils' skill development closely enough, so that progression is ensured at individual as well as class level. The coordinator has plans to put this right.

ICT across the curriculum

63. The development of ICT across the curriculum has been hampered by the late installation of equipment in the ICT suite. This situation is now rapidly improving with the timetabling of the ICT suite for teaching ICT and its use in other subjects.

HUMANITIES

The provision for geography and history is good. Religious education was inspected separately.

History

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in geography and history are above the average expected by the end of Year 6 and achievement is good.
- There is an appropriate emphasis on teaching investigative and enquiry skills in these subjects as well as knowledge.
- Occasionally, work set for lower attaining pupils is too demanding.

Commentary

64. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are above those expected, and pupils make good progress, including pupils with special educational needs. Achievement is good. Evidence for this judgement is based on the observation of two lessons, pupils' work, displays of pupils' work and conversations with pupils. Good literacy skills contribute significantly to this attainment; the enthusiasm teachers have for history and the teacher's very good understanding of the requirements of history in the National Curriculum. Teaching and learning is enhanced through visits, although this aspect of learning history could be developed further.
65. In Years 1 and 2 pupils develop a good understanding of 'now' and 'then' through topics such as 'Washing day in the Past' through examining the differences between Victorian artefacts and those of today. In a good Year 2 lesson, pupils successfully identified and explained the uses of various implements connected with washing through the skilful questioning of the teacher. They were encouraged to consider what it must have been like and why it was different. As a result pupils could explain that washday must have been a lot harder and that there were no appliances because electricity had not been invented. The initial discussion was followed by appropriate activities. The Year 1 pupils successfully categorised pictures of artefacts into 'now' and 'then', while the Reception children used the Victorian artefacts in the home corner.
66. Pupils continue to develop their research skills as they progress through the school. In a good Year 4 lesson, pupils were set the task of researching the experiences of evacuees during World War II. The pupils were presented with a wide range of sources: first-hand written accounts, photographs and posters. They enjoyed this greatly and were motivated to

apply themselves to the task of writing their own account of what it would have been like to be an evacuee during the war. The quality of their written work could have been enhanced further however, by greater discussion on the need to relate the writing to the period.

67. Teaching and learning are good because activities are well planned and are interesting. Very good relationships also contribute to successful learning.
68. The coordinator is passionate about history and this commitment is demonstrated through effective teaching and learning of history throughout the school. She has a clear view about standards throughout the school through monitoring planning and reviewing samples of work from pupils.

Geography

69. Overall, standards are above what is expected of pupils in Years 1 and 2 and achievement is good. It was not possible to see any geography lessons during the inspection week and these judgements are based on work seen and conversations with pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress but occasionally work set is too demanding for lower attaining pupils. Very good attention is paid to developing pupils' geographical skills as well as increasing their knowledge.
70. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop the skills of mapping the immediate area through guided walks. Average attaining pupils can identify some principal features and explain their function. Higher attaining pupils can produce accurate pictures of the main features on their way to school and to distinguish between natural and built features. All pupils understand the function of how these features are represented on a map and how symbols are used.
71. By Year 6, pupils have extended their geographical knowledge and skills. They can explain the distinguishing features of contrasting localities, for example, a major city and an area in which a national park is situated. They appreciate the impact that tourism can have on areas of natural beauty through their study of the effect of public transport in the Peak district. They know and can explain features of coastal erosion, through their study of Holderness.
72. Coordination of the subject is good. There is a good scheme of work in place but the coordinator has yet to monitor standards through sampling pieces of work.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Provision for creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In those subjects where it is possible to make a judgement, standards are broadly average.
- Planning is secure, based upon nationally recommended schemes and suitable resourced.
- The adoption of a two-year cycle ensures continuity without repetition.
- The school does not make the most of links between the subjects, or between each subject and literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- The pupils' imaginative and creative talents are not extended through making the use of outside help from other skilled adults and from learning in a range of alternative venues.
- Each co-ordinator has other significant responsibilities and has limited time for the subject's development.

Commentary

73. It was not possible to observe many lessons in this area because of timetable arrangements during the inspection. However, examination of teachers' planning, stored work and

photographic evidence, as well as work on the classroom walls, and discussion with pupils and teachers, has contributed to the evidence base for the judgements made.

Design and Technology

74. It is not possible to make a secure judgement on standards in this subject. Although no lessons were directly observed, the coordinator supplied a folder of photographic evidence that showed how the curriculum plans for each class had been followed. Food technology showed good progression from the design and making of sandwiches in Year 2 to bread-making in Years 5 and 6. Pupils evidently enjoy technology lessons. As little work was on display, it is not possible to judge if the school fully exploits the potential of design and technology for improving non-narrative writing.

Art and design

75. Standards in art and design are average, with some examples of above average work, particularly in Year 2. Work on the walls, observation of a lesson, and scrutiny of art work as part of other subjects, contributes to this judgement. Pupils use a suitable range of tools and techniques and have a good idea about shape, form and space. Many of the paintings of Durham Castle on display show a good sense of perspective, and contain some careful brush strokes to create effect. Large-scale collage work in shared areas shows that pupils can combine a range of media successfully. They have studied the work of famous artists and compared their work.
76. Teaching was good in the lesson seen with Year 2 pupils, and the outcomes on display from a parallel lesson with another group of pupils were of a good standard. The teacher enthused the pupils and fostered a freedom of approach through her creative teaching. First hand experience of observing, smelling and feeling fruit, had the pupils bubbling with excitement, so that they worked enthusiastically. The teacher's own knowledge of teaching art encouraged the pupils to depart from the process of detailed sketching to move quickly to applying colour to create the full effect. Some groups therefore managed very good composition and use of light and shade to create the dimensions of the fruit.
77. Teachers of older pupils are conscientious in developing their skills, but work around school suggests that they are less creatively inspirational in their approach. They do not benefit fully from the co-ordinator's expertise because there is no opportunity for her to work alongside other colleagues and monitor teaching. Budget constraints limit chances for the pupils to visit art galleries or benefit from visiting artists, which would enhance their art curriculum and improve standards.

Music

78. Standards are broadly average. The subject has an acting coordinator, and this subject was sampled lightly. It was possible only to observe one dedicated music lesson. There was no opportunity to note the quality of music in other settings, such as singing in assembly. However, standards in the Year 2/3 lesson that was observed were broadly what is expected of children at this age, and other evidence points to similar standards by Year 6. The school has evidence of a good standard of musical contribution by Year 6 pupils to a musical production in the community. Resources are satisfactory and the teachers have recently adopted a new scheme of work for music, which is now well embedded. This ensures that pupils cover all the key elements of the music curriculum.
79. In the lesson seen, pupils enjoyed the singing component and stayed in tune. They detected musical patterns and stayed in time with the tape as they shook instruments in time to the 'Ride of the Valkeries'. They showed a keen sense of performing with others, and this is maintained through the school. Pupils have very recently joined with the local feeder secondary school in a joint musical production to celebrate World Peace Day. There is

evidence that pupils in the junior classes have studied the life and work of musical composers, although Year 5 and 6 pupils have imperfect recall of famous musicians and their works.

80. At present, the subject is in 'maintenance' mode. The acting coordinator does not have the time to devote to expanding its influence in the cultural and creative life of the school. There has been little monitoring of teaching to check standards and teaching quality. Music does not make a strong contribution to the pupils' creative development and responses and is ready for further development.

Physical Education

81. As only one lesson was observed, with Year 1 and reception children, it is not possible to describe standards in this subject accurately. The younger children who were observed showed a good standard of body control, completing forward rolls and balances well. They were familiar with the large apparatus and confident to work at different heights. The school's football team has completed a victorious competition season, winning the Durham schools seven-a-side competition. This indicates that standards are good in this field of physical education at least. The medium term planning for PE shows an appropriate balance between gymnastics, athletics, games, dance and swimming. The extra-curricular clubs are sport-oriented, include girls and boys equally and improve the overall standard of physical education in the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

82. The work in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is good, and reflects very well the school's desire to educate the 'whole' child. The high level of care and regard members of staff have for each individual has a positive effect on pupils' well being, motivating them to do their best in all activities. A new scheme of work has been introduced to support work in citizenship, and the school council is beginning to develop pupils' understanding of democracy in action. Through the school's PSHCE work appropriate programmes of study have been put in place to cover sex and relationships education, and alcohol and drug abuse and this is paying dividends in the good progress pupils make in personal development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	5
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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