

INSPECTION REPORT

**St Matthew's Roman Catholic (Voluntary Aided) First
School**

Prudhoe

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122313

Headteacher: Mrs B M Pye

Lead inspector: Miss K Manning

Dates of inspection: 23rd – 25th September 2003

Inspection number: 260588

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	78
School address:	Highfield Lane Prudhoe Northumberland
Postcode:	NE42 6EY
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Father Paul Zielinski
Date of previous inspection:	May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Matthew's is a voluntary aided first school, which serves the local and wider Roman Catholic community, though not all pupils are from Roman Catholic families. It offers weekly workshops for parents in its efforts to forge a close partnership between home and school. Numbers are rising and there are now 78 pupils on roll. Most pupils start in reception class and leave at the end of Year 4. The proportion that joins after the reception class is about the same as the national average. When they start in the reception class children's experiences vary greatly, but most do not have the skills and knowledge that are expected of four-year-olds in other schools in Northumberland. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs linked to learning, physical or emotional difficulties is above average. The school has identified a very small number of pupils who are gifted or talented. Though pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, the area in general is no more advantaged than most. All pupils speak English as their first language and only a very small number are from ethnic minority families. The school has recently gone through a period of change with one class being taught by temporary teachers last year. It is now entering a period of greater stability; the head teacher has been in post for almost a year and a permanent teacher joined at the beginning of this term.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20267	K Manning	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage
			English
			Information and communication technology
			Art and design
			Geography
			Physical education
			English as an additional language
12511	L Buller	Lay inspector	
11510	K Oglesby	Team inspector	Special educational needs
			Mathematics
			Science
			Design and technology
			History
			Music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school. In most subjects teaching and learning are good overall and pupils achieve well, but, in information and communication technology, teaching is unsatisfactory and standards are not high enough. Good leadership and sound management have kept the school on an even keel during a period of substantial changes in staffing. The school is funded well and provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils attain good standards in reading and science, but do not do well enough in information and communication technology.
- Teaching is good in most subjects except information and communication technology, where it is unsatisfactory.
- There are inconsistencies in the marking, which prevents pupils from knowing what they need to do to improve.
- The school makes good provision for pupils who have special educational needs and as a result, a number overcome their barriers to learning and achieve the levels expected for their age in English and mathematics.
- Very good provision for moral and good provision for social development helps pupils become responsible and mature and ensures that they are keen to learn.
- Teachers are not yet checking on the quality of teaching and learning rigorously enough.
- Teachers ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and equal opportunities to make progress.

The school has improved at a steady rate since the previous inspection and it continues to be effective. All of the key issues have been tackled successfully but standards in information and communication technology have fallen.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2003
Reading	B	B	C	D
Writing	B	A	D	E
mathematics	C	B	D	E

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

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

Care is needed when interpreting data where the numbers of pupils in each year group are small.

Pupils achieve well. Many begin school with skills and knowledge that are below what is expected for their age and, by the time they leave at the end of Year 4, standards in reading, science and history are all above average. In other subjects, standards are similar to those found in most schools. In the Foundation Stage, which in this school is the time children spend in the reception class, most children achieve well, reaching the expected goals by the end of the reception year. Their physical development is not restricted by the lack of outdoor play area because teachers make good use of the hall. The standards achieved in Year 2 tests are not a true reflection of how well pupils do in class. A high proportion of the year group had special educational needs; which brought the results down. The work in class shows that most pupils achieve well in reading, mathematics and science and satisfactorily in writing. In information and communication technology, pupils do not achieve well enough and standards are below those expected in all year groups.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are generally good, though behaviour is only satisfactory because it is the beginning of a new school year and pupils are just settling into new classes and teachers. Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy their lessons. They are eager to take on responsibilities for befriending other children and for helping out around the school. They like school and consequently attendance is very high.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good in most subjects except information and communication technology, where it is unsatisfactory because teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop skills in using computers. A weakness of the teaching is that marking does not always tell pupils what they need to do to get better. The curriculum is satisfactory and teachers are willing to try new initiatives aimed at enriching it further. The school takes good care of its pupils. This is a school with a good ethos. Teachers know their pupils and families well and have their best interests at heart. There is a strong feeling of family and affection within the school and links with parents, the church, other schools and the local community are all good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are good. The head teacher leads the school well. One teacher has not been in post long enough to be an effective leader. The management is sound reflecting the fact that the head teacher has not in the past had any time set aside for her to carry out her leadership role and that teachers are not checking the quality of teaching rigorously enough. Governors do a good job on behalf of the school and have a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses. They have prudently set aside money from last year's budget for major building work this year.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views of the school and are very happy with what it provides. Pupils talk animatedly about their school and say that they enjoy most lessons and activities.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in information and communication technology and so raise standards, particularly by ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to use computers;
- Ensure that, from the Foundation Stage onwards, pupils form their letters correctly;
- Be more rigorous in checking how good teaching and learning are and using the information gained from this to make changes that will drive up the overall quality of teaching and increase the pace of learning;
- Be certain that staff are consistent and regular in the way that they mark work in order to help pupils understand what they need to do to get better.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve well during their time in St Matthews. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children are well on the way to achieving the early skills and knowledge expected in each area of learning. Standards in reading, science and history are above average by the end of Year 4. Standards in writing and geography match those expected. In mathematics, standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and average by the end of Year 4. In information and communication technology standards are below those expected in all year groups. Throughout the school girls and boys achieve equally well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy reading and are keen to talk about the characters and plots in books they have read.
- A significant number of pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not form their letters correctly.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good grasp of numbers, which helps them work out mathematical problems in their head.
- By the end of Year 4, pupils understand the importance of careful and thorough scientific enquiry and investigation.
- Pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 talk knowledgeably about the periods and events they study in history.
- Pupils have only limited skills in information and communication technology and rarely use computers in their work.
- Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well and some do very well to overcome their barriers to learning and reach the levels expected for their age.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.3 (16.3)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	13.5 (15.4)	14.4 (14.3)
Mathematics	16.1 (16.7)	16.5 (16.2)

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

1 Last year, the school's results in national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 were about average in reading but below average in writing and slightly below average in mathematics. The main reason for this is that of the twelve pupils in the year group, five had to overcome barriers to their learning because of their special educational needs. So, while figures do not match the national average they do not tell the true story of pupils' attainment. In this group of pupils, one did extremely well to reach the level expected in reading and writing and two reached the expected level in mathematics. This is a real success for the school and not a lowering of standards.

2 One of the reasons why standards in reading are above average is that pupils enjoy reading and talking about books. Good teaching ensures that by the end of Year 2 average attaining pupils read competently and with expression. The most able, read fluently and those who have special educational needs are well taught to use a range of strategies, such as looking at pictures and sounding out letters, to help them read unfamiliar words. All are keen to talk about the characters in their books and show by their conversation that they have understood the stories. Teachers ensure that, as they get older, pupils continue to have many opportunities to read in English and other

lessons. Consequently, by the end of Year 4, higher attaining pupils read unfamiliar non-fiction books very confidently. Most pupils quickly absorb useful information from the text and talk about what they have read. Pupils' love of reading is further promoted by encouraging them to read with parents at home and those who do so benefit considerably from the extra practise.

3 Standards in writing match those expected by the end of Years 2 and 4 but are prevented from being higher because in the past, the teaching of handwriting has not been good enough to ensure that pupils form their letters correctly. Not enough attention has been devoted to this in the Foundation Stage and consequently a significant number of pupils in Years 1 and 2 hold their pencils incorrectly or clumsily and do not write their letters in the correct manner. This makes it difficult for them to join up letters and hinders their progress.

4 Good teaching of number patterns and relationships ensures that pupils in Years 1 and 2 are quick to solve mathematical problems in their head. For example, those in Year 1 can mentally subtract single digits from two-digit numbers accurately. Those in Year 2 understand the concept of 'bridging through ten' and use it to help them work out equations involving addition and subtraction. When explaining how they have worked things out in their head, pupils use the appropriate mathematical language that they hear their teachers use.

5 Teachers in the Year 3 and 4 class have ensured that pupils have many opportunities to experiment and investigate in science. Much of their work is based on finding things out in a practical way through experiments on physical forces, how materials change and on life processes. This ensures that pupils question why things happen and build up an enquiring mind at the same time as they extend their scientific knowledge.

6 Pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 have a thorough and detailed knowledge of the history topics they study. Those in Year 2 talk animatedly about the Great Fire of London and answer questions about the past sensibly. For example, they were keen to point out that the fire spread so quickly because of the proximity of houses to one another and that modern semi-detached houses are safer. Teachers ensure that pupils are given the reasons behind important historical events and consequently pupils in Year 4 talked about Germany invading Poland as being the catalyst for World War II. A strength of the understanding is in the way that pupils interpret history and suggest consequences for modern times.

7 Pupils of all ages lack the skills and knowledge expected in information and communication technology. They have only a limited knowledge of how to use computers and how to carry out tasks such as retrieving work and loading programmes. They are familiar with some of the school's most often used software but are unsure about using the computer to control events or command things to happen, electronic mail, the Internet or databases. Although fairly familiar with the school's word processing package they type slowly and are not sure of how to amend or present their ideas by combining graphics or pictures. Until they have more opportunities to practise their skills, standards are unlikely to rise.

8 Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress and last year, a number did exceptionally well to reach the level expected for their age in English and mathematics despite their difficulties. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is higher than in most schools and this represents something that is done well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and personal qualities, including their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, are good overall. Pupils enjoy school and as a result attendance is very good. Behaviour is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between adults and pupils are very good.

- Teachers help pupils to distinguish between right and wrong.
- Most pupils are interested in their work and generally try hard to do their best.
- Pupils treat each other with respect and kindness. This mirrors the very good teamwork they see amongst all adults in the school.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of their own religious beliefs. Their knowledge of other faiths and cultures is satisfactory but less strong.
- A number of pupils do not listen to teachers or each other well enough. They do not follow instructions straight away.

Commentary

9 Pupils describe the school as a happy place where they feel safe and are learning well. They believe that adults listen and are fair. Problems are sorted out very quickly. Pupils take a full part in all that the school offers. In lessons, pupils rarely sit back, they become involved in their learning and are eager to contribute. Occasionally, for example, when pupils in Years 3 and 4 have to organise a longer piece of writing, some pupils are less enthusiastic.

10 Pupils who have special educational needs enjoy school and want to do well. This is because adults are quick to notice when pupils are frustrated and provide appropriate help. Relationships with teachers and teaching assistants are very good. Other pupils show that they appreciate the gains made by pupils who find learning difficult, in this they take a lead from the way teachers support and praise. This helps to raise the pupils' self esteem.

11 In all aspects of its work, adults make pupils feel included and respected. They encourage pupils to explore what is important to themselves and others, for example in 'circle time', when pupils talk about issues that are of concern to them, or in assemblies. Pupils have opportunities to reflect on their values and beliefs, for example when they write honest and personal notes on themes such as 'good choices I have made,' or 'my special place'. Teachers find opportunities in the curriculum to develop a sense of empathy with others, as when pupils in Years 3 and 4 wrote sensitive letters home from the World War 2 evacuees. A weakness is that the pupils' knowledge of religious beliefs and customs other than their own is limited. Some pupils can name other faiths but they do not know much about the way these impact on peoples' lives in Britain and around the world.

12 Provision for moral development is very good. The school's code of conduct provides a clear basis for the care and consideration which pupils are expected to show one another. Teachers apply the school behaviour policy consistently. In all aspects of school life they promote the principles of fairness, honesty and respect for others. When standards of behaviour slip, teachers are firm but positive. As a result, pupils are able to think about the consequences of their own actions and put things right.

13 The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to learn about their own culture, for example through history lessons or the regular visits to museums or theatres. However pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures is limited. The school has begun to improve provision, for example through a broader range of fiction and non-fiction books, and by developing links with schools in other areas.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.1
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.5

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

14 The school promotes attendance very well through good communication with parents and effective record keeping. Attendance is very good as it is much higher than the national median.

Punctuality is also a strength. Very few pupils were late during the inspection and registers show little evidence of lateness. When pupils have to come late, for example because of illness, they are made to feel welcome and helped to catch up.

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	75	3	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0

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

15 Pupils behave well in the playground and at lunchtimes. They are considerate and helpful. The ‘buddy system’ works well and makes new or upset pupils feel at home and welcome. The youngest pupils are already beginning to follow rules about sharing, sitting still and listening. Although behaviour in Years 1 to 4 is satisfactory overall, a significant number of pupils need reminding to pay attention and listen to adults or each other. In general, teachers insist that pupils behave well and it is when behaviour falls below these expectations that further steps are taken. Last year, two pupils were excluded from school for short periods for unacceptable behaviour.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching is generally good, although there are some weaknesses in the way that work is marked and one or two subjects do not yet have agreed procedures for assessing pupils’ attainment and progress. The curriculum is satisfactory; it includes a broad enough range of activities and is enriched through educational visits and visitors. Pupils are safe and secure in school, though the accommodation is a bit tight and children in the Foundation Stage do not have access to a separate playing area. Pupils benefit from the school’s close links with church, parents, other schools and the local community and have a growing involvement in the work of the school.

Teaching and learning

Overall, the teaching and learning in all classes and year groups is good and ensures that most pupils make good progress and achieve well. The school’s procedures for assessing pupils’ attainment and progress are satisfactory overall; with some areas that need improving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good teaching of pupils who have special educational needs.
- Teachers make effective use of the skills of teaching assistants to teach pupils who have special educational needs.
- Teachers ensure that higher attaining pupils achieve well by planning work that is challenging.
- In all lessons, teachers insist on high standards of behaviour.
- Teaching of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory and assessment is not being used to plan work.
- Teachers do not mark pupils’ work consistently and the marking does not always help pupils know how to improve their work.

Commentary

16 The inspection took place at the beginning of term and this had an impact on what was seen in lessons. The teacher of children in the Foundation Stage was still settling in children who

have not previously attended school or nursery. The teacher of pupils in the class of Year 3 and Year 4 pupils is new to the school and establishing discipline in a class where pupils were taught by a number of temporary teachers in the previous year. At the time of the inspection this need to settle pupils was a considerable barrier to pupils' learning. However, teachers insist on high standards of behaviour at all times and are determined that important rules, such as sitting still and listening to what others have to say are followed.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 20 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	7	13	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.

17 In all classes, there is good teaching of pupils who have special educational needs. As a result, these pupils achieve well and a small number do very well to reach the levels expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Careful and thorough observations of what children can do in the Foundation Stage enables teachers to identify pupils' special educational needs early in their school career. Having diagnosed their needs, teachers set about providing the right sort of help, in school, and when necessary, from other agencies such as speech therapists and educational psychologists. Pupils have an individual programme of work that is aimed at helping them overcome learning or behavioural difficulties. Parents are involved at all stages of the work and governors and teachers view them as being a crucial link in the chain of support. They are expected to help their children at home and given the skills and resources they need to do this effectively. In lessons, teachers ensure that pupils who have learning difficulties are fully included and that they get the help they need to cope with the work at their own level. For example, in a mathematics lesson one pupil in Year 2 was asked to calculate a $7-0 = 7$ because that was his target for the day.

18 Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching. The work of pupils who have statements of their special educational needs is planned meticulously and teaching assistants keep copious records about how well they have done on a daily basis. This provides a tremendous range of information for parents and enables teachers to pitch work at the right level in order to gain the maximum rate of progress. In lessons, teaching assistants often work with small groups of pupils who benefit from their questioning and prompting.

19 In general, teachers ensure that higher attaining pupils are set work that is challenging and helps them achieve well. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the most able pupils were asked to convert measurements to fractions and decimals while other pupils consolidated their skills of measuring in centimetres. Having mixed-age classes helps in that there is generally a wide spread of ability in the class and pupils can join in more challenging activities without leaving their classmates. At present the school has only a very small number of children who are identified as being gifted and talented academically. They are taught with a group of older pupils for part of the time but benefit by remaining with their peers for most lessons.

20 The teaching of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory. Although there are computers in each class these are not used often enough and consequently standards are below what is expected for pupils' ages. Not enough time is devoted to teaching pupils skills such as retrieving or saving their work and pupils of all ages say that teachers always do this. Similarly, pupils have only limited knowledge of how to program robots or computers because they have not had sufficient opportunities to practise their skills. The oldest pupils are unsure how to access the Internet or use electronic mail and the links with schools in Bradford and Birmingham have not been exploited to good effect. The co-ordinator is aware of the shortfall in provision and knows that standards are not high enough. To remedy this she has devised a comprehensive plan for improvement, aimed at raising standards and improving the quality of teaching. One of the weaknesses of teaching is that there have previously been no agreed procedures for assessing what pupils know and can do. This has meant that teachers have been unable to pitch work at the right level or ensure that the skills taught, build on what pupils already know. The co-ordinator has

also devised a system aimed at improving the quality of planning and assessment and these two facts put the school in a good position to be able to make the changes necessary to return standards to a satisfactory level.

21 There are some inconsistencies in the way that teachers mark pupils work. In general, teachers tick work and praise good effort. Spelling inaccuracies are pointed out but very often comments fail to help pupils understand how to improve their work. In some books there are gaps of several weeks when work is not marked and worksheets are too often neither dated nor marked. This sets a poor example, particularly for pupils who do not complete their work. Previous monitoring by senior staff has not been focussed enough to identify this as a weakness of the teaching, though the head teacher recognises it as an area for future monitoring.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory. It provides an appropriate range of learning opportunities, which meets pupils' needs. All statutory requirements are met. There are sufficient after-school activities to enrich the curriculum and these are popular with pupils. Teachers make use of well-chosen visits and the school regularly invites experts to come into school. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall and there are sufficient well-qualified teachers and other staff to teach the curriculum and ensure the health and welfare of pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is enriched by close links with parents and the local playgroup.
- The school makes good provision for pupils who have special educational needs.
- Teachers pay close attention to the needs of individual pupils and ensure that everyone has equal access to what the school has to offer.
- Children in the Foundation Stage do not have a separate or secure playing area.

Commentary

22 The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is appropriate for children aged four and onwards. It is enriched by the SHARE project, which is very well attended by enthusiastic parents. In these sessions, parents test learning activities for pupils to do at home. These are chosen to support the work done in school and make a good contribution to pupils' development. A weakness in this part of the school is the lack of an outdoor play area, which can be kept separate from the rest of the grounds. Because of this, pupils work towards the early learning goals for physical development with a limited range of equipment.

23 Pupils who have special educational needs benefit from the good relationships and ethos of inclusion which is seen in all parts of the school. Teachers, and the well-qualified team of support staff, know the pupils well and make sure that they have access to the full curriculum and play a full part in lessons. Pupils have detailed and comprehensive individual education plans which are kept in good order and up to date. These are practical working documents, used daily in planning, teaching and recording progress. Good teaching, effective support and careful record keeping means that pupils make good progress in their personal and academic development.

24 Pupils of different backgrounds, ages and abilities have equal access to an appropriate curriculum. Teachers plan the curriculum together and ensure that pupils in mixed-age classes do not miss or repeat activities and that work in lessons is usually well matched to pupils' ability. The school is keen to try fresh approaches to enrich the curriculum further. For example, teachers have recently adopted an interesting new personal, social and health programme, and the school believes that it has improved the quality of science investigations by introducing thinking skills and the 'brain gym', which seeks to keep pupils' minds active and fully focussed.

25 The school's ethos, whereby children are friendly towards one another and play with their special 'buddies' who have just started school means that they are not intimidated or anxious during playtimes and get on with other pupils well. However, there is nowhere outside that they can engage in the sort of play that is specific to the physical development of children of their age.

Care, guidance and support

The school has good procedures to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. The provision of support, advice and guidance is satisfactory overall, but it is better in lessons than in the teachers' marking. Systems for involving pupils in the work and development of the school are also satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are very good, each pupil has a trusting relationship with at least one adult in the school.
- The induction arrangements for new pupils help them to settle quickly into school.
- Staff record accidents and keep in close contact with parents.
- There are not many opportunities for pupils to give their points of view about the school.

Commentary

26 The school ensures that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment. It does this through good up-to-date record keeping and risk assessment. The school has effective procedures for child protection with clear guidance for staff.

27 Informal support, advice and guidance for pupils is good. This is because relationships are very good and teachers know a great deal about how pupils are learning. However this is not matched by the marking seen in pupils' books. This is usually thorough, with a few comments on work rate or presentation. However teachers rarely include guidance on how the work might be better, or what comes next. As a result, pupils are not sure what to do to improve. This was not helped by recent weaknesses in the pupils' presentation in Years 3 and 4. Most pages, for example in mathematics, did not have a heading or any indication of what was being practised. This meant that it was difficult for pupils to reflect on their work, or to know how well they were doing. There is already a significant improvement in presentation in the current Year 3 and 4 class.

28 Pupils who have special educational needs benefit particularly well from the school's calm and safe ethos. Well-established routines and consistent relationships mean that these pupils can work without distractions. Support and guidance is good, because these pupils are given a lot of one-to-one advice. A good feature of this is that adults do not 'spoon-feed' answers, they ask challenging questions and so lead pupils towards independent work.

29 The school takes great care to see that new pupils soon feel at home. Communication with parents is good and adults keep a close eye on new arrivals to see that they are happy and learning. The school's 'buddy' system works well and older pupils enjoy the responsibility. This level of care, from both adults and pupils, sets the tone for all. For example, a pupil in Year 2 looked horrified at being chosen to read to a visitor until friends hugged her and said, 'Don't worry, you'll enjoy it.'

30 The school has no formal systems yet to gather and act on pupils' views. Nevertheless the close relationships between pupils and staff mean that pupils are confident that their comments and ideas are welcomed by teachers.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school continues to have good links with parents, other schools and the local community. Being a Roman Catholic school it also has strong and close ties with the church, which pervade all of its work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with the local playgroup are beginning to have an impact on children's skills and knowledge when they start in the reception class.
- The SHARE initiative provides a good base for parents and school to work together on behalf of pupils.
- Staff work closely with teachers in the middle school and this ensures that pupils move from Year 4 to Year 5 confidently.

Commentary

31 The school already works in close partnership with a local playgroup, but there are plans to further strengthen this relationship when it moves on site, following major building works later this year. For some years the skills and knowledge of a significant number of children have been below those expected when they start in the reception class. This is largely because they have not benefited from time in a nursery setting. Many children lack confidence and a sense of independence when they start school and it is something that staff in the reception class work hard to promote. By strengthening the links between the school and playgroup, teachers and governors hope that more children will have a valuable pre-school experience and that attainment on entry will rise.

32 The school runs a successful and well-attended programme aimed at showing parents how they can help their children to learn at home. Each week about 15 mothers and fathers attend a carefully planned session led by one of the teachers. The programme focuses on literacy and mathematical skills and parents are given ideas that they can try out at home. It includes some theory and practical demonstrations such as jumping backwards on a number line to help gain an awareness of number order. The school receives a very small fund for the programme and this is spent ensuring that parents have resources to take home. The school has not carried out any formal evaluation of whether pupils whose parents attend these sessions fare better than others but the general view is that this group of pupils grasp the ideas covered more quickly. Alongside the benefits to children the school also values these sessions because it provides a forum for teachers and parents to talk about children and school informally. Teachers say that they find this extremely valuable and during the inspection a number of parents stayed behind after the session to chat with staff and one another.

33 Teachers take great pains to ensure that they work closely with other middle schools so that pupils make the move from one to the other smoothly and without distress. The curriculum for humanities is planned with regard to what topics are to be covered in Years 5 and 6, so that there is no overlap in what pupils are taught. This works well and pupils who have older brothers or sisters know what topics they will be covering in history and geography and say that they look forward to them. Teachers have in the past made some use of the information and communication technology facilities that are available to the middle school, though this has not been done often enough to raise standards.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The head teacher leads the school well. Other staff have not been in post long enough to make a contribution. Governors do a good job on behalf of the school and make a significant contribution to it being led well. The school is managed satisfactorily, reflecting the fact that the head teacher has not previously had the time to carry out her managerial duties and that one teacher joined the school in September.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- Staff work together well as a team; everyone is a key member and they share a heavy workload of leadership and management.

- Teachers are not yet monitoring the quality of teaching and learning effectively enough in all subjects and this is a barrier to raising standards.

Commentary

34 Governors have a thorough knowledge of the workings of the school because of their high level of involvement in everything that goes on. Most visit the school frequently so that they can judge the quality of teaching for themselves. They do this formally, through a programme of planned visits to observe, set and agree criteria. If teaching falls below the mark they are quick to inform the head teacher and to offer their support when difficult decisions about staffing have to be made. Governors are also very much involved in setting priorities and targets for school improvement. In this way they know what needs to be done from year to year and can measure the school's success with projects such as the Healthy School's Award. Governors meet regularly to consider the work of the school and they expect a full and detailed report of progress and change from the head teacher. The close professional partnership between school and governors works well and helps everyone work together as an effective team.

35 There is a strong sense of shared purpose and teamwork in the school, which is evident in the support teachers give to one another and their willingness to work hard to continue to raise standards. With only four teachers they all have leadership and management responsibilities for several areas and subjects. In order to overcome the heavy workload staff work together as often as possible. For example, they work together closely at each stage of developing and planning the curriculum and teaching. In addition, staff join forces to analyse the results of National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science very thoroughly. In this way they keep a close check on standards and are able to identify any gaps in teaching and learning in these subjects. As a direct result of this staff were able to identify weaknesses in the way that writing was taught that prevented pupils in Year 2 from achieving a higher level in national tests.

36 The head teacher acts as the special educational needs co-ordinator. With limited time she has done well to establish very effective teamwork and well-understood procedures. The school keeps up-to-date records; these are relevant and focus on raising achievement. Many of the support team have experience and training in helping pupils who have special educational needs. They are well deployed, feel valued and make a good contribution to learning.

37 Teachers are not yet monitoring the quality of teaching systematically or rigorously enough. There are two main reasons why this has happened. The head teacher has not previously had time to carry out her leadership and managerial responsibilities and this has prevented her from doing a better job. In addition, one teacher works only part-time and all have a heavy workload of leadership and management responsibilities. Consequently, they have spent very little time monitoring the quality of teaching in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, which have been a priority in recent years. It is noticeable that in these subjects the quality of teaching is generally good. Where teachers have observed their colleagues at work, their responses have not always been sufficient to improve the quality of teaching. For example, where teachers have lacked confidence or been unwilling to teach information and communication technology the leadership has not been strong enough to overcome these barriers and pupils' learning has suffered as a result. Teachers plan together, which eliminates the need for monitoring of this aspect of the teaching. Although they check the work of a sample of pupils' books this line of monitoring has not been effective enough to identify the weaknesses in marking. It needs to have greater focus if teachers are to be effective in improving the quality of teaching.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	177,111	Balance from previous year	21,044
Total expenditure	150,966	Balance carried forward to the next	26,145

Expenditure per pupil	2,459
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PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The school's provision for children's creative and physical development looks to be good on the small amount of evidence gathered. Each day they are given opportunities to paint or be creative; often working in small groups under the direction of an adult. They also have daily opportunities to gain physical skills at playtime and in lessons when they use the hall. During lessons children learn to move around a large space and follow instructions to march, walk, skip and run. Most have a good control of their movements but a number are still slow to dress and undress themselves.

Similarly, only one activity linked to children's knowledge and understanding of the world was seen; not enough to judge the provision as anything but satisfactory. During this activity children used appropriate terms, such as 'squidgy', 'hard' and 'cold' when asked to describe the feel of a range of objects including ice.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching means that children are beginning to follow class rules about sitting still and listening to others speak.
- Children quickly form very good relationships with adults and other children.

Commentary

38 Through consistent and patient reinforcement of the class rules children are quickly learning to sit in a circle for group time and listen to what the teacher has to say. At the beginning of a new year, and without the benefit of nursery education, a number of children need a lot of reminding about things like not shouting out and looking at whoever is speaking. There is still some way to go before many achieve these skills but each time they come together as a group the teacher quietly and briefly reminds them of the rules. Cartoon pictures help them remember rules such as sitting on bottoms and not swinging on chairs.

39 The teacher provides many opportunities each day for children to work and play with one another. For example, children are expected to share equipment such as construction kits and to take their turn in games. All of the children have a 'buddy' from Year 4 who welcomes them into school with a card and who takes responsibility for playing with them during breaks. This is one of the main reasons why children do not suffer from not having a separate play area; they are confident that others will look after them in the playground. Children also follow the good example set by adults and are mostly polite and generous towards one another. This is evident during lunch times when they chatter amicably and on occasions offer swaps of food and drink.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have daily opportunities to talk about themselves and their work and this makes them confident speakers.
- At this time in the term a significant number of children have not learned to listen to others.
- Children are taught the sounds of letters and this helps them with reading.

- The methods used to teach children how to write letters are not working and a significant number do not form them correctly.

Commentary

40 Each day, the teacher plans many short periods when children come together to talk about their work. For example, in a mathematical activity children were asked to set out party objects for teddies and consequently learned to use language such as 'one more', 'how many?' 'add' and 'take away'. In addition, staff never miss an opportunity to talk with pupils and engage them in conversation. As they paint or engage in make believe play, adults ask questions, make suggestions and introduce new language. All of this has a good effect on children's confidence and because they know that their answers are valued they are generally ready to share their point of view.

41 Few children have had nursery experience, though a growing number have attended the local playgroup. This has an effect on their ability to listen to others and, at present, group sessions can be quite lively. However, the teacher is patient and consistently reminds children of the rules so that it is possible to see them becoming more settled with each day. A number still call out when others are talking, but this is often the result of natural ebullience rather than a disrespect of rules. It is noticeable that children in the Foundation Stage also learn from the greater experience and example of pupils in Year 1, who have a better understanding of what is expected.

42 A strength of the teaching is that children are taught the sounds of letters. The methods used to do this are fun and as such work well. For example, in one activity, children were asked to choose an object and quickly go to the space where the letter beginning its name was placed. The teacher had taken children into the hall, which meant that there was plenty of room to spread out and make a bit of a dash to the right letters. As a result, children had a good time and, by the end of the lesson, most could recognise up to three consonants at the beginning of words.

43 Although the teacher uses methods such as writing letters in the air and tracing them with fingers this has not in the past been sufficient to ensure that all pupils form their letters correctly. In addition, children are not always shown how to hold a pencil properly and this has repercussions in Years 1 and 2, when they struggle with joined-up writing and handwriting in general.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Each day children spend time counting, working with number and engaged in practical mathematical activities.
- The teacher does not always get through all of the planned activities.

Commentary

44 Staff ensure that children gain an understanding of number, pattern and shape through practical activities such as counting objects, playing games and sorting objects into sets and patterns. This helps children achieve a sound understanding of numbers and concepts, such as adding and taking away. These practical activities are reinforced when children come together to sing number songs and rhymes that involve addition and subtraction. Throughout the day the teacher creates opportunities for children to count. For example, they count how many are in a group or work out how many are absent. All of this ensures that, from a fairly low starting point most children learn at a good rate during their time in the Foundation Stage.

45 In trying to create interesting and fast moving lessons, the teacher sometimes plans too much and not everything is achieved. For example, because children were enjoying setting out a birthday party as part of their learning about the numbers four and five, the activity went on for too

long. Consequently there was insufficient time for children to carry out individual and group tasks that were aimed at reinforcing their grasp of these numbers. In part this is because children are new to the school and take longer to settle but occasionally the teacher's expectations of what children will achieve are too high.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching enables pupils to reach above average standards in reading.
- Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to develop confidence in speaking.
- Handwriting is not taught well enough and a significant number of pupils hold pencils clumsily and do not form their letters correctly.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good and they achieve well.

Commentary

46 Throughout the school, teachers are good at teaching reading. In Years 1 and 2, teachers build on what children in the Foundation Stage have learned about the sounds of letters and pupils learn to sound out unfamiliar words. The many opportunities that teachers provide for pupils to read, in guided reading sessions, independently and to adults ensures that by the end of Year 4, average and higher attaining pupils read fluently and expressively. Lower attaining pupils are slower readers, who often recognise when they have misread a word and go back to put it right. In order to motivate pupils, the school provides a reasonable range of reading books, which engage the interest of boys and girls. Pupils of all abilities say that they enjoy reading and are keen to talk about books, poetry and favourite authors. In all classes, teachers expect pupils to read every day, at home and at school, this has a good effect on pupils' interest and achievements in reading.

47 Teachers use a wide and successful range of methods to promote language, extend pupils' vocabulary and help them become confident speakers. They have high expectations that pupils will understand and use technical vocabulary in all subjects. In literacy lessons, pupils in Years 1 and 2 use terms such as 'author' while older pupils talk about choosing a book after reading the 'blurb'. Throughout the school, pupils are fairly confident when it comes to joining in discussions and giving their opinions about the books they have read. Through performing in assemblies and talking to the whole school, pupils learn to speak to a wider audience and gain self-esteem and confidence.

48 In the past, the teaching of handwriting has not been good enough to ensure that pupils hold their pencils in a manner that makes it easy for them to write. As a result, a number of pupils in Year 2 now have great difficulty in holding a pencil in the accepted manner and this is having an adverse affect on their handwriting. In one lesson, several pupils were shown how to hold their pencils but although they tried it was not always easy for them to change the habit and one girl became upset because she felt that she was not doing well enough. In addition to this, pupils have not always been expected to form letters correctly. This has clearly restricted their progress in handwriting because they cannot join letters that are written incorrectly. It also means that a number of pupils have made little progress in the style or fluency of their handwriting over a period of time. In some cases it was no better at the end of Year 4 than it had been at the beginning and a significant number of pupils in Year 4 were still printing at the end of last year.

49 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and has improved since the previous inspection. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to ensure that, in literacy lessons, pupils who have special educational needs make good progress towards their individual

targets. Individual education plans are very specific and are linked to pupils' learning needs. For example, a pupil's target might be to spell five words or read all of the words on a given list. A particularly good feature of the teaching and one that helps pupils make good progress is the way that teaching assistants check off the targets before and after daily lessons and record how well pupils have done or where they need more help. This works extremely well and pupils who have statements of their special educational needs benefit considerably from this method of teaching. Throughout the school, teachers are good at matching work to the abilities of these pupils and this is one of the reasons why a number of pupils in Year 2 did very well to reach the level expected for their age in last year's national tests in reading.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50 Teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to use their language skills in other subjects. In history, geography and religious education, debates and discussions help pupils gain confidence in speaking to a larger forum and group and to give their points of view. This was evident when pupils in Year 4 were asked to talk about their work; their eagerness to talk about subjects and topics that interested them led to lively discussions.

51 Similarly, teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to read and write in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4 wrote about life in the African village of Chembakoli and how it differs from life in the north of England.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of mental calculation is good.
- Lessons are interesting and teachers make sure that pupils of different ages and abilities are involved and challenged.
- Teachers make effective use of teaching assistants and other adults. These make a good contribution to learning.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- In some lessons, teachers talk for too long and this limits the time that pupils have to practise their skills.
- Pupils' work in the Year 3 and 4 class has been poorly presented, however books from the current year group show that this is now improving rapidly.

Commentary

52 Many pupils enter the school with average or below average attainment in mathematics, but make good progress by the end of Year 2 and achieve standards that are above average. In the most recent national tests for seven-year-olds, almost all pupils reached the expected level and one third did better than this. Pupils achieve well because teachers keep a close eye on each pupil's progress and encourage everyone to do their best. Lessons are lively, well planned and have clear learning objectives. Teachers use other adults effectively, often with less able pupils or those with special educational needs. This carefully organised support is one reason for the good progress made by these pupils.

53 Teachers are generally good at matching work to the age and ability of each pupil. This is one of the reasons why pupils in the mixed-age classes make good progress. Pupils who have special educational needs are well catered for and are always given the help they need to achieve well. Last year, a number did so well that they overcame their barriers to learning and achieved the level expected for their age in national tests. This was a real success for them and the school.

54 In the two lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was satisfactory with some good features. A particular strength is the way that teachers lead the oral and mental part of the lessons. They ask searching questions that make pupils think. One boy in Year 4 said *"I like being in the spotlight, because you have to think fast."* Nevertheless, teachers make sure that everyone has a chance to answer fully. In a lesson in Year 3 and 4, for example, the teacher quickly noticed that boys were dominating a number game and encouraged the girls to have a go. In the Year 1 and 2 class, everyone sat with bated breath while a very young pupil got to the end of a long but impressive answer. The good relationships and trust in this school means that pupils of all abilities volunteer answers because they know that mistakes will be treated positively. Teachers explain ideas in ways that the pupils understand, often using real-life contexts. As a result, pupils are building up a good range of calculation strategies and an accurate grasp of number facts.

55 A further strength of the teaching is the way that teachers use, and insist on, correct mathematical vocabulary. For example, in a lesson in Years 1 and 2 the teacher used several ways to describe subtraction in her questions and explanations. This helped pupils to understand and to apply their knowledge in new situations.

56 A weakness in some of the lessons is that classes or groups spend too long sitting and listening. Teachers are anxious to make sure that everyone understands, so they continue explaining even when some of the pupils are ready to move to independent work. As a result, even though pupils are actively involved in the discussions, concentration flags and learning slows.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57 Pupils make limited use of mathematics in other subjects. For example, in a design and technology lesson, pupils in Years 1 and 2 failed to use what they know of measurement to help them construct structures that would hold a weight. Similarly pupils in Year 4 were unsure how to use what they knew of angles and right angles in particular, to help them programme a floor robot. However, in science pupils from Year 1 onwards incorporate block and then bar graphs and charts and tables to present the results of investigations and experiments.

SCIENCE

Provision in science varies, it is **satisfactory in Years 1 and 2** and **good in Years 3 and 4**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 1 and 2, activities are not always challenging enough for older pupils.
- By the end of Year 4 pupils achieve above average standards because of their thorough understanding of experimental science.
- Throughout the school, pupils record scientific results in a variety of ways and make good use of literacy and numeracy skills to do so.

Commentary

58 In the mixed Year 1 and Year 2 class, the work planned for pupils of different ages was not sufficiently challenging for the pupils in Year 2. For example, while pupils in Year 1 worked to classify the properties of materials, the task set for pupils in Year 2 required them to do no more than write their descriptions of similar materials. While they enjoyed the activity, most pupils could have moved on to more complex tasks because they already know that materials can be solid or liquid but that these can be changed by heating or cooling. In these lessons, teachers had not used the school's assessment procedures and records to set a starting point for pupils' work; with the result that the task was too easy.

59 Teaching in last year's Year 3 and Year 4 class was good and ensured that pupils gained a thorough grounding in scientific enquiry. In all of their work, pupils were given opportunities to investigate scientific concepts such as how sound and light travels and what plants need to grow.

Much of the work was based on making predictions or suggesting hypotheses and then testing these out. For example, as part of their work on sound, pupils made the prediction that sound fades with distances. Having carried out tests, pupils compared their results with first predictions. Pupils of all abilities understood the concept; one lower attaining pupil recorded his results by writing 'I was right because it got quieter every time it got moved away'. This attention to scientific enquiry is evident throughout all of pupils' work. Consequently, by the end of Year 4 they are good at finding solutions to questions, such as 'how does a rainbow happen?' They understand the importance of making tests fair and of recording their observations and results accurately and systematically. All of this ensures that they achieve standards that are above those expected for their age.

60 A good feature of the teaching, throughout the school, is the way that teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to record their work in a variety of ways. For example, the youngest pupils often record what they have seen as pictures or labelled diagrams.

61 From Year 1 onwards pupils are expected to record their scientific observations and results in a variety of ways. The youngest pupils are given a range of options, depending on the type of results they need to communicate. Following some experiments, they drew pictures to show what they had seen and labelled them with pertinent information. At other times pupils have made good use of their numeracy skills to record the properties of materials as Carroll diagrams or to set out simple charts. By the end of Year 4, pupils have extended their range of recording techniques and use charts and graphs to communicate their findings. Pupils say that they enjoy this aspect of their work and talk animatedly about which type of recording they prefer and would choose for different experiments.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to use computers and consequently standards are below those expected for pupils' ages.
- The co-ordinator has a clear view of what needs to be done to improve teaching and learning.

Commentary

62 The computers in classrooms are not used often enough for pupils to practise or consolidate their skills. As a result, many pupils are unfamiliar with the school's programs and with using the keyboard and mouse. With only two computers accessible to a class, pupils have to wait a long time before they get a chance to practice any new skills and consequently their progress is slow. On top of this, in many lessons, computers are not used at all. This is an inefficient use of the resources and further slows pupils' rate of learning. For example, although they have used floor turtles, pupils have had so little opportunity to program them that they quickly forget how to do this. Similarly, although pupils in Year 4 have done work on databases they could remember nothing of it. This was a recurring theme when pupils demonstrated what they could do on computers. The only program that they used confidently was a paint program that all pupils had worked on recently.

63 The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of what needs doing to raise standards. The work has already begun with the production of useful guidelines and a comprehensive policy for teachers. This puts the school in a good position to be able to make the changes necessary. For example, it outlines the responsibilities of teachers for planning appropriate activities and ensuring the curriculum is taught in sufficient depth. In the past, the co-ordinator has not monitored the quality of teaching or learning rigorously enough. However with a higher profile in the school this is set to change as raising standards becomes a priority for all staff.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64 Teachers do not make sufficient use of computers to reinforce pupils' learning in English, mathematics or science. Pupils in Year 2 had only a limited knowledge of word processing and those in Year 4 were very slow with typing. In school, they have had limited access to the Internet or CD ROMs to research information or communicate their work as text and graphics. Teachers rarely use computers to present results or findings in science as graphs, tables or charts and pupils are unsure about how to do this. The school has begun to communicate through electronic mail with schools in Bradford and Birmingham. However, these links have not been in place long enough to raise standards or make a significant contribution to promoting pupils' cultural awareness.

HUMANITIES

History was inspected in depth and geography was sampled. Religious education was not inspected.

65 In the one **geography** lesson observed in Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning was **satisfactory**. The teachers captured pupils' interest in the subject of transport through using a story about a journey from home to school. Pupils enjoyed the story and responded eagerly to the task of finding the distance between two places on a map of the British Isles. Talking with pupils revealed that their knowledge of the British Isles was sound and that they could explain how their local shops would differ from those in a small Scottish Island. Older pupils talked knowledgeably about the different lifestyles and physical features of a village in Africa and one in Northumberland.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those expected.
- The topics chosen help promote pupils' cultural development.
- A wide range of educational visits help pupils to learn.

Commentary

66 Pupils in Years 2 and Year 4 demonstrate a thorough factual knowledge of the topics and events they study. For example, pupils in Year 2 gave the year of the great fire of London and went on to discuss why it had happened and how the need to prevent fire spreading easily has effected the building of modern homes. They talked at length about the life of Florence Nightingale and why the work she did in hospitals has made her famous. This ability to explain and suggest consequences of these events and people put their understanding beyond what is expected for their age. Similarly, pupils in Year 4 linked the political causes and effects of the countries involved in World War II with the changes that have been made in society today. Pupils have begun to evaluate the information they get from different sources and know that some are more accurate than others or that they simply give a different point of view.

67 The topics chosen are interesting to pupils and often help to promote their cultural development. For example, pupils in Year 4 talked animatedly about the work they had done on ancient Greece and in particular about the Olympic games and Greek myths. They each had a favourite myth and spent some time trying to recall all of the labours of Hercules. Their fascination with the subject is promoted further by the lively displays, paintings and craftwork in classrooms and around the school.

68 One of the reasons why pupils have good attitudes to learning is that teachers plan a wide range of educational visits and visitors to the school to promote pupils' learning in history. Pupils in all year groups visit museums where they see history brought to life and these first hand experiences have a good effect on their knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils learn about life in Victorian times by visiting Beamish museum.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

69 The schools' provision in all other subjects looks to be satisfactory based on the sample of work seen. **Art and design, design and technology, music** and **physical education** were all sampled during the inspection. No art and design lessons were observed but the work in pupils' books and on display around the school shows a reasonable range of approaches and media used in their paintings and craft work. In the one design and technology lesson observed the teaching and

learning were satisfactory. The activities were exciting for pupils in Years 1 and 2 who rose to the challenge of creating a structure from construction equipment. However, a weakness of the teaching was that, although they had previously made designs, pupils were not following them carefully enough. The school has recently appointed a music specialist and good teaching is already beginning to have a good effect on pupils' enjoyment of the subject and in their performance. In a lively singing lesson the whole school sang familiar songs and hymns and learned to perform new ones. Boys and girls of all ages joined in enthusiastically and listened carefully to directions about how to improve their performance. In the one physical education lesson observed, pupils' gymnastic skills matched those expected for their age. They practised a sequence of movements and their performances were co-ordinated and controlled. All understand the importance of warming up before a physical activity and of the need to be safe when working on large and small apparatus.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

70 The school's provision for promoting pupils' personal, social and health education was only sampled. It is promoted very well through the close relationships that teachers forge with pupils. They are firm but fair and expect pupils to behave sensibly and respect others. Pupils respond to these high expectations by acting in a mature fashion and making friends with other boys and girls. A measure of the success of the good provision is that pupils and parents are in agreement that bullying does not happen in this school and that children help and care for one another. Though no lessons were observed, each class has some time set aside for pupils to discuss their feelings and to learn about making informed choices about healthy lifestyles. They are taught about the effects of smoking and drug abuse on their bodies and given advice about how to stay healthy; for example by choosing fruit at lunchtime.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
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	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
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).