

INSPECTION REPORT

SUTHERLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Blurton

LEA area: Stoke-on-Trent

Unique reference number: 124106

Headteacher: Mr Glynn Edwards

Lead inspector: Mrs Chris Field

Dates of inspection: 19-22 January 2004

Inspection number: 262605

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	489
School address:	Beaconsfield Drive Blurton Stoke-on-Trent
Postcode:	ST3 3DY
Telephone number:	01782 233977
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Kathy Niblett
Date of previous inspection:	November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school which is much bigger than most is located in Blurton at the south-western edge of Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire. The school serves a disadvantaged community and is located within an Education Action Zone and Health Action Zone. Currently there are 489 pupils from the age of 3-11 on roll. Most pupils are from White European backgrounds with a minority of mixed race, African, Asian or Chinese heritage. The great majority of pupils in school speak English, although a very small proportion speak Chinese at home. A broadly average proportion of pupils have special educational needs, mainly for moderate learning difficulties; eight pupils have a statement. At the time of the inspection 44 children were attending the nursery; 20 full-time and 40 part-time and 55 children were full-time in the reception year. This provision is known as the *Foundation Stage*. The profile of children's attainment when they start school is well below average but covers a wide span of ability.

The school has received a Government Achievement Award for the last three years running for raising academic standards and was accredited with the Active Mark for its curriculum for sports in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
9479	C Field	Lead inspector	Personal and social education and citizenship.
109655	P Edwards	Lay inspector	
22856	K Campbell	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, geography, music.
4099	R Braithwaite	Team inspector	Mathematics, history, physical education.
15414	D Carrington	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology, religious education, special educational needs.
22474	J Taylor	Team Inspector	English, art and design, design and technology.

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SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Sutherland is a **very effective** primary school, and every pupil is fully included in all aspects of its day-to-day life. Boys and girls achieve very well from their different starting points because of very good teaching overall. The headteacher provides excellent leadership, and he is ably supported by a highly effective deputy headteacher. School managers are very good at focusing on things that matter and are moving development forward at a good pace. The team spirit in school is very strong and everyone pulls together extremely effectively. Governors know the school well and are good critical friends. The school's key word *CONSIDERATION* is rightly viewed very positively by parents as assisting their children in developing very good principles by which to live. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership, and together with the deputy, senior managers and subject leaders ensures very good management.
- Very good teaching leads to very good achievement by boys and girls by the end of Year 6 in English, science, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). The school is progressing faster than other primary schools in the country.
- Highly effective provision is made for pupils with special educational needs but more attention should be paid to enabling a consistent level of provision for those pupils with specific gifts or talents.
- Very good assessment and target setting in English has yet to be extended to other subjects and pupils are not sufficiently involved in evaluating their own progress.
- Excellent support and guidance strategies enable pupils to become very good learners, have a high level of interest in their studies, enjoy very good relationships with one another and adults and behave very well.
- A very wide range of activities that are fully available to any pupil who wants to attend considerably enriches the very good curriculum.
- Links with parents and the community are proving to have an enormously beneficial impact on pupils' successful learning.
- The gym is too small for the number and size of pupils who have to use it and this limits the standards being achieved in physical education despite good teaching.

There has been good improvement overall since the previous inspection in 1998. All issues have been responded to positively and this is seen in the raised standards in all subjects. The school is judged to have very good capacity to drive forward future improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	A	D	B
Mathematics	C	A	B	A
Science	A	A	B	A

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

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

The tests above show a dip in English results in 2003. The school has worked very hard and effectively to make improvements. Writing which was a weakness then is now a strength.

When the children in the Foundation Stage start school their standards are well below average. They make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1. Throughout the school most boys and girls make good or better progress over time and achievement is **very good**. This includes those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. By the end of Year 2 current standards are above average in science, ICT, history, geography and music and average in all other subjects including English, mathematics and religious education. By the end of Year 6 current standards are above average in English, mathematics, science, ICT, religious education, history, geography and music and average in all other subjects. School targets are more challenging this year than last and the school is well on track to meet them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **very good**. Pupils enjoy school, have good attendance and give of their very best. Relationships are very caring and the school is a safe and happy community. The school helps pupils develop as responsible future citizens. Exclusions are very rare and the few last year, were for valid reasons.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is **very good**.

Teaching and learning are **very good overall** with significant strengths in nursery and Years 5 and 6, that help pupils of all capabilities do very well. The very good curriculum provides a range of very worthwhile experiences across subjects that are rich and interesting and meet statutory requirements in all respects. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good but more attention should be paid to enabling a consistent level of provision for those pupils with specific gifts or talents. Pupils receive very good care and support. They are very well looked after during the school day. The provision for their personal and social development is a significant strength. Excellent attention is paid to educational inclusion with full equality of opportunity. The school has an excellent partnership with parents and has forged very effective links with other schools and its community to the great benefit of pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is **excellent** and management is **very good**.

The headteacher has very high expectations for pupils' social and academic achievements and these result in an excellent ethos and *Can Do* culture. He leads the school forward on all fronts and is ably supported by the highly effective deputy. Everyone on the staff is working together very successfully as a member of a high-flying team. Very good use is made of data to plan the way forward very well. Governors are good critical friends of the school and work in an effective partnership with managers. They fulfil their legal duties well, apply best value principles securely and hold the school to account.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are extremely happy with the school, they hold very positive views about the all round education provided and family values promoted. **Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school** and they find lessons fun. They told inspectors that it is *Cool to be keen at Sutherland!*

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Extend the very effective assessment systems and targets for learning in English to other subjects and involve pupils more in evaluating their own progress.
- Establish a criteria for assessment and agree a policy that enables consistency in provision for those pupils with special gifts or talents.
- Take steps to enhance the indoor provision for physical education.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Pupils' achievement is **very good overall**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Since the previous inspection, standards throughout the school have improved significantly.
- From a well below average starting point, boys and girls from different ethnic backgrounds and of different capabilities make good or better progress and achieve very well by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science to reach above average standards.
- Pupils' good achievement leads to above average standards in information and communication technology, religious education, history, geography and music by the end of Year 6.
- The excellent leadership by the headteacher is behind the school's success in sustaining very high standards; he sets a very clear plan for raising achievement that all staff are signed up to and work very effectively to implement.
- The school's performance in tests is better overall than that seen nationally and awards have been made by government to the school for three years running to celebrate this.
- Satisfactory standards in physical education could potentially be higher, to better reflect the good teaching and good leadership and management, if the size of the indoor accommodation was improved.

Commentary

1. When the children in the Foundation Stage start school their standards are well below average. They make good progress but standards remain below average overall, especially in communication, language, literacy and numeracy. Throughout the school most boys and girls make good or better progress over time and achieve very well. This includes those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. By the end of Year 2, current standards are above average in science, information and communication technology, history, geography and music and average in all other subjects including English, mathematics and religious education. By the end of Year 6 current standards are above average in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, religious education, history, geography and music and average in all other subjects. This indicates a well above 'added value' to the attainment of pupils during their time in the school. This picture is testament to the excellent leadership of the headteacher, and very good management of the school that is totally focused on raising standards whilst ensuring pupils enjoy a rich and stimulating curriculum and are exceptionally well supported in becoming responsible future citizens. The school's performance in national tests is better than that seen nationally and awards have been made by government to the school for three years running to celebrate this.
2. The table below shows that standards were average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing in the 2003 national tests. The school's performance in raising standards at the end of Year 2 was above that found nationally.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.0 (14.6)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.6 (13.5)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.8 (16.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 61 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The table below shows that standards at the end of Year 6 were below average in English and above average in mathematics and science. The tests in 2003 show a dip in English results on those reached in 2002. The proportion of pupils expected to reach level 5 was not as high as predicted in writing. The school has worked very hard and effectively to make improvements based on a very thorough analysis of the test results. Standards in writing which were a weakness, are now a strength. When standards are compared to those found in similar schools they were well above average overall. The school's trend in raising standards was above that seen nationally. The school has set higher targets for 2004 than those set in 2003. This reflects very creditably on the drive for even better performance. The current Year 6 pupils are well on track to achieve the challenging targets set for their performance in the 2004 national tests.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.3 (29.5)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.8 (28.6)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.8 (30.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 79 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. The school has tried and tested strategies for supporting improvement. For example, the setting arrangements in all years from Year 1 to 6 in English and mathematics are organised by a careful analysis of pupil performance data that is regularly reviewed. Close monitoring of individual pupil progress by the headteacher enables pupils to move sets if they need to and the sets are re-adjusted and resources reallocated as necessary. The sets are working very effectively in all years; the very best practice in enabling sustained high-level achievement was found in top sets in Years 5 and 6 English. Pupils are given very good opportunities to use their well-developed literacy skills across the curriculum. Speaking and listening are encouraged in every subject. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to read aloud, accessing information from texts and from computers. The opportunity to extend writing skills through history, geography and religious education is carefully conceived and successfully achieved. Pupils put their numeracy skills to good use in practical subjects such as design and technology and science but the school could encourage wider and more frequent planned opportunities for pupils to extend their numeracy skills in other subjects. A very good drive to improving provision in information and communication technology has resulted in standards being shifted from below average to above average since the last inspection. From a very early age, pupils are taught basic computer skills and become familiar with the keyboard, using the mouse and a good range of programs in different subjects. This secure start enables pupils to maintain good standards in information and communication technology.
5. The standards being reached in physical education are average but could potentially be higher if more space was available for indoor work. The gym is a small space and rather crowded

with stored equipment. Teachers are planning carefully and are mindful of health and safety and accommodation constraints. They are enabling worthwhile experiences for pupils but the space available for the size of classes was observed to slow down progress in lessons and have a limiting effect on overall achievement. This is an area for improvement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **very good**. There has been **good** improvement to the systems for registration since the time of the previous inspection. Attendance and punctuality are both **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy school, have good attendance and give of their best.
- Relationships are very caring and the school is a happy and harmonious community.
- The school's key word CONSIDERATION is very much in evidence in the school's daily life and work.
- The very good provision for supporting pupils' personal; including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is assisting them in developing very good principles by which to live and become responsible future citizens.

Commentary

6. The school has sustained the very good provision for supporting pupils' personal; including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development since the time of the previous inspection. The pupils themselves are a strength of the school. From youngest to oldest they greatly enjoy being at school and told inspectors that it is *Cool to be Keen at Sutherland*.
7. In the Foundation Stage children's attitudes are very good with them showing a growing willingness and enthusiasm to work hard and do their best for the teaching team who they clearly hold in very high regard. Older pupils have very positive attitudes to their studies and are prepared to work hard and have a go at most things. As the vast majority of teaching is of good or very good quality children approach their lessons and activities with enthusiasm, with extremely positive relationships, behaving well. They respond very well to all they are asked to do, settle very quickly to activities and enthusiastically participate in all that is planned for them to do. Members of staff insist upon a very high standard of behaviour and pupils of all ages live up to these expectations. Relationships between pupils and with adults are mutually respectful. Pupils behave well during lessons and at break and lunch times. A small number of pupils' exhibit challenging behaviour and have individual education plans to help them develop self-control skills. These are working very well. Pupils with special educational needs develop positive attitudes towards one another, high self-esteem and confidence in relating to others because they are provided with opportunities through planned tasks that enable them to work confidently alongside other pupils.
8. Boys and girls say there is very little bullying but that there is some name-calling and upsets when friends fall out with each other. The school is very hot on any racist incidents and takes a zero tolerance stance. Only one incident was recorded last year that involved a pupil writing a racist comment on his work book and this was dealt with appropriately. Exclusions are rare and the school had not used this sanction for some years up to last year when four fixed-period exclusions were made involving one pupil who was finally permanently excluded. The exclusions were all for valid reasons and were supported by parents and governors.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

No of pupils on roll
503

Exclusions in the last school year

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
4	1

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

9. The very good provision for supporting pupils' personal; including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is assisting them in developing very good principles by which to live and become responsible future citizens. Pupils have a finely tuned sense of what is right and what is wrong and are very aware of the qualities needed to live in a harmonious and ethnically diverse world. The school has provided a range of experiences that enable pupils to learn about different cultures, for example they have developing links with another Stoke school where most pupils come from Asian backgrounds, largely Muslim. Pupils from both schools recently met to have tea together and swap information about themselves. Through the excellent community links pupils are enabled to gain a good understanding of their neighbourhood and exercise social responsibility. For example, Year 6 pupils annually visit four senior citizen homes to sing and do readings. Most of the school visited a local hospice on its Open day last March to see where the large amount of fundraising from school had gone in supporting the resources and equipment. Pupils are afforded many opportunities for team-work through lessons and the great range of sporting and musical activities. They relish responsibility and those who have recently been asked to be *playground pals* or members of the school council regard it as a great privilege. The Annual Awards Evening and merit assemblies are very positive features in school life in which pupils celebrate their personal achievements together and invite members of the community to share them too. A whole-school assembly held on the last day of inspection was a very moving experience in which singing, drama and dance of very high quality held the audience of staff, pupils, governors and some 50 parents in raptures from start to finish. The theme of *Make the World a Better Place* was very thought provoking and everyone present shared a moment of deep spiritual reflection.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.9	School data :	0.2
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.5

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

Pupils' attendance is good as is their punctuality. Lessons begin when they should and there is no wastage of time. These features support positively pupils' overall good achievements.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is **very good**

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **very good** overall with significant strengths in nursery that ensure the youngest children get off to a flying start and in Years 5 and 6, that help pupils of all capabilities make accelerated progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils are fully included in all learning opportunities, regardless of capability, gender or background.
- All teachers and support assistants work together as a team and relationships are very good.
- Teaching methods are highly imaginative and capture pupils' interest and sustain very best efforts.
- Exceptionally high expectations, a brisk pace to learning and lots of challenge are the key features in the excellent teaching observed that led to pupils making considerably better progress than expected.
- Consistently high expectations for behaviour, with the emphasis on praise and encouragement, are at the heart of the very good learning environment created.
- The very good involvement of pupils and parents in homework is working to good advantage.
- Very effective use of targets in English and well-planned opportunities for pupils' to review their progress need now to be extended to other subjects.

Commentary

10. Teachers and assistants are fully aware of inclusion issues and make excellent provision for promoting equality of opportunity. Pupils have very good capacity to work both independently and collaboratively because of the consistent approach to providing learning experiences that enable this. Pupils told inspectors they find learning fun and enjoyable and can't wait to come to school. Parents and members of the community who inspectors met at a lunch organised by the school all rate the teaching highly and pinpoint this as a key feature in helping the pupils achieve so much and in some cases against the odds.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 82 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5 (6%)	19 (23%)	46 (56%)	12 (15%)	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 were seen.

11. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Pupils achieve very well because teachers are very tuned into the needs of individuals and provide work that is well matched to enabling clear gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills acquisition across most subjects. There are particular strengths in the teaching of English, mathematics and science that lead to very good achievement. These include:
 - Very clear plans of what needs to be taught and assessed in order to move pupils' learning forward at a brisk pace.
 - Methods that are highly imaginative and capture pupils' interest and sustain very best efforts.

- The use of questioning that helps pupils to develop their linguistic skills and extend subject-specific vocabulary that they later use confidently in writing.
 - Very high regard for insisting on positive behaviour through an emphasis on praise and reward.
 - Well-focused marking that is geared towards helping pupils improve their work.
 - Well-planned homework challenges that are supported by pupils and parents.
12. In English, target setting and pupil self-review are extra features that were seen to add considerable value to the learning process in Years 5 and 6 where excellent lessons were observed. These could usefully be extended consistently across years and to other subjects.
 13. Teaching is good overall in the Foundation Stage with some very good features in the nursery. Between them the teaching team in the early years have a good command of all areas of learning and are working in successful partnership to enable the children to learn well. The next steps for development have rightly been identified as improving the structure of outdoor play and learning and to enable more focussed use of assessment to support the achievement of higher attainers.
 14. Pupils with special educational needs receive some good one-to-one support from teaching assistants who are well deployed and effective in role. Teachers set suitable learning challenges in response to pupils' diverse learning needs, as work provided is closely related to targets identified in pupils' individual learning plans. Pupils are provided with the correct blend of help and challenge, so that they do not become over-reliant. Teaching and learning in virtually all lessons observed by inspectors were of good or better quality and this is supporting very good achievement for all pupils with special educational needs.
 15. Teaching is good in information communication technology, religious education, history, geography, and physical education and never less than satisfactory in all other subjects. Very good specialist teaching by the music coordinator in all years is supporting some very good learning. No music lessons were observed in the infant classes but inspectors saw some very good lessons in the juniors and an excellent lesson in Year 6 in which pupils worked creatively with rap music, sang really well with exuberance and sheer enjoyment and achieved very well. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Their management of pupils is very good and teachers consistently apply the school's agreed approach to behaviour management, so pupils are well aware of what is expected of them and that there is no compromise on standards. All teachers recognise and comment on those pupils who are co-operating and others soon follow the example and quickly settle at change of activity. Because these approaches are applied consistently, pupils know where they stand and these result in an effective learning environment in all classes. Because teachers have a positive approach to pupils' behaviour, pupils feel valued and this forms the basis of very good relationships between pupils and teachers.
 16. Pupils are taught well to use and apply their knowledge and understanding and there is clear purpose to their learning from a very early age. Teachers share learning objectives with pupils at the beginning of lessons, and this is good because pupils know what is expected of them as a result. Teachers ask appropriate questions focused on pupils of different ability and English skills, and these are effective in furthering all pupils' progress and ensuring all are fully included in activities. The best questioning was vigorous and made pupils think carefully about answers to their questions. This was seen in a Year 6 English lesson, when the teacher adapted the level of questioning in response to the understanding shown in the pupils' answers and responses. She asked searching questions that made pupils think and find out answers for themselves. Teachers use plenary sessions well on the whole to reinforce key learning points but not all take the time to involve pupils in reviewing their own progress and identifying the next step for improvement. Additionally, in the very best lessons the teaching assistant made a written assessment of progress that could later be shared with the teacher to inform future planning but this is not consistent practice. These are the key features for improvement in otherwise satisfactory lessons.

The Curriculum

The curriculum is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good curriculum is considerably enriched with very good extra curricular provision.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good but more attention should be paid to enabling a consistent level of provision for those pupils with specific gifts or talents.
- Accommodation is of good quality and very well maintained but space is tight in the gym and holds back potentially higher achievement in some physical education lessons.

Commentary

17. The curriculum is much improved since the previous inspection. It is well planned and pupils of all ages and aptitudes are receiving a very good quality of education because of the school's approach. Long and medium term planning identifies worthwhile experiences across all subjects. Subject guidance is usefully in place to enable teachers to see the programme of studies for younger and older pupils and draw from either if appropriate to do so in meeting the specific needs of individuals. Short-term planning usefully provides specific focus on what pupils of different capabilities need to learn to achieve successfully. The setting arrangement in English and mathematics is a very positive feature. Pupils have a range of worthwhile experiences in the creative and aesthetic and physical aspects of the curriculum. Topics are chosen to be equally appealing to boys and girls. A very well planned range of visits and visitors that tie into the curriculum considerably enrich pupils' experiences.
18. Children in the early years are provided with a good curriculum and well-resourced environment that is vibrant and stimulating.
19. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. These pupils make good progress against their specific targets because of good assessment, timely review and effective leadership and management. The two co-ordinators for the provision of special educational needs have a very good grasp of their role and manage the administration of support programmes extremely well. Record keeping is in apple-pie order. The co-ordinators ensure that pupils receive help where necessary and that pupils who make good progress are removed from the register of special needs so that support can be targeted elsewhere. Individual education plans are very well-conceived and state the small steps needed to enable good progress. The co-ordinators for special educational needs have planned opportunities to monitor work in the classroom to identify and address where improvements are needed but sometimes these do not take place because of staff absence. The school has a working knowledge of those pupils who show particular talents in creative and physical aspects and through assemblies, for example and school productions enables them opportunities to develop these. However, there is no specific policy or guidance that could help raise the quality of provision to that found in support of pupils with special educational needs.
20. The main accommodation is of good quality and provides a bright, airy and attractively presented environment in which to explore the curriculum. A new library is proving to be a real asset in supporting pupils' research and enquiry skills development. The school grounds are spacious. The Foundation Stage is separate with nursery being located some distance from the reception classes but systems are in place to enable shared experiences, though even more mileage could be gained from the nursery spending more time in the main school. During the inspection a major building programme was underway and although some classes were not in their normal rooms, the disturbance was minimal due to very thorough forward planning and assessment of risks.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils receive **very good** care and support.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff know the pupils very well, value their individuality and uniqueness and provide excellent support for them.
- The school is a very caring community in which all pupils are given equal status and show tolerance, consideration and respect for one another.
- Induction arrangements are very good.
- Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good and pupils receive support and guidance that is second to none, however, pupils have yet to be fully involved in setting and reviewing targets to aid their academic progress in all subjects.
- Health, welfare and child protection arrangements are all very good.

Commentary

21. The school has improved the quality of care and support for its pupils since the time of the previous inspection. The care, support and welfare of pupils are all high priorities for the school. Pupils are exceptionally well looked after during the school day and the standard of care provided is outstanding. Pupils who have concerns of any type can draw attention to them by posting them into the *Worry Box* and pupils say any such issues are dealt with very promptly. Pupils highlight the fact that Sutherland is a very happy and friendly place where they feel safe. Pupils like their teachers and speak warmly of the personal and academic support they provide.
22. The school makes smooth and very well planned arrangements for welcoming and supporting pupils new to the school. Children in the nursery benefit from a welcoming induction package which ensures their smooth and secure settling-in. They soon develop a very good, trusting relationship with at least one member of staff, and know there is always someone to turn to. Pupils are treated with respect, care and patience.
23. The support provided for pupils with special educational needs is very good. They are included well in lessons, and are able to make good progress in their learning. The monitoring of pupils' personal development and achievements is highly effective, particularly for those many pupils with individual education plans. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is carefully tracked.
24. The monitoring of other pupils' achievements is limited in subjects other than English, mathematics, science, music and information and communication technology. Target setting has been introduced but more work remains to be done to promote these in subjects other than English, and to undertake regular review and revision. Pupils need to know what they have to do to reach higher standards in their work and to be fully involved in a review process.
25. Staff very effectively monitor and support the personal development of pupils through individual and class discussions. Achievements are consistently celebrated. The home-school links co-ordinator has been instrumental in forging trusting links between families, the school and the community it serves. Parents are very happy with the way the school looks after their children.
26. Child protection procedures are fully in place and training is regularly undertaken. Pupils have very good relationships with staff. They feel that staff treat them fairly in all situations. The school council successfully contributes to the future plans. The school has very good health and safety procedures and all accidents are carefully recorded and parents kept informed. Governors carry out regular risk assessments and all safety checks are up to date. The

school is managing the major building work very carefully to ensure the standards of health and safety are maintained at very high levels.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has an **excellent** partnership with parents and the community and has forged **very strong and effective** links with other schools to the benefit of pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The information parents receive from the school is excellent.
- The parents and the community it serves have an extremely high regard for the school.
- Parents find the staff very approachable and willing to talk to them at any time.
- The school has very good links with other schools and colleges.

Commentary

27. The school has improved its partnership with parents and the community it serves since the previous inspection. Most parents are very supportive of the school and are very pleased with what the school provides. They are happy to approach the school about any worries or concerns they may have. The information provided by the school for parents in the detailed prospectus, the weekly *Sutherland Sentinel* Newsletter and curriculum letters is excellent. Parents and pupils are happy with the amount of homework received and feel it successfully builds on work undertaken in lessons. The school encourages parents to help in any way they feel able and provides a course for parent helpers to assist them in this role. Staff very much appreciate the regular reliable help they receive.
28. Pupils' annual progress reports are particularly clear about what pupils can do and how they have improved during the school year. There are clear targets for further improvement and ways in which their parents can help them at home. The school regularly consults parents about their expectations for the school and organises courses for parents, for example family literacy, getting to know your school and positive parenting. These courses effectively help parents to better support their children's learning.
29. The school has excellent links with the community including the local church, the pottery industry, local museums and other places of interest visited by pupils. There is a very good programme of support with the local High school to assist Year 6 pupils' transition. Very good links with other primary schools enrich the curriculum and provide pupils with opportunities to take part in sporting and musical events. The school's full involvement with activities organised by the Education Action Zone, for example, maths challenge days and Indian dance celebrations is a very positive feature. The school makes a very effective contribution to the initial training of teachers and this also benefits pupils from more adult support in classrooms.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is **very good** overall.

The leadership of the headteacher is **excellent** and is the key to the success of the school. Management is **very effective** at all levels. The governing body carries out its duties well and provides **good** governance.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is an inspirational leader, he has very high expectations for pupils' social and academic achievements and these result in an excellent ethos and a *Can Do* culture.
- The deputy headteacher provides highly effective support.

- Senior managers totally reflect the school's aims in all their work.
- Subject leaders have a very clear overview of standards and provision.
- Everyone on the staff is working together very successfully as a member of a high-flying team.
- The school has an excellent approach towards ensuring every pupil has equal opportunities to develop abilities and interests.
- Self-evaluation procedures provide highly accurate outcomes for successfully moving the school forward.
- Strategic planning is well focused on the things that matter most for bringing improvement at a good pace.
- The chair of governors is a strong positive influence within the school.
- Governors have a good understanding of the many strengths of the school and of its areas for development. They fulfil their legal duties well, apply best value principles securely and hold the school to account.
- The school gives very good value for money.

Commentary

30. The school owes much of its success to the excellent leadership of the headteacher. There are many strengths. Beneath a calm, unassuming exterior is a charismatic leader who shows exceptional skill in creating very successful teams by drawing out the best in people. He demands the highest standards and articulates the way forward with clarity. Staff know where the school is going and share his total commitment towards providing the best for the pupils of Sutherland. The headteacher recognises the individual talents of his staff and plays to their strengths to ensure high quality teaching and learning. He also, in his own words, 'keeps one step ahead of the game' and never shies away from making difficult decisions. Parents hold the school in deservedly high regard. The socio-economic circumstances of the community the school serves are a challenge to overcome but are not seen by anyone at the school as a barrier to pupils' successful learning. This is a really positive feature that supports the excellent ethos so evident in school and the self-belief that pupils have that they *Can Do* anything they set their minds to.
31. The headteacher and his high calibre deputy combine their strengths and complement each other well. They present a very powerful partnership that is wholly successful in driving the school forward. Senior managers share the same vision of striving for excellence and carry out their responsibilities with rigour, dedication and skill. Joint decision-making is a strong feature and discussion is honest, self-critical and reflective. There are tried and tested systems in place for identifying and tackling weaknesses.
32. Leadership and management are very good at all levels. Management tasks and responsibilities are delegated with great success, though in some subjects, for example design and technology, there could be more time made available for the direct monitoring of teaching and learning. Core subject leaders have a very secure overview of standards and the leadership in English, science, information and communication technology and music all stand out as key strengths. The leadership of children in the Foundation Stage is very good, ensuring the school's youngest children get off to the best possible start. The leadership of special educational needs is also very good and these pupils achieve very well.
33. The school has gone from strength to strength since its previous inspection. It has responded very positively to the key issues and addressed them fully. Carefully thought-through adaptations to the curriculum have resulted in greater breadth and depth of coverage. Rigorous monitoring by senior managers has raised standards of teaching and learning. The school has been quick to embrace new initiatives and has won several awards for its achievement. Performance management is firmly established as a very positive tool in raising standards. Targets that stem from discussion are linked very effectively to whole school and personal needs. This is an ambitious school that welcomes a wide range of visitors and

outside agencies. It offers very good support to student teachers and teachers new to the school, enabling them to settle and quickly become as effective as longer serving colleagues.

34. The governors are interested, supportive and very involved. They fulfil their statutory duties well. The governing body is a very well led group, with considerable expertise. Governors are proud of their school and keep a watchful eye. The headteacher ensures governors are well informed about the strengths of the school and the areas for development. Financial management is very secure and the school applies the principles of 'best value' very effectively. Strategic planning is impressively detailed and very thorough. Each year, governors consider different budget options, prepared by the headteacher, and they are not afraid to make difficult decisions in support of school effectiveness.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)2002/3		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,077,306	Balance from previous year	39,720
Total expenditure	1,074,046	Balance carried forward to the next	42,980
Expenditure per pupil	2,170		

The school achieves high standards for an average cost per pupil and provides very good value for money.

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

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good** overall, with some very good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well from a low starting point across the six areas they experience.
- The importance placed on developing personal, social and emotional skills is very effective and children achieve highly in this area of learning.
- Very good leadership and management and very good teaching ensures the children get off to a flying start in the nursery. Good teaching in reception builds on this but there is room for best practice to be shared between nursery and reception classes.
- The curriculum has developed well since the previous inspection and now provides children in both years with a rich variety of exciting, purposeful activities.
- Provision for children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is very good, because adults take every opportunity to develop skills on a one-to-one basis.

Commentary

35. There are currently twenty children attending full-time and forty children attending part-time in nursery. Fifty-five children are also taught in two reception classes. Children enter the nursery with well below average personal skills. Early literacy and numeracy skills are poor. Through very good teaching in all areas of learning, children make very swift progress. Strong teamwork, very thorough planning and high expectations are the key to the nursery's success.
36. Children enter the reception classes with below, rather than well below average levels of understanding. Social skills are strong and children settle quickly into school life. Overall, teaching is good and children achieve well. However, its quality is more variable than in the nursery, ranging from excellent to satisfactory. Despite the school's best efforts, a higher than average number of children do not achieve average standards.
37. There is a good ratio of adults to children, ensuring that the needs of all are fully met. Teaching assistants are of high calibre and make a strong positive contribution to children's learning. Provision for children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is very good, because adults take every opportunity to develop skills on a one-to-one basis.
38. Very good leadership and management have resulted in improved liaison between the two year groups, better planning and highly effective assessment procedures. Links with parents and outside agencies, such as Surestart, are very good.
39. The accommodation is spacious and displays are of high quality. Resources are good and the recent addition of an outdoor learning area is starting to have a positive impact on provision. Staff overcome the problem of being located at opposite ends of the campus well. There are, however, missed opportunities for the nursery to participate in activities such as assemblies, that would allow them to be part of the school's very strong community.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal, social and emotional development is a very important part of provision. It underpins all work in the Foundation Stage and children achieve very well.
- All children are valued and know they are part of a highly caring community.
- Staff provide excellent role models and are totally committed to providing the best for children in their care.

Commentary

40. Children enter the nursery with poor social skills. They make rapid progress throughout the Foundation Stage because relationships are excellent, activities are fun and routines are firmly established. All staff have clear expectations of behaviour, courtesy and collaboration. Children quickly learn to treat each other with care and kindness. A good example of this occurred when children in the reception class spontaneously put their arms around each other as they listened to an extract of music.
41. Teaching is of a consistently high quality and children are on course to achieve the early learning goals before the start of Year 1. It is impressive that many will exceed them from such a low starting point.

Communication, Language and Literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff seize every opportunity to develop children's speaking skills through good quality discussion.
- There is a good level of one-to-one support for children of all capabilities.

Commentary

42. Language skills are very weak when children enter school. They achieve very well through very good teaching in the nursery and continue to make good progress in reception. However, despite much focused input, attainment remains below average by the time children move into Year 1.
43. In the nursery, adults question, cajole and help children to extend their skills. Even the most reticent child wants to contribute, although some are held back by limited vocabulary and speech problems. One boy tries to talk about the uniform he is wearing but has great difficulty because he does not know the word 'fireman'.
44. Nursery staff use music very effectively to develop listening skills when, for example, children sit in a circle to drink their milk. Early writing skills are weak. By the time children move into the reception classes, a few children write their name, but most are not yet making recognisable marks unaided. Children love books, enjoy playing games and singing rhymes. Some know letter sounds.
45. In the reception classes, adults continue to develop children's speaking skills effectively through good quality discussion. Every child gains in confidence because they know their ideas are valued. A handful of children express themselves well. When creating a dance about 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', one girl announced proudly that she expressed feelings 'in her heart'.
46. Through a good range of exciting activities, writing skills also develop well. When writing shopping lists or trying to label computer drawings of Alton Towers, children make recognisable attempts at unfamiliar words and develop a good awareness of letter sounds.

Reading routines are firmly established and children make good progress. Parents support their children well with reading and make a positive contribution to their learning.

Mathematical Development

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In many lessons, teaching is of a very high standard.
- Staff develop mathematical vocabulary very well.
- Practical activities are interesting.

Commentary

47. Nursery children achieve very well from a low starting point. They show a real enthusiasm for mathematical activities because learning is fun. Staff take every opportunity to develop skills further. They use the 'magic stick' to count how many children are present. When waiting to go out to play, children sing 'Four Little Frogs' and some remember to use the word 'zero'. Despite very good teaching, children move into the reception classes with below average mathematical understanding.
48. In the reception classes, children make good progress overall. They learn through a rich variety of learning experiences. The quality of teaching ranges from very good to satisfactory. In lessons where teaching is very good, children make rapid progress. During one high quality session, children were totally absorbed in activities, such as being 'Shape Detectives' searching for circles, squares and triangles. Others made big and small houses for their animals using construction materials. They used words such as 'larger' and 'smaller' in their explanations. Everyone developed understanding well through purposeful activities. In less successful lessons, children find it hard to sustain concentration when there is not a rich enough variety of activities or they spend too long listening to the teacher's explanation. By the end of the reception year, although most children have a simple basic understanding of number, many will not achieve all the early learning goals in this area of learning.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a wealth of visits and visitors to enrich learning.
- Children have numerous opportunities to explore and experiment with tools and materials of their choice.

Commentary

49. Children enter the nursery with a poor knowledge of the world in which they live. They develop greater understanding through an exciting range of purposeful activities linked well to topics. Through very good teaching in the nursery and good teaching in the reception classes, most children are on course to reach the early learning goals by the time they reach Year 1. Visits and visitors feature strongly. During the inspection, nursery children were fascinated by the changes in the development of someone's baby brother and there was much animated discussion. Investigations are an important part of learning and children use magnifying glasses and talk about materials that are 'shiny and sparkly' as they look closely at a wedding dress. The imaginative play areas create high levels of interest. During the inspection, Sutherland Builders was a very popular choice that attracted much interest because it linked

well to the building work taking place in school. Chinese New Year gave children the opportunity to dress up, wearing hats they had made. Computers are a regular feature of all lessons. Children in the reception classes click on the mouse and print their work with impressive levels of independence.

Physical Development

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outside areas have improved significantly since the previous inspection and now provide well for developing physical skills.
- Lessons are well planned and children receive a good variety of purposeful activities.
- The quality of teaching is consistently very good in the nursery.
- Teaching quality ranges from excellent to satisfactory in reception.

Commentary

50. No sessions were observed outside because of heavy rain.
51. On entry to nursery, many children have little experience of handling glue spreaders, scissors, paintbrushes and other tools. They quickly acquire competent skills through very good quality provision.
52. Physical development is similar to other children of this age on entry to the reception classes. Children achieve well through good teaching overall. In a dance lesson observed, children responded well as they interpreted the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. They moved with confidence and creativity and all gained great enjoyment from the lesson. Most children are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the time they reach Year 1. Recently completed outdoor areas are starting to be used to develop skills further. The school is aware that further work needs to be done in order to provide a structured outdoor play programme.

Creative Development

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff use every opportunity to teach skills directly and offer a good balance of opportunities for children to learn through play.
- Children's work is attractively displayed and provides them with an exciting learning environment.
- Occasionally children's creativity is stifled when activities are over directed.

Commentary

53. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in the nursery. Children make rapid progress. By the time they move into reception, standards are similar to other children this age. Through good teaching in the reception classes, most children achieve the early learning goals. Staff successfully create an atmosphere of fun. Nursery staff focus their attention on teaching skills, such as using paintbrushes and mixing paint. Children produce very realistic clay models of penguins and recognisable drawings of themselves. They make up their own stories and have free access to musical instruments.

54. Reception staff continue to develop skills and children achieve well. However, on occasions, activities that are over directed by the teacher stifle creativity. Children produce very good pictures in the style of Kandinsky. They benefit from a weekly session with the music specialist in the school. She builds confidence very successfully and they gain strong enjoyment of the subject.
55. Displays are of high quality. They are lively, interesting and relevant. They give good insight into the development of individual children.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is very good overall and leads to very good learning and very good achievement in English.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use very good questioning techniques which enrich pupils' vocabulary and challenge deeper levels of thinking.
- High quality marking is objective driven and clearly focused on the next step for learning in order for pupils to achieve individual targets.
- Teachers and managers analyse performance data and use this to take effective action that supports improvement.
- The setting arrangements in English and use of pupil targets are very positive features.
- High expectations for pupils' likely future achievement, their attitudes to work and behaviour very effectively support the systematic approach to raising standards.

Commentary

56. The school has focussed clearly on this subject and standards have risen as a result. National test results for 2003 indicate that standards for Year 2 are average in reading and above average in writing and well above average for both areas when compared with similar schools. The results for Year 6 indicate below average standards in English. Pupils' performance in writing was the weak link in the 2003 tests and the school has worked systematically to make improvement. Its strategies have proved very successful and writing is now a strength. Over the last three years pupils have consistently outperformed their peers in similar schools. This represents very good progress from a below average start at the beginning of Year 1. Higher targets have been set for the current Year 6 pupils and lesson observations and pupils' work books indicates that they are well on track to achieve them.
57. Achievement for pupils throughout the school, including those for whom English is an additional language and those pupils with special educational needs is very good. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Pupils currently in school are making good progress from a below average starting point to reach average standards in English by the end of Year 2 and above average standards by the end of Year 6.
58. Achievement in speaking and listening is very good. Teachers and teaching assistants provide an extensive range of speaking and listening opportunities based around practical activities, ensuring that standards are average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils vocabulary is enriched and extended by:
 - Planned activities for pupils to talk to each other in every English lesson.
 - Highly skilled questioning techniques used by teachers, which scaffold appropriate responses for pupils.

- Repeating and explaining new and unfamiliar words and phrases to reinforce and consolidate learning.
 - Extensive use of role-play in other subjects with carefully undertaken interventions by teachers and teaching assistants.
59. In junior classes progress in speaking and listening accelerates, especially in Years 5 and 6. Every opportunity is taken for pupils to rehearse ideas in pairs and small groups. Very effective questioning by adults ensures they discuss and debate with increasing confidence, enjoying good quality discussions and enabling them to speak with confidence in formal situations including a very moving Celebration Assembly.
60. Achievement in reading is very good, with skills taught consistently and practised through, well-planned and innovative lessons. In a Year 2 lesson observed by inspectors, pupils relished reading aloud the big book dialogue while wearing costume and handling props to aid their understanding of character. Others read the narration with equal confidence and expertise, making full use of the punctuation including speech and exclamation marks. Many pupils in Year 6 are enthusiastic and independent readers, they know about a broad range of modern and classic authors, can discuss the way in which characters interact and predict how the narrative will develop as a result of events and character interaction. Standards are above average and are affected by the very good selection of fiction books throughout the school and in the library, which is used regularly by all pupils for home loans.
61. Achievement in writing is very good and is built over time. In Years 1 and 2 pupils are achieving well through regular practice, such as writing their own stories, accounts and reviews. One higher attaining Year 2 pupil reviewing favourite poems writes of "The Daffodil" by William Wordsworth, telling how he enjoys the words *fluttering and dancing*, identifying rhymes and showing good understanding of verse form. The pupils go on to successfully write their own poems in the style of other poets. By the end of Year 6 higher attaining pupils' work, in equal numbers of boys and girls, is well above the expected standard with good paragraphing, vocabulary and punctuation. In Years 5 and 6 imaginative teaching was seen with pupils offered very well conceived frames on which to base their writing. Writing about Mythical creatures was well prepared for and enabled pupils to use similes, metaphors, alliteration and personification with confidence. A good standard of presentation is fostered throughout the school.
62. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Pupils achieve very well because teachers of all English sets:
- Plan for the systematic development of key skills and teach them very effectively.
 - Consistently extend, widen and enrich pupils' vocabulary.
 - Direct classroom assistants well to enable lower attaining pupils to secure spelling strategies and writing skills through their good guidance and encouragement.
 - Move lessons forward with good pace.
 - Mark pupils' work to agreed formats which is objective driven and matched to clear targets.
 - Regularly review targets with their pupils to reinforce their good achievements.
 - Ensure plenty of self-evaluation opportunities for all pupils.
63. Pupils concentrate very well in lessons responding positively to their teachers and working at the brisk pace, which is demanded of them. The very good relationships in classes underpin the very successful learning taking place.
64. The subject is very well led and managed by two coordinators. Their systematic approach provides a very good role model for staff, particularly in the area of assessment and target setting. There are comprehensive sets of policies and schemes of work that cover all aspects of the National Curriculum Programmes of study. The work of teachers and pupils is regularly monitored by both co-ordinators who have a very good knowledge of standards across the school. They have been able to identify areas of relative weakness while reinforcing areas in

which pupils' knowledge is strong. Their ability to analyse performance data and take effective action has ensured that intervention programmes have a good impact. Learning resources are very good and are used effectively in all lessons.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

65. Pupils are given very good opportunities to use their well-developed literacy skills across the curriculum. Speaking and listening are encouraged in every subject, including practical subjects such as music, art and design and design technology where pupils offer evaluative comments about the performance of others and the resources they are using. Question and answer sessions feature in lessons as teachers wish to find out what strategies pupils are using and what gains have been made in the acquisition of knowledge and understanding. Frequent opportunities are provided for pupils to read aloud, accessing information from texts. Classrooms are language-rich places, and the high quality displays in most classrooms, consistently reinforce subject-specific vocabulary. The opportunity to extend writing skills through history, geography and religious education is carefully conceived and successfully achieved. Information and communication technology is being used to increasingly good effect to support literacy with pupils' word processing and researching to access information from a wide range of sources.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

- Pupils attain standards well above those found in similar schools, standards are above average by the end of Year 6.
- The achievement of boys and girls of different abilities over the time they are in the school is very good.
- Teaching in mathematics is good overall, especially the teaching of numeracy.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics and make good progress in their learning.

Commentary

66. Since the previous inspection, standards throughout the school have improved significantly. Pupils enter the school with below average standards and by the end of Year 2 they have improved to become average. This good progress continues apace so that by the end of Year 6, pupils are attaining above average standards, and are reaching standards well above those seen in similar schools. This indicates a well above 'added value' to the attainment of pupils during their time in the school. It also demonstrates that over time all pupils, whatever their background or ability are achieving very well. A pleasing pointer is that the school has maintained this situation for the last three years. This is a tribute to the leadership and management of the school in that the need for improvement in the subject was identified after the last inspection. This has been achieved and has not fallen back.
67. The continued strength of mathematics in the school is due primarily to consistently good teaching across all year groups. Teachers plan well for all abilities, have very good relationships with their pupils and have utilised the setting arrangements very effectively. A prime example of particularly good practice in the school is the teaching of the top set in Year 6. Here very high expectations, and very challenging work, make pupils work productively and undertake exemplary recording in books and on worksheets. As a result, in common with work seen throughout all year groups, pupils' presentation of their work is of a high standard, and the marking by teachers is consistently helpful and accurate. Far from finding this a drudge, pupils take great pride in their work, and enjoy their learning, which moves at a good pace. In discussions about their work they show both enthusiasm and thoughtfulness and work very well together in pairs and small groups. They also regularly personify the *Can do* culture promoted in the school, exemplified by the group of Year 3 pupils who tried and tried and tried again to make a boat tangram out of 5 cut out mathematical shapes. Likewise, Year

6 pupils struggled at first to fathom the concept of probability, but after 3 lessons their determination ensured that nearly all had a far more confident understanding.

68. The mathematics curriculum is suitably broad with a substantial emphasis on number, especially in the early years. This ensures that pupils build a sound base of knowledge from which they can move confidently to more advanced thinking. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily in data handling, but there could be more opportunities for pupils to use computers in mathematics work. Assessment through regular analysis of both national and school testing helps the school to have a general understanding of learning and progress of year groups. The school is in the process of introducing more detailed assessment profiles for individual pupils, which is anticipated will enhance the setting of individual targets.
69. The leadership and management of the experienced co-ordinator are effective. She has been responsible for the drive for improvement in mathematics, and its subsequent consolidation in the last three years. She has ensured that teachers are provided with good resources. The school has also rightly decided that in view of its size, an assistant co-ordinator at the top end of the school should be appointed. Consequently the drive for improvement and innovation should continue, ensuring that achievement in mathematics remains a strength of the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

70. The basic skills of numeracy are taught well throughout the school. There is evidence of the use of these skills in areas such as science but the school could encourage wider and more frequent opportunities for pupils to use numeracy across the rest of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average through the school.
- Achievement is good in infant classes and very good in the juniors.
- Teaching and learning are of very good quality overall.
- Science is very well led and managed.

Commentary

71. Provision in science is a strength of the school. The curriculum is very well planned and includes much work of an investigational or problem solving nature. This enthuses the pupils who respond enthusiastically and who are very productive workers. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and the school has very good potential to maintain the strengths and improve science even more.
72. Standards are above average in all classes. The scrutiny of work showed that in most classes an above average proportion of pupils are attaining average levels of skill, knowledge and understanding. Furthermore, in most classes over a third of the pupils are attaining at well above average levels. Pupils clearly have the skills to plan investigations, predict outcomes, run a fair test, evaluate the results and generalise their findings by the age of eleven. In the Year 6 lessons observed, pupils explored molecular science as they explained what happened to salt when it dissolved in water. Almost all pupils in these classes understood the principles involved and talked confidently of salt molecules mingling with those of hydrogen and oxygen.

73. Pupils make strong gains in their learning through the school. Achievement is good in infant classes as pupils build on their low starting point when they joined the school. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good platform of knowledge and skills in preparation for work in the juniors. In Years 3 to 6 achievement increases as this grounding is broadened and understanding increases. Achievement is very good in the juniors, especially in Year 6. Pupils of all backgrounds share in this very good achievement. Teachers have high expectations and ensure that higher attainers are challenged thoroughly. Likewise, the support for pupils with special educational needs is very successful in ensuring they develop appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding of science.
74. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. It is good in infant classes and very good in the juniors. In general, teachers have very good expertise, high expectations and they use very effective methods. The work to ensure all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed is excellent. Lessons are well planned and support staff play a very effective role in supporting the learning of their pupils. In return, learning is very good. Pupils work very hard, are capable of very good levels of independent and collaborative work and increase their science knowledge, skills and understanding very effectively.
75. Science is very well led and managed by the two subject coordinators. They have very good knowledge of the strengths and areas for development in the subject and are very influential in making improvements. They have worked effectively to develop a good system of assessment for the subject and are ready for the task of increasing opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own learning more frequently.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Achievement is good through the school.
- Teaching and learning quality is good.
- The subject is very well led.
- The cross-curricular use of information and communication technology is satisfactory and developing still more as new interactive whiteboards support both teaching and learning.

Commentary

76. Provision for information and communication technology has improved well since the previous inspection and is firmly rooted in a good curriculum, some very good use of the wide range of enhanced technology resources and good expectations of staff.
77. Standards are above average in all classes. In the infants, pupils are confident users of computers, they have good skills in manipulating the mouse and the keyboard and in using simple features of professional software such as word processing and graphics packages. Year 2 pupils have produced attractively presented Christmas cards with some original design features, for example. Older pupils gain good insights into more advanced features of such packages. In Year 5 pupils worked effectively to identify and eliminate errors in a database of personal statistics by using the software to produce scatter graphs that showed the overall trend and also entries that diverged widely from these.
78. Teaching is generally good with some very good features. Staff knowledge is good and expectations are high. The work provides ample challenge, especially for the higher attainers and support staff work in good partnership with teachers to ensure that pupils with special educational needs do as well as the other pupils. Some very good use of resources is evident, both in lessons and pupils' past work. Learning is a productive and enjoyable

experience. The pupils work in good partnership with each other. Relationships are very good and pupils have good skills in collaborative and independent working. They are keen to learn and work hard in lessons.

79. The subject coordinator is keen and hard working. He has a well-judged action plan for the development of information and communication technology that includes the improvement of the currently satisfactory procedures for assessment. He leads the subject very well, making very good use of the technology himself, thereby serving as a very good role model. There is a very clear direction for the development of information and communication technology in school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

80. There is very good awareness amongst all staff of the potential for the use of information and communication technology to enhance learning across the curriculum. This is translated into some very good opportunities to develop skills and knowledge, such as the link between art and design, religious education and information and communication technology through the *What a spectacle* topic. Similarly, the link between music and information and communication technology is strong. In one lesson, Year 3 pupils used *Music Explorer* software to write a simple melody and then add a rhythmical accompaniment. The pupils developed good understanding of musical notation and how it represents a sound pattern, in this lesson.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6.
- Achievement is good through the school.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- The new locally agreed syllabus has yet to be fully assimilated into the curriculum and assessment for learning is reliant on individual teachers rather than a whole school approach.

Commentary

81. Standards in religious education are average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6. The increasing levels of knowledge and skills are due to good provision in all classes. Religious education has improved well since the previous inspection and has good potential to maintain this advancement in the future.
82. Pupils achieve well. The subject is well planned to enable pupils to learn as much *from* religion as they learn *about* religion. Junior pupils develop good skills of comparison of Buddhism and Christianity, for example. They identify with interest, where things are similar and where they are different. They know that people have feelings, beliefs and sensitivities that others can respect, support and share. The curriculum is well versed in the locally agreed syllabus and is well linked to themes in assembly and other subjects, for example the work on headdresses that brought together English, geography, history and religious education as pupils related the headdress to different religious groups. There are good opportunities for pupils to improve their basic literacy skills in religious education work, with ample chances to write at length about the different themes.

83. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have secure expertise and commitment to the subject. They also plan effectively, have good expectations and provide a good variety of activities. Pupils give good effort, complete ample amounts of work and are interested and often enthusiastic in their learning. They build knowledge, skills and understanding well.
84. Religious education is well led and managed. The subject coordinator is fairly new to the post but is committed, enthusiastic and hard working. She has good ideas for the future development of the subject and has made a good start to the work to assimilate the new locally agreed syllabus into the curriculum. This is the key priority for the next few months and is being tackled with confidence and success. Assessment for learning is another aspect that requires improvement.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good** throughout the school

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have risen since the previous inspection and are now above average at the end of Year 2 and 6.
- Teaching is of a consistently good standard and enables pupils to achieve well from a low starting point.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- The use of Information and communication technology is in the early stages of development.
- Assessment and target setting are not yet formally established.
- Good use is made of educational visits to support learning.

Commentary

85. Standards are above average at the end of the infants and juniors. Pupils achieve well because teachers present geography in a lively and interesting way. All ages and capabilities gain a secure breadth of knowledge because they study topics in depth. Skills are developed very systematically. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning to speak English, make as much progress as their classmates because they receive a good level of support.
86. Well-structured topics provide good balanced coverage of the curriculum. Good attention is paid to the development of research and enquiry skills. Teachers extend literacy skills very effectively through, for example, discussion on environmental issues and high quality writing. Numeracy skills are also much in evidence through, for example, line graphs to support work on temperature. Topics are often linked to other subjects. Pupils in Year 2 develop geography skills well through their work on 'Flight'. Pupils in Year 3 link map-work skills to their topic about the Romans. However, information and communication technology is not yet a strong feature of provision and assessment does not form an integral part of the subject.
87. By the end of the infants, pupils have a very secure knowledge of the local area. They produce good quality plans of the school and diagrams of their own homes. Their topic work on Blurton is well researched and some higher attaining pupils show considerable maturity when comparing and contrasting Blurton with Edinburgh.
88. Pupils sustain an enjoyment of the subject throughout the junior school. Pupils in Year 3 displayed high levels of concentration when they were set the challenging task of choosing amenities for the local area. Much animated discussion ensued as pupils considered various options.

89. By Year 6, pupils develop a very mature approach and many acquire skills at an advanced level. Map-work skills are confident and research is an integral part of learning. Pupils are motivated by practical activities, use precise geographical vocabulary and are well-informed about topics. Educational visits to places such as Barlaston Downs further enhance provision.
90. Although no lessons were observed in the infants, examples of previous work indicate that the overall quality of teaching is good. In the juniors, the quality of teaching is consistently good, with one lesson judged very good. In this lesson, the teacher and support assistant formed a very effective partnership. Work on studying physical features on a map of Europe captured the interest of pupils of different capabilities. High attaining pupils rose to the challenge as they searched for answers. The atmosphere was busy and productive, with not a moment wasted. Pupils were aided by good quality resources and everyone made very good gains in their knowledge.
91. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has a clear sense of direction and offers good support and guidance to colleagues. Documentation is of good quality and priorities for future development are accurate. The school is well placed to succeed in making improvements to geography in the future.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weakness

- Standards in history are above average throughout the school, and achievement of all groups of pupils is good.
- Teaching and learning are good, pupils enjoy their historical studies.
- There is no on-going record of individual achievement yet in place.
- History in the school is well linked to other areas of the curriculum, especially literacy and art.
- The leadership and management of history are good.

Commentary

92. Consistently good teaching throughout the school enables pupils to reach higher than average standards by the end of Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection. All pupils regardless of their background, gender or ability make good progress and achieve well. Pupils in all years receive high quality opportunities to develop their historical knowledge and research and enquiry skills, which they seize enthusiastically.
93. This success is due to a combination of two factors. Firstly, teaching is never less than good and sometimes of very good quality. Teachers have good subject knowledge, are enthusiastic about history, and transmit this to pupils who are thirsting to extend their knowledge. Teachers present the subject well, relate it often to areas of pupil interest, as for instance in a study of the Stoke potteries, and provide good resources and visits to stimulate the imagination of their pupils. Extremely pertinent questioning gives pupils many opportunities to improve their speaking skills, and the emphasis on good writing habits being established in English is strongly pursued in pupils' writing in history. Consequently, pupils in Year 2 talk excitedly about famous people they have studied like the Wright Brothers, Stanley Matthews and Jack Ashley whilst wearing the types of clothes these people would have worn. History made real! In discussion with pupils in Year 5, one girl showed an astonishing knowledge of the Tudors. She had clearly been fired by her visit to a nearby Tudor House, which had led her to extensive research into, particularly, the wives of Henry VIII. Pupils' knowledge and enthusiasm is also reflected through the many examples of good extended

writing about the Egyptians, the Victorians and the Ancient Greeks. Standards of presentation are exemplary, a great credit to the teaching.

94. Secondly, the leadership and management of history are good. The co-ordinator shows initiative, and her passion for the subject is shared by a good number of other teachers. She has developed a rich resource bank for the school, especially in costume, much of which she has provided herself. The effect of this is that throughout the school there are very effective and colourful displays of pupils' work (Egyptian hieroglyphics and necklaces and charcoal drawings of The Potteries), in addition to stimulating presentations of artefacts such as Victorian toys. The next step for history is to establish an on-going record of individual achievement that can add value to the school's good assessment systems. The importance and fascination of history is there for all to see at Sutherland Primary School.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weakness

- Standards in art and design are average and the range of art work meets National Curriculum requirements but is very two dimensional.
- Worthwhile cross-curricular links enable pupils to enrich their artistic, creative and cultural awareness.
- Management of art and design is satisfactory although more opportunities need to be given for the subject leader to monitor the impact of teaching and learning on standards achieved by pupils.

Commentary

95. From teachers' planning, pupils' portfolios and displays of work it is evident that work in art and design meets National Curriculum requirements. Standards are average in infants and juniors, which is a positive improvement on the position at the last inspection when infants' standards were unsatisfactory. Pupils' skills increase steadily as they get older and their achievement is satisfactory. Portraiture work demonstrates this clearly with Year 1 pupils mixing colours carefully to create skin tones for the face of Florence Nightingale. In Year 2, pupils make good observational drawings, as they work in the style of Van Gogh, painting his mother and doctor. Year 3 paint pictures of Boudicca that show originality and flair whilst Year 4 pupils are developing an understanding of the historical importance of portraits as they create paintings of Tudor life. Year 6 pupils combine digitally produced images with drawing skills to produce very effective self-representations.
96. The three-dimensional work undertaken is rather limited but that planned in Year 5 and 6 has considerable impact. Following a visit to Gladstone Pottery Museum, Year 5 pupils make decorative pottery flowers led by a former pottery worker and friend of the school, they learn much about their own cultural heritage while extending their skills. One lesson observed in Year 6 involved pupils co-operatively constructing headdresses developed from their own ideas and generated by their study of the importance of light as a symbol in a range of major religions. Teaching is satisfactory overall with teachers making effective use of their talented classroom assistants to further extend pupils' skills and understanding.
97. The newly appointed co-ordinator is completing a review of the scheme of work currently in place and attention is to be given to artist in residence programmes to bring added expertise and wider creative partnerships and to ensure that any potentially gifted pupil artists in school are well provided for.

Design and technology

Provision in design technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good improvement in planning and resources is beginning to have a positive effect on the current average standards across the school.
- Pupils work well in groups and this improves their self-confidence and self-esteem and they take pride in their work.
- Pupils are not yet carrying out regular assessment or evaluations of their work and this is a shortcoming.
- Management of design and technology is satisfactory although too few opportunities are available for the subject leader to monitor directly the impact of teaching and learning on standards in order to plan for improvement.

Commentary

98. Since the previous inspection, the school has made good overall progress in improving design and technology, as standards are now average throughout the school and before they were below average. A suitable range of learning experiences is provided that include pupils working with textiles, food and mechanics. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in design and technology.
99. Teaching and learning are both satisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge has been improved through on-going staff development and training and is supported by clear planning and appropriate resources. The lessons observed provided good opportunities for pupils to think and assess logically in the design and plan process. Clear explanations and searching questions ensure pupils' understand the need for safety when using tools.
100. Good organisation in a Year 5 lesson resulted in a good pace to learning as pupils designed biscuits for a special occasion. Pupils exhibited good concentration, enabling them to complete tasks in the required time, to a good standard and taking considerable pride in their work. Pupils with special educational needs were well supported and they achieved as well as other pupils. Opportunities for pupils' self-evaluation are good in Years 5 and 6 but are not sufficiently well developed across the school.
101. The subject coordinator has only recently taken responsibility for design and technology. He is building a useful portfolio of photographic evidence to show the levels of work being achieved and to support evaluation of strengths and weaknesses in the subject. The use of information and communication technology to support learning within the subject is currently under-utilised.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of the infants and juniors and have improved since the time of the previous inspection.
- The decision to develop high quality music specialist teaching throughout the school has been a wise move.
- Performances and concerts of a very high standard enhance provision and make a major contribution to pupils' personal, social and cultural development.
- Assessment procedures are good.

- Boys and girls remain equally interested and involved in musical activities until they leave.
- Music is very well led and managed.
- The school misses the opportunity to share best practice and develop the expertise of non-specialist class teachers.

Commentary

102. When the school was last inspected, pupils throughout the school made good progress and achieved satisfactory standards. Music was an important part of school life and there was some specialist music teaching.
103. Provision for music has gone from strength to strength. Currently pupils of all ages and capabilities achieve well and reach above average standards. Music makes a very strong positive contribution towards pupils' personal social and cultural development. It is an exciting subject. Parents and pupils are justifiably proud of provision. Some pupils, who learn woodwind, brass and string instruments achieve very well and reach higher standards. Provision does not focus solely on pupils with musical ability. Performances and concerts involve as many pupils as possible. Music assemblies are very important social occasions, when everyone enjoys singing together and listening to a wide range of music. During the week of the inspection, older pupils celebrated their 'Merit Assembly' through dance and song. To a packed hall of parents and pupils, two boys sang a truly memorable rendition of 'Something Beautiful'. Other pupils performed dance and drama with great style and maturity. The whole occasion was one of the highest quality and transmitted a very powerful sense of community.
104. There are numerous examples of literacy and numeracy skills being developed through music. School concerts and productions, such as 'The Wizard of Oz' develop speaking and listening skills very effectively. The use of information and communication technology is beginning to develop. Pupils in Year 4 made very effective use of the 'Music Explorer' program during one lesson. However, the school recognises the need to develop computer skills through music in a more structured way. Visits and visitors are a strong feature of provision. Pupils participate in a wide range of activities, such as the Stoke Recorder Festival and a drumming workshop.
105. Evidence taken from examples of previous work indicates that younger pupils have a very secure basic musical knowledge and understanding. No infant lessons were observed, so it is not possible to make a judgement on the overall quality of teaching. The quality of specialist teaching in the juniors is very good. Occasionally, teaching is excellent and pupils of all abilities make remarkable progress. In an excellent Year 6 lesson, pupils were preparing a performance of 'Silver and Gold' for a future merit assembly. Pupils had to add a 'rap' and introduce instruments to their compositions. Levels of co-operation were very high as the whole room erupted into animated activity. All completed the task and gained much from each other's success. This was an ambitious lesson that fully matched the needs of all abilities.
106. The music co-ordinator is a very accomplished practitioner who leads by example. She has developed an effective range of assessment procedures that give good insight into the level of understanding of individual pupils. Music permeates the work of the school and motivates all pupils, and boys in particular, to succeed. Many pupils at Sutherland develop a love of music that will remain with them for the rest of their lives.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils reach standards which are average, and their achievement is satisfactory.
- Teaching is often good, under sometimes difficult conditions.
- Assessment is based on informal systems and there is currently no set criteria for evaluating any specific sporting talents amongst pupils.
- Despite creative organisation and planning, the gym is too small for the number of pupils who have to use it and this slows down the pace of learning in class lessons and has a negative impact on standards.
- Provision of extra curricular sports clubs is very good and the *Active Mark* from Sport England accreditation is wholly justified.
- Pupils compete very successfully against other schools in a number of sports.
- Leadership and management of physical education are good.
- Teaching and learning is satisfactory and occasionally good.

Commentary

107. Standards are average in physical education at the end of Years 2 and 6, which is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Achievement is satisfactory. A realistic analysis of evidence, though, indicates that standards, achievement and progress would be considerably better if the main resource for indoor activity in physical education, the gym, was bigger. There are a number of classes of well in excess of 30 pupils in the school, which results in a very crowded gym on occasion. As some large apparatus has to be stored there, this also places constraint on the area available for pupils to work in. Consequently some lessons, such as the teaching of hockey skills, when the weather outside is inclement, or the use of large apparatus, becomes very limited because of safety factors. This is a pity, because the inspection offered very clear evidence of good quality teaching throughout the school, allied to tremendous enthusiasm from the pupils. For many of them in the area, this is their main opportunity to develop their physical education and sporting skills.
108. Teachers, even when in these trying conditions, are knowledgeable and well organised, are extremely good role models in the activities, and use time well. Pupils respond accordingly, enjoy their work, and do their best to improve their games and gymnastic skills. The school tries to offer as many opportunities as possible for further pupil development. During the inspection an ex Olympic gymnast took several classes through aerobic and simple gymnastic routines. This was a hugely inspiring and exciting occasion for pupils, participating teachers and observers alike. The whole activity was dynamic, with learning at a high level, by the end leaving pupils exhausted but exhilarated.
109. Pupils, mainly in Year 1 and Year 3, have opportunities to learn to swim. By the time pupils leave the school at eleven a substantial majority are able to swim 25 metres. Boys and girls participate in many sporting activities competing with other schools, and have over several years won awards and cups in soccer, cross country, netball and table tennis. This success is linked to the very good provision at extra curricular games clubs, a number of which were observed during the inspection. These are organised mainly by several very enthusiastic teachers, in particular the subject co-ordinator. Although only recently appointed, she is already proving to be a most effective leader and manager. She is brimming with ideas for future development of physical education in the school, which is encouraged by the very self evident support and teamwork throughout the school. Assessment is one aspect ripe for development as is the need to establish a criteria for evaluating whether those pupils with sporting talents are consistently well provided for. The co-ordinator's vision for the future finds the school well placed to take the achievement of pupils to a higher level if physical resources can be improved.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a happy and very caring community in which all pupils are given equal status and show consideration, tolerance and respect for one another.
- The many and varied opportunities for boys and girls to play team games and take on roles of responsibility are key features in promoting high self esteem and pupils' very positive attitudes to school.
- Pupils are making gains in their knowledge about how to keep safe and healthy because of the school's good approaches and they grow as responsible future citizens. The school is working towards the accreditation for *Healthy Schools* status.

Commentary

110. Personal, social, citizenship and health education (PSCHE) is very well provided for, the excellent role models provided by staff and governors support positively the excellent relationships so evident in school. Opportunities to play in one of the many sports teams, become a house captain or a member of the School Council assist the pupils in developing good social and leadership skills and supports positively the *Can Do* culture so evident in the school's daily life. A PSCHE policy and scheme of work is in the process of being revised and this aspect of education has high status in the school improvement plan for the coming year.
111. Specific PSCHE lessons often focus upon a theme that supports pupils' personal, including moral, and social development, for example, challenging stereotypes, avoiding risks and coping with peer pressure. Circle times take place in some classes, and were observed to be used effectively for Year 2 children to consider what it means to be *good*. Pupils' cultural development is very successfully developed through a variety of experiences, for example the school has links with another school a few miles away where most pupils are from Muslim backgrounds. The Year 4 pupils from both schools have met to get to know one another and a programme is in place to enable shared celebrations. During the inspection lots of good work was seen taking place to raise the pupils' awareness about China and the Chinese New Year celebrations, especially pertinent as some pupils in school are from Chinese backgrounds.
112. The school pays good attention to health awareness aspects. Younger pupils benefit from fruit provided daily and are learning about the need for a good diet to keep them healthy and mentally alert. They learn about keeping safe in the playground and when out in the community, for example the need for road safety. Older pupils devise school and class rules and Year 5 act as playground leaders. Good attention is paid to sex and drugs education and a range of visitors, such as the nurse, visit to share their expertise and offer guidance. All of these experiences support positively the very good education enjoyed by the pupils at Sutherland Primary School.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS***Inspection judgement******Grade***

The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	2

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

The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3);satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7). When judging standards- 1 is very high, 2 - well above average; 3 – above average; 4 – average; 5 – below average; 6 – well below average; 7-very low.