

INSPECTION REPORT

ST GEORGE'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newcastle-upon-Tyne

LEA area: Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Unique reference number: 108499

Headteacher: Mrs C McCullough

Lead inspector: Mr A Margerison

Dates of inspection: 6 – 8 June 2005

Inspection number: 267782

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	96
School address:	Bell's Close Newcastle-upon-Tyne Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	NE15 6XX
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms Ni Charraighe

Date of previous inspection: 16 November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St George's RC Primary School is a Voluntary Aided school situated in an urban area on the northern bank of the River Tyne in the outer west of the city of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The school is old and shares its site with the Church of St George and the parish club which is situated in the basement of the school. The area around the school is composed of modern private and local authority housing. The area has suffered in recent years from significant levels of unemployment so that recent census data shows that, although pupils' backgrounds vary, overall their socio-economic circumstances are below average. Since the last inspection, local population trends have changed so that the school roll is gradually falling. In addition, the proportion of pupils who join and leave the school during the school year is above average. As a result, the school is smaller than most primary schools and class sizes vary significantly from year to year from a minimum of eight pupils in Year 4 to eighteen in Year 6. There are currently 96 pupils on roll aged between four and 11 years. Since the last inspection, the staffing has almost completely changed, mainly due to retirements. At the time of the inspection, one member of staff was on extended leave for a year with a newly qualified teacher covering her class. When children start school, although their attainment varies, baseline assessment shows that attainment is below that expected, particularly in their language and mathematical skills in which few children are working at levels above those expected for their age. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, mainly for moderate learning difficulties, is above average. Currently, there are two pupils with statements of special educational needs. The majority of pupils are of White-British origin, but the school has a few pupils from Asian backgrounds with 5 pupils at an early stage of learning English. The school was awarded the School Achievement Award in 2000 and

involved in several local and national initiatives including the Primary Leadership Initiative and the Sports Co-ordinator Development programme.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21666	Mr A Margerison	Lead inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs English as an additional language
32678	Mrs K Dodd	Lay inspector	
22859	Mrs A Hivey	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Physical education
34065	Mrs J Winyard	Team inspector	Science Music Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St George's RC Primary School is a fairly effective school with a number of good features providing sound value for money. Due to good leadership by the headteacher, the school has continued to improve despite falling rolls, significant changes in staffing and financial constraints. Standards are beginning to improve as the initiatives the headteacher has put into place begin to have a positive effect.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Provision in Reception is good so children achieve well.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well due to teachers' emphasis on developing basic literacy and numeracy skills and very good support from classroom assistants.
- Procedures to establish the school's strengths and areas for development are good.
- Assessment information is not used consistently to ensure that activities in lessons always match the learning needs of pupils of different abilities in English, mathematics and science.
- Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good.
- Subject leaders do not have enough opportunities to work with other teachers to evaluate pupils' progress towards the targets set for them.
- Activities in all subjects are not used effectively enough to develop pupils' writing, information and communication technology (ICT) and numeracy skills.
- The most recent governors' annual report to parents does not fully meet requirements.

Since the last inspection, the school has developed satisfactorily. The curriculum has developed well, particularly in Reception where it is now good, and provides appropriate experiences for children to steadily develop their knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning and subjects. Standards in ICT are now in line with those expected in Year 2 where they were below. The school has revised its policy for marking of pupils' work, but this is not consistently applied in all classes.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well due to good support in lessons. Children achieve well in Reception so that standards are likely to be in line with those expected by the end of the year in all the areas of learning except in their personal, social and emotional development in which standards are likely to be above those expected.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E	E	E	E
mathematics	E	B	D	C
science	E	D	D	C

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

The trend in the school's results in national tests in Years 2 and 6 has been below the national pattern in recent years and the 2004 results (shown for pupils in Year 6 in the table above) reflected this. For pupils in Year 2, they were well below average when compared to all schools in reading, writing and mathematics and well below average in reading and writing when compared to similar schools. In mathematics, they were below average. Inspection evidence shows that current pupils in Year 2 are achieving satisfactorily in all subjects, although standards overall are below those expected. However, they are beginning to improve. Standards and achievement in writing, speaking and listening, science and ICT are satisfactory. In reading and mathematics, although most pupils reach standards close to those expected, overall, they are below average due to the low proportion of pupils working at the higher than expected levels. In Year 6, half of the current class have identified special educational needs and, although these pupils are achieving well, a significant proportion will not reach the expected levels, particularly in English and mathematics, by the end of the year. The majority of pupils develop secure basic skills and knowledge of the subjects they study, but because they are not consistently provided with enough opportunities to use these skills in all lessons, few pupils are on track to reach the higher than expected levels in English, mathematics and science. As a result of these two factors, standards overall are below average in these subjects. In ICT, achievement is satisfactory and standards are in line with those expected. **Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral and social development, are good.** Their cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance is above average and pupils' punctuality to school is good. Relationships between pupils are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In Reception, teaching and learning is good because teachers have very good subject knowledge and use it very effectively to plan a good range of activities that develop children's basic skills and knowledge in all the areas of learning. In Years 1 to 6, teaching is satisfactory, but there are consistent strengths in all classes. Teachers use questions and ICT resources well to involve pupils in lessons and most teachers share the aims of each lesson with pupils so they know what they will be learning about. As a result, the brisk, opening class discussions that focus on developing pupils' basic skills and knowledge and the closing parts in which pupils consider what they have learnt are most effective. Support staff are used very effectively to work with pupils with special educational needs so they are fully involved in lessons and achieve well. The school has established good procedures to assess and track the progress pupils are making, but the use of this information is inconsistent, so that follow-up activities are not always varied enough to provide pupils of all abilities with enough opportunities to extend their understanding. In addition, teachers do not plan enough activities in other subjects for pupils to use their writing, ICT and numeracy skills. Procedures for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. Procedures to support and guide pupils are good. The school has established good links with parents based on good procedures to deal with any concerns they may have.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, including the overall contribution of governors to the development of the school are satisfactory. Management is good. The headteacher leads the school well with a clear view for the future based on good procedures to monitor the work of the school. Good financial management has ensured that the school has been able to implement its priorities despite falling rolls and a gradually decreasing budget. Subject leaders' action

plans accurately reflect the school's priorities, but they do not have enough opportunities to work with other teachers to review the progress pupils are making in their subject. Governors are very committed and have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and the challenges it faces in the future. With the exception of the annual report to parents, they ensure that the school meets its statutory duties well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The good links the school has developed with parents are reflected in parents' positive views of the school. Pupils have positive views of their school. The very good relationships between them and adults, means that they are confident that if they have any problems they will be listened to.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Use assessment information to ensure that activities in English, mathematics and science lessons consistently extend the learning of pupils of all abilities.
- Extend the role of subject leaders in working with other staff to evaluate pupils' progress towards the targets set for them.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use their writing, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that the governors' annual report to parents contains all the required information.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The overall achievement of pupils is satisfactory as they move through the school. Children achieve well in Reception to reach standards in line with those expected. Thereafter, pupils achieve satisfactorily, although the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs results in standards being below average in Years 2 and 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's personal, social and emotional development is above that which is typical for their age by the end of Reception.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Pupils develop good basic skills of literacy and numeracy.
- Standards and achievement in ICT in Year 2 have improved since the last inspection.
- Pupils' ability to apply their knowledge and skills in English, mathematics, science and ICT is not well developed.

Commentary

1. Provision in the Foundation Stage has improved very well since the last inspection when there were weaknesses in the curriculum so that children did not reach the expected standards in their communication, language, literacy and mathematical skills. Provision and teaching are now good in Reception and are reflected in children's good achievement. When children start school, although most attend nursery, few have extensive experience of the world in which they live and baseline assessment data shows that very few children are working at levels above those expected. Consequently, the level of their skills is below that which is typical for their age in most of the areas of learning. However, due to the good curriculum and broad range of experiences provided for them, during their time in Reception children achieve well in all of the areas of learning. As a result, in their language, literacy and mathematical skills, their knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative and physical development most children are on course to reach the expected levels for their age. In their personal, social and emotional development, most children start school with skills close to those expected. However, their personal skills develop well so that most children are likely to reach the expected levels in this area of learning by the end of the year with a good proportion on course to exceed them. This provides the foundation for the good attitudes and behaviour seen throughout the school.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.0 (16.4)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	12.8 (14.8)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.8 (17.6)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 18 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The school's results for pupils in Year 2 have been falling against the national trend in recent years. However, the school has to contend with year groups that vary considerably in size and ability from year to year. For example, in 2003 when the school's results were well above average in reading and very high in mathematics, there were only eight pupils in the group

and very few pupils had special educational needs. In 2004, the results were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared to all schools and below average in reading and writing when compared to similar schools. In mathematics, they were below average. However, in this group, over a quarter of these pupils had special educational needs, which had a negative effect on the overall results. These pupils achieved well, but few of them reached the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics. In addition, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher than expected levels was well below average.

3. Inspection evidence shows that current pupils in Year 2 are achieving satisfactorily. This year's group is smaller than last year and includes more than a third of pupils with special educational needs, mainly for literacy-based problems. However, these pupils with special educational needs achieve well due to the high quality support they get from teaching assistants. As a result, although the majority of pupils develop secure basic reading and number skills, standards overall in reading and mathematics are below average. However, early indications from this year's tests show that standards in writing are average. In other areas, pupils achieve well in their speaking and listening skills to reach the expected levels. Pupils are attentive in lessons, respond well to each other and teachers' questions, which helps teachers to begin most lessons with brisk and stimulating discussions. In science, standards and achievement are satisfactory because pupils' special educational needs have less effect on the pace of their learning, and most pupils are working at the levels expected for their age. Standards in ICT have improved well since the last inspection when they were judged to be below those expected due to pupils making insufficient progress. The school has invested heavily in new resources and teachers' skills are much better than before so that standards are now in line with those expected and achievement is satisfactory.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.7 (23.7)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.3 (28.1)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.0 (27.5)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 18 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. The trend in the school's results for pupils in Year 6 have also been below the national pattern in recent years, This has particularly been the case in English, in which the results have stubbornly remained well below average when compared to all schools and similar schools (except in 2002), despite the initiatives the school has put into place to raise standards. In 2004, the results were average in mathematics and science when compared to similar schools although below the national average for all schools. In 2004, this was primarily due to the below average proportion of pupils reaching the higher than expected levels and the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
5. This pattern is set to continue this year because half the pupils have identified special educational needs. However, inspection evidence shows that overall, these particular pupils have achieved well in Years 3 to 6, although a significant proportion are unlikely to reach the expected levels by the end of the year. As a result, standards in English, mathematics and science are below average. Those pupils who do not have special educational needs have achieved satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6 and virtually all of them

are on track to reach the expected levels for their age. The few pupils of Asian backgrounds, whose first language is not English, achieve at a similar rate to their classmates. None of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English so are completely included in lessons. School's assessment data shows that this year, more able pupils in Year 6 have made good progress in English and mathematics. However, because teachers do not always use assessment information well

enough when planning activities in lessons or provide enough opportunities for pupils to use and apply their basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects, not many are likely to reach the higher than expected levels by the end of the year. There is no evidence that currently, boys and girls are achieving at different rates.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal qualities are good. Pupils' attendance is above average and their punctuality to school is good. They have positive attitudes to school and behave well. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Their cultural development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between pupils are very good.
- The school has very good procedures to deal with any incidents of discord between pupils.
- Pupils' develop a good respect for the opinions and feelings of others.
- Pupils' understanding of how faith or beliefs affect the daily lives of other cultures is under-developed.
- The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct so they develop a clear understanding of what is right and wrong.

Commentary

6. Pupils say that they enjoy being at school and they take a keen interest in what is provided for them, taking on any responsibilities allocated to them willingly. Parents agree with their children in this. As a result, pupils are punctual to school, and attendance, as shown in the table below, is above the national average.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.6	School data	0.3
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

7. Children in Reception achieve well in their personal development, develop good attitudes to school, and quickly learn what is expected of them. This creates the foundation for the good attitudes and behaviour seen throughout the school. In lessons, pupils are keen to get involved in discussions and take part in most activities enthusiastically. They are particularly motivated by practical activities in which they are active participants. For example, in a lesson in Year 4, pupils had to imagine they were exploring a dark, empty house and took it in turns to sit in the 'hot seat'. Other pupils asked them questions about how they felt and what they could see. The quality of the questions was good and those pupils who had the chance to talk about their adventure got really involved and excited. This was one of the few occasions during the inspection when pupils were given this type of opportunity to extend their language and show how imaginative they can be. Pupils' work and other lessons show that, overall, they are not given enough similar opportunities to think about and imagine how, for example, people from the past might have felt if they were involved in momentous events in history. Pupils' writing in Year 6 reflects this, with most

examples being essentially descriptive with few examples of deeply emotive or perceptive work. In assemblies, pupils think about the problems facing other people around the world. For example, at the time of the inspection, the school was having a major focus on the national campaign on 'Making Poverty History' and in many lessons pupils are asked to reflect on whether they think they have achieved the objectives set for them by the teacher at the start. As a result, pupils develop a good level of self-knowledge and spiritual awareness.

8. The school's provision to develop pupils' personal skills has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. Underpinning this aspect of its work is the Catholic ethos of the school, founded on respect for others. The school also places a very strong emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of what is right and wrong and works hard to develop pupils' respect for each other's feelings and opinions through discussions. This is reflected in the very good relationships seen between pupils throughout the school. In lessons, pupils listen to each other and accept the comments from each other as being constructive and useful. Outside, pupils of all ages play together well. In addition, parents and pupils say that very few pupils suffer from bullying or harassment. However, if such incidents do occur, the school sorts out the problem very quickly and effectively. These good moral values are also reflected in the good standards of behaviour seen around the school. The school has a few pupils who find behaving well all of the time difficult, but teachers deal with these pupils well. Pupils' positive response to the teachers shows that although they have failed to meet the high standards set for them, they have a clear understanding of what is appropriate, so the effect on other pupils' learning is minimal. Overall, pupils' good moral and social development is reflected in the lack of exclusions in recent years and the positive ethos that is apparent throughout the school.
9. Through assemblies, art, history and music, pupils develop an appreciation of different cultural traditions and faiths. The school also involves the children and parents from the few Asian families well to help pupils learn about their traditions and culture. However, the school does not have any links with schools with a more diverse cultural mix to find out from first hand how faith affects how people live their lives. As a result, opportunities to learn about the daily lives of the diverse cultures that are part of modern British society tend to be linked to specific subjects or limited to 'theme days' and are not consistently threaded throughout the work of the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. Pupils are taught well in Reception. Procedures to support and guide pupils are good and they are well cared for. The school has established good links with parents.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in Reception is good.
- Procedures to track the progress pupils are making towards the targets set for them are good.
- Teaching assistants are used very well and make a very good contribution to pupils' learning.
- Not enough use is made of assessment information in Years 1 to 6 to ensure that activities in lessons consistently extend the learning of all pupils.
- Teachers use ICT and questions well in the opening parts of lessons.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work has improved since the last inspection, but is still inconsistent across classes.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5	10	9	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

10. Although teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, the teaching seen was better than at the last inspection. As can be seen from the table above, a third of teaching was good or better and a fifth of lessons were very good. The strongest and most consistent teaching was in Reception, where all teaching was at least good. The improvement in teaching reflects the emphasis the headteacher and the staff have placed in recent months whilst working with local authority consultants, to establish a consistent whole school approach to the structure of lessons. In the majority of classes throughout the school, teachers share the aims of the lesson with pupils so they are clear about what they will be learning. In the best lessons, teachers return to these aims at regular intervals to check pupils are following the plan and review the success of the lesson with pupils at the end. Another consistent strength is teachers' effective use of ICT as a teaching tool. Each classroom has an interactive white board and projector and these are used well to involve pupils in the lessons. Pupils are really excited by these techniques and are keen to write on the board and move objects around. As a result, most lessons begin with a brisk, well-focused and interesting class discussion. The purposeful way in which teachers introduce lessons and stimulate pupils' interest in the topic means that the opening parts of lessons are the most successful in promoting learning. In the majority of satisfactory lessons, this pattern was not followed as rigorously so the lessons did not have the same degree of structure and often lacked clarity and direction. As a result, pupils' learning was not as effective.
11. Teaching and learning in Reception is consistently good because teachers use the information they have collated about children's skills well to provide a broad range of exciting and stimulating activities. They achieve a good balance between those activities directed by an adult and those that the children choose for themselves. As a result, children achieve well in all the areas of learning. Classroom assistants are very important members of the team. Teachers make the best use of their skills so at all points of the day they have a clear role and are given tasks well suited to their skills. They fulfil their roles very well and demonstrate very well developed skills in working with and observing the children. They play an important part in evaluating children's progress by taking notes on specific things that children show they have learnt. They are also involved in planning lessons and reviewing what went well and how lessons could be amended to make that activity more successful.
12. Although the opening discussions to lessons are generally effective, lessons and pupils' work shows that the follow-up activities do not consistently provide a wide enough range of activities to build on the pupils' basic understanding that they acquire at the start. Lessons also often fail to provide enough scope for pupils of all abilities to extend their learning. There are too many examples in pupils' books of where they have been set very similar tasks to do, with the only variation relating to the degree of difficulty of, for example, the size of the numbers they have to work with. There are limited examples where teachers have given pupils who have secure basic skills the challenge of using these skills to solve problems in mathematics or to set up and plan their own investigations in science. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from teachers' emphasis on reinforcing key ideas and practising essential skills. Pupils are assisted by the very effective support they have from classroom assistants so that overall they achieve well. As a result, most pupils develop good basic skills and knowledge in literacy, numeracy and science, but they do not learn to use these skills sufficiently so that the proportion of those pupils who have the potential to reach the higher than expected levels is below average.

13. The root cause of this narrow range of tasks is that teachers do not always use the comprehensive range of assessment data they have available well enough when they are planning lessons. Targets are set for pupils and their progress is checked termly, but the information is not used well enough to highlight those pupils who are not progressing quickly enough towards their targets and identify what it is they need to learn next. Individual teachers are not helped in this by the limited opportunities they have to work with subject

leaders to discuss the progress of pupils in their groups. In addition, although teachers' marking of pupils' work is better than seen at the last inspection and there is a whole school policy for how marking should be done, teachers' application of the policy is inconsistent. The best marking clearly highlights for pupils what they have done well and what they need to work on. However, there is limited evidence that pupils are given specific tasks that reflect these, often perceptive and accurate evaluations.

The curriculum

The curriculum and the opportunities for enrichment are satisfactory. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum and resources in Reception have improved very well since the last inspection and are good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- There are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to develop their use of all aspects of their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects.
- There is a good number of support staff and they have good skills in working with pupils, particularly those with special educational needs.

Commentary

14. Overall, the school provides pupils with a satisfactory range of activities that meets statutory requirements and develops their skills and understanding in all subjects of the National Curriculum. The school meets its statutory requirement to educate pupils in sex and relationships, drugs and alcohol issues through the personal, social and health education programme. However, subjects tend to be taught discretely and, currently, the opportunities to reinforce and develop pupils' basic skills by linking activities or experiences from different subjects are frequently missed. For example, in science in the upper years of the school, pupils are not expected to record their own investigations and there are few examples in pupils' work in geography and science of pupils writing for themselves or using their mathematical skills to draw graphs to compare climate in different parts of the world. Similarly, although ICT is used well by teachers in lessons as a teaching tool, pupils have very few opportunities to practise their own skills except in ICT lessons. As a result, the proportion of pupils who develop their skills sufficiently to be working at the higher than expected level in writing, mathematics and ICT is below average.
15. In contrast, pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are provided with well-focused support that builds their basic skills well. Pupils' individual plans are detailed and accurately identify what they need to learn next to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers place a strong emphasis on developing these skills in whole class sessions. However, pupils' achievement is very much due to the very good support they receive from classroom assistants in class and in small group work. The number of support staff is above average for the size of the school and they have benefited from extensive training so they have developed good teaching skills. Teachers often plan different activities for these pupils within the context of the lesson in many subjects, not just mathematics and English, and classroom assistants use these very effectively in small groups. As a result, despite finding learning difficult

so that few of these pupils reach the expected levels for their age by Year 6, they make faster progress than many of their classmates and develop secure basic reading, writing and number skills.

16. There are a good range of activities outside of lessons for pupils to develop their interests and skills in sports and physical activities. The subject leader for physical education has worked very hard in the last two years to introduce a wider range of after-school clubs for pupils.

These include, football, netball and gymnastics and, in addition, pupils have the opportunity to go on a residential trip to an outdoor activities centre where they can try canoeing, rock-climbing and other adventurous activities. However, the range of activities in other areas such as art and music are more limited, a fact noted by parents at the meeting held before the inspection. Whilst recognising that the number of activities has improved recently, they would like more in the areas mentioned above.

17. The curriculum for children in Reception is the strongest element of this aspect of the school's work. Since the last inspection, the Foundation Stage teachers, supported by the headteacher, have made very significant progress in improving the provision. The most recent guidance for the Foundation Stage has been introduced well and now underpins all the activities planned for children. Staff provide an extensive range of interesting and challenging activities both indoors and outside and make sure all children are able to participate. The significant difference between the curriculum in Reception and in Years 1 to 6 is the way that teachers link areas of learning together and provide plenty of activities for children to work together, share their ideas and to practise the skills they are taught in whole class and small group teaching situations. As a result, children now achieve well and standards have improved in the key areas of language and literacy, mathematics and personal, social and emotional development.
18. The school has continued to improve the accommodation and resources since the last inspection and they are now at least satisfactory in all subjects. A new library area, foyer and office area has been created and much of the school has been redecorated. These works are on-going and at the time of the inspection the dilapidated canteen building had just been demolished and workmen were busy extending the playground to provide a flat area for physical education lessons. However, the school has been thwarted in its desire to provide an outside area for children in Reception because money promised by the Diocese was withdrawn at the last minute. However, the teachers ensure that as much outside activity is included in daily routines as possible so there is no discernible negative effect on teaching or learning. The school is fundraising with parents' help to provide this as soon as possible, whilst the headteacher is exploring alternative sources of funding. Resources for teaching ICT were judged to be inadequate at the last inspection, which had a negative effect on standards, particularly in Years 1 and 2. The school has spent considerable sums in recent years to provide Interactive whiteboards and projectors for each classroom and making sure that the range of software available for pupils to use is up to date. Resources in this subject are now satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. Support and guidance for pupils are good. The school has satisfactory procedures to involve pupils in the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between pupils and adults are very good.
- Arrangements for children starting in Reception are good.
- The day-to-day care and support of pupils is good.
- The monitoring of health and safety procedures and practices is not consistently rigorous enough.

Commentary

19. The school has good policies in place to ensure the health and safety of pupils and, on a day-to-day basis, the care of pupils is good. Parents are confident that their children are cared for well. The school has a good policy with regard to pupils' use of the Internet and procedures to record accidents, and for child protection and other events are effective. However, the

monitoring of the health and safety procedures is not always rigorous enough to ensure that these policies are consistently reflected in practice. Whilst this does not necessarily put the safety of pupils immediately at risk, it is important in the long-term that these procedures are followed as closely as possible.

20. The school is very proud of its caring, community atmosphere and the ethos of mutual respect and support that exists between pupils and adults. The very good relationships between pupils and adults are at the heart of this. This begins in Reception, where teachers gather good information about children before they start school, involves parents well in the process and establish a very caring and secure atmosphere for children to learn. As a result, parents report that their children settle very quickly into school. As pupils move through the school, this good level of support continues. The school has good procedures to recognise pupils' academic achievements and these are celebrated in assemblies and although the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent, teachers provide a good level of academic support to pupils. Although the school does not have formal procedures to track the personal development of pupils, staff know the pupils well and, as a result, pupils are confident that if they have a problem they will be able to talk to some one about it.
21. The involvement of pupils in the work of the school is in its early stages of development. The school council was elected last year but until recently it had not taken a proactive lead in any initiatives due to staff absence. However, the oldest pupils are currently canvassing pupils' views on the playground facilities because they are participating in a competition to win funds for improvements. They will be sending a questionnaire to other year groups very soon. Pupils play an important part in establishing school codes of conduct and class rules, but their comments are not sought on their annual reports on progress.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established good links with parents. Links with the community and with other schools are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The information provided for parents on their children's progress is good.
- Procedures to deal with any concerns from parents are good.
- The mechanisms for preparing pupils for transferring to secondary school are good.
- The school does not have formal, well developed links with nurseries or pre-schools.

Commentary

22. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to build its relationships with parents. This is based on ensuring that the headteacher and other staff are always on hand at the beginning and end of the day to meet with parents and to discuss any concerns they may have. As a result, the vast majority of parents feel confident that they can approach the school and anything they bring to its attention will be dealt with well. Despite this, a significant proportion of parents do not feel well enough informed about the progress their children are making. However, the inspection team disagrees with parents on this and considers the school provides good quality information for parents about the work of the school through the school prospectus, newsletters and pupils' annual reports. In the main, documentation complies with statutory

requirements, but the most recent governors' annual report to parents omits several important items.

23. The school has also tried hard to involve parents more in their children's learning by providing workshops and information evenings, but the attendance has been limited. However, during the inspection, nine parents took part in a 'SHARE' session run by the local authority's Family Learning Unit in Reception where they had the chance to work and play with their own

children. This is a recent initiative and all those parents who took part said how much they had enjoyed it. However, the school has not established formal procedures to consult parents on the development of the school and mainly relies on informal contact in the playground and through parent governors to gauge parents' opinions.

24. The school makes more use of the local area in lessons than at the last inspection and pupils report that they enjoy the opportunities to go out of school, to places such as Bede's World and the City Learning Centre to use the ICT resources. There are also links with local businesses, one of which has provided a football kit for the school team, and the church. However, parents report that the school does not have high profile in the locality, but they do acknowledge that this is difficult in an area that is primarily residential, with no real community centre. The school has identified this aspect of its work as an area for development and one of the keys to attracting more children into Reception to stabilise pupil numbers.
25. The school has good links with the local Catholic network and effective procedures to ease pupils' transition to the secondary schools to which they transfer at the end of Year 6. Pupils are involved in producing a diary, share experiences with ex-pupils, visit the secondary schools and take part in activities where they can mix with others. In addition, there are good links between the special educational needs co-ordinators and other school staff. As a result, parents say that their children settle quickly into their new schools. However, links with other local primary schools are more limited and there are no formal links with any of the local nurseries or playschools that potential pupils attend before starting school. This represents a missed opportunity to promote the school and to find out exactly what experiences children have had before they start.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is led and managed satisfactorily. The headteacher's leadership of the school is good. Subject leaders fulfil their roles satisfactorily. The good management systems are effective in identifying school improvement priorities. The school deals well with the challenges caused by falling roles and the associated financial constraints. Governance of the school is satisfactory. The most recent governors' annual report to parents does not comply with statutory requirements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school and has been proactive in seeking ways to raise standards.
- The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed, which has resulted in the very good improvement in the provision since the last inspection.
- Effective self-evaluation procedures ensure that strategic planning reflects the school's immediate priorities.
- Subject leaders do not have enough opportunities to work with other staff in order to monitor the progress pupils are making towards the targets set for them.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and manage the school's finances well.
- The most recent governors' annual report to parents does not contain all the required information.

Commentary

26. The headteacher leads the school well with sense of purpose and intent to improve the quality of education and standards. Despite a significant change in staff in recent years, she has succeeded in creating a very supportive ethos of mutual respect among staff that provides a good example of the importance of working together for the pupils. In addition, her quiet style and calmness in dealing with situations and when leading assemblies is effective and

contributes a great deal to the atmosphere within the school. She is also a good role model to staff in the effective way in which she executes her own specific areas of responsibility, such as the management of the special educational needs provision. She has also been proactive in taking any opportunity that presents itself to improve the school. For example, the school is involved in the primary leadership project and she volunteered the school to be part of a local authority intensive support project. This was in response to the changes in staffing and the levels of attainment that were not improving as fast as she wanted. This involved the staff working closely with consultants in literacy and numeracy looking at the quality of teaching. The effectiveness of class discussions are testament to the effectiveness of this work.

27. She is well supported by the rest of the staff in school who all have a clear vision for their subjects. The school is involved in the Primary Leadership Initiative so where staff have been working on their areas for an extended period they have made a major difference to the quality of education. For example, the Foundation Stage is very well led and this has resulted in the very good improvement since the last inspection. However, because many of subject leaders have not held their areas of responsibilities for very long, their work has not yet had enough time to have a significant impact on standards. In addition, in recent years, the main school focus has been on developing aspects of English and mathematics, and other subject leaders have had limited time to monitor their subjects by checking planning or observing lessons. The subject leaders for English and mathematics have good subject knowledge and a good overview of their subjects. However, they do not formally work with each class teacher looking at the progress pupils in each class are making to help teachers identify which pupils may need extra support to maintain the pace of their learning. As a result, class teachers do not make as much use as they might of the comprehensive tracking information in English and mathematics in their daily planning so some pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
28. The membership of the governing body has changed significantly since the last inspection and one of its strengths is that a good proportion of the most proactive members are parents of pupils in the school. Because of this, and the good information they receive from the headteacher about the work of the school, they have a good view of the school's strengths and the challenges it faces in the future, particularly to raise the school's profile in the community and to increase pupil numbers. The chair of governors is very clear on her vision for the school and the important role that governors should play in its development. Governors have had training in their role and are taking an increasingly important role in school in planning developments and challenging the senior management. They fulfil their statutory duties satisfactorily in all aspects except that the most recent annual report to parents did not include several items of required information. However, these omissions were brought to the chair of governors' attention during the inspection and she has undertaken to ensure this will be rectified in the autumn when the next report is due.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	351,820
Total expenditure	370,858
Expenditure per pupil	3,904

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	138,910
Balance carried forward to the next	119,872

29. The school has established good procedures to evaluate its work and to identify areas for improvement based on effective systems to monitor the pupils' progress and to identify aspects of weakness in their learning, particularly in English and mathematics. The school is in the process of extending these systems to ICT and science. The effectiveness of the school's procedures is reflected in the very close correlation between the inspection findings

and the school's own self-evaluation documents. As a result, the school improvement plan, in which each subject has a clear action plan with standards and improving provision as its primary objective, provides a good overview of what the school needs to do next. The action the school has taken in the light of the information has been good and, although it has not yet had time to have an effect on standards and has been hampered by a continually changing financial situation, changes of staff and falling roles, the school has continued to make satisfactory progress overall. In some areas where there has been more continuity in staffing, such as in the Foundation Stage, improvement has been good and even very good.

30. Since the last inspection, the school has had to make difficult decisions in the light in gradually falling roles which has lead to wide variations in class sizes and a fall in income. However, by good financial planning and a keen regard for getting the best value from any spending, governors have managed to sustain staffing levels whilst improving the accommodation and resources available for pupils. The table above shows that the school brought forward reserves that were in excess of the recommended minimum, but these have been allocated in the current financial year to the improvements to the outside environment already underway, increasing ICT resources and safeguarding staffing against falling roles next year. The projected balance at the end of the current financial year is within national guidelines.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

31. Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good** and has improved very well since the last inspection. Two teachers teach the Foundation and Year 1 class as a job share. This works very well because the teachers talk to each other a lot about the children's achievement and progress and make sure they are in the classroom together on one day a week. As a result, of this good communication, joint planning and assessment, all children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start.
32. The majority of children enter the Foundation class having been to local nursery schools. Attainment on entry is below national expectations and the majority of children have limited experiences and immature speaking and listening skills. Children achieve well in all six areas of learning so that by the end of Reception, standards are in line with the expected level in all areas except personal, social and emotional development, where they are above. This is because staff provide an extensive range of interesting and challenging activities both indoors and outside and make sure all are able to participate. Although there is no special outside area which the children can access from the classroom, the teachers ensure that as much outside activity is included as possible. This was a key issue from the last inspection and would have been dealt with, but money promised by the Diocese was withdrawn at the last minute. However, the school has clear plans for an outside area and is fund-raising with parents' help to provide this as soon as possible. The headteacher is exploring alternative sources of funding. All play activities have a clear and planned learning objective, which teachers or support staff carefully explain to the children.
33. Overall, teaching is good and staff work very well as a team to ensure that children, including those who have special educational needs and those who do not speak English at home, settle well to their learning. Staff know each child well through very detailed assessments so they address individual needs in their plans. Leadership is very good because the Foundation Stage curriculum is managed enthusiastically by staff on a day-to-day basis and led with very clear knowledge and direction. The action plan shows very appropriate developmental points and improvements are analysed and reviewed in terms of the impact they have on children's learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn well because teaching is consistently good.
- Children value each other, play, and learn together consistently well because adults are good, caring role models.
- Children are well behaved, relaxed and grow in confidence because relationships at all levels are good.

Commentary

34. Teaching is good and all adults adopt a clear consistent approach in all they do so children feel safe and secure. In this positive environment children achieve well and reach standards above those expected. Staff place great emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional skills. They quickly assess children and plan activities that match their stage of

development. As a result, children are challenged well and enjoy their work. They achieve well because staff are very caring role models and they encourage children to show good levels of concentration in all they do. They teach children in small supported groups, so each experiences a clear sense of achievement. This has a very good impact on all their learning. Children show good levels of interest and pleasure in their activities, for example they laugh when Buddy the puppy is frightened by his reflection in their shared reading activity. Children are proud of their paintings, their models and their writing and eagerly show them to staff. Many children have established friendships, sharing equipment and taking turns, even when not closely supervised by adults. Staff have high expectations, consequently behaviour is very good and children are very sure about boundaries because staff explain in clear language about right and wrong. For example, children are clear about good and bad choices and are able to explain why they are being kind to each other or a person in their family. Children learn to follow rules and routines very well, lining up very quietly and sensibly when walking outside or around the building. Children know they are valued at school so they show high levels of self-esteem and confidence. They are very friendly and easily engage staff and visitors in conversation.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn well because staff use a systematic approach to teaching basic reading and writing skills.
- Computers are used well to raise achievement.
- There could be more focus on writing in information about the curriculum for parents as the school has identified this as an important area for development.
- Staff give good emphasis to speaking and listening skills.

Commentary

35. Due to good teaching children develop good listening skills and achieve well in their speaking and listening skills. Overall, standards are in line with the expected level and this has a significant impact on their learning. Staff support children well and teach them a range of new words, for example one child asked: "What is technology?" and the teacher let another child respond to this before adding further examples which the children had used in the classroom like tape recorders and digital cameras. They learn about scientific words when planting seeds and mathematical words when finding out about heavy and light objects. The role-play emphasis changes to match the topic and children recently played different roles in the vet's surgery, for example, as a pet owner or the vet. The good, focused teaching has resulted in children knowing and using most letter sounds in their reading and writing. Children are learning to handle books and enjoy stories, making sensible predictions about what might happen. Some attempt to sound out unknown words with confidence and accuracy. Children are very motivated to learn. They work with interest and enthusiasm on tasks set by the teacher, for example a writing activity where they had to think about, and then write who was frightened, and what frightened them. Some children form letters correctly and more able children are encouraged and supported to write short phrases and spell simple words accurately. There is no mention of how to encourage children to write at home in the brochure for parents about the

Foundation Stage. This would support the work of the school in raising standards and achievement in writing.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because staff know exactly what children understand and can do, and build systematically on it.
- Staff provide a good range of play activities to enhance children's understanding of number, pattern, shape, space and measure.
- Learning objectives are accessible to all children.

Commentary

36. Teaching is good and children achieve well so that standards are in line with those expected by the end of Reception. In lessons, staff are very focused on what they want each child to learn. They place good emphasis on number skills so children learn to count up to ten and above average children are counting with confidence in 2s. Staff make sure that planned activities match each child's stage of development so all are interested and make good progress. A small minority of more able children recognise numbers beyond ten and can add and subtract 2 numbers. Children learn to count objects and record the number. Some are beginning to form numbers correctly. Staff plan a good range of practical and interesting activities for children to access for themselves. They practise using a calculator in their play in a shopping activity and count out coins, talking about pounds and pennies. They learn the names of two-dimensional shapes and can recognise these inside and outside the classroom. More able children are beginning to describe what is special about each shape and, during a walk with a classroom assistant, children were discussing the difference between a square and a rectangle. They were able to recognise that in a square all the sides were the same length. Work on display shows that children have good opportunities to talk about and work with numbers greater than 10, they have compared balloons to find out which is the shortest or longest, and compared the weight of objects to find out which is heavier or lighter.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good play opportunities both indoors and outside for children to explore, investigate and learn about the natural environment.
- Good use is made of ICT.

Commentary

37. Teaching is good. Standards overall are in line with the expected level and children achieve well. Staff plan an extensive range of interesting activities which inspire children so they begin to develop their basic investigation and ICT skills. For example, they learn about what seeds need to help them grow through work with the teacher planting cress seeds and a focused play activity in a soil tray where they practise planting plastic flowers. Staff encourage children to use large and small construction

equipment and they are able to draw what a wheeled car looks like and record what they will need to make one. Children's work is displayed carefully alongside teacher's questions, designed to focus and extend their vocabulary and understanding of how a car moves, for example: Why are wheels circles not squares? Why does an axle go through the middle of the wheel? Children learn early

computer skills and most learn to use the mouse and keyboard confidently when using a range of software including a drawing program, which helps them to make careful pictures of small creatures they had observed. Teachers also make good use of the interactive whiteboard and projector to motivate the children, focus their attention and select suitable resources to support their learning. Teachers make good use of the local environment in lessons, including walks in the local area and there is good provision to broaden children's experiences by involving outside experts. For example, they took part in 'Castle Day' where the children experienced daily life in a castle through role-play, and theatre groups.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although there is no outdoor play area adjacent to the classroom teachers make sure they plan as many challenging physical activities for children as they can.

Commentary

38. Whilst there is no provision for outside activities accessible from the classroom, teachers' planning ensures that they include as many outside activities as possible so that overall there is good provision for children's physical development. Teachers take the children once a week to a soft play area. Parents fund this activity and the local council who provide this facility give a special rate per child. In the classroom, children learn to manipulate objects, such as beads and to control paintbrushes and glue spreaders. They have daily opportunities to use felt pens regularly, and a minority of older children control pencils with consistent accuracy. Children enjoy their snack of fresh fruit and milk each day. No physical education (PE) lessons were observed. Support staff are very careful to point out how children can move safely around the school and on the playground, for example, before taking a group outside for an activity the classroom assistant reminded children not to go close to an area where builders were working. As a result, of the good teaching children achieve well and most are course to reach the levels expected of them by the end of reception.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are able to create their own individual response to ideas.

Commentary

39. Teaching is good so that children achieve well. The majority of children are likely to be working at the level expected for their age by the end of Reception. Staff plan an interesting range of practical activities to develop children's creativity, for example, they learn to paint and mix colours and each child has made a monster using a range of collage materials. The monster has a speech bubble so that the children can record what it is saying. The role-play area is changed every half term to match the

class topic so that children can develop their imagination and language skills in a good range of different situations. For example, by pretending to be gardeners and shop keepers in a garden centre. They wear aprons and gardening gloves and use their imagination well. There is also a music area in the classroom enabling children to use percussion instruments in their play and staff plan a weekly music session. As a result, children begin to develop an awareness of different musical instruments and learn a number of songs and rhymes, for example the 'days of the week song', with the teacher that they join in with enthusiastically.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well led with a clear drive to improve standards.
- Teaching develops pupils' basic skills well.
- Assessment information is not used consistently enough to ensure that activities extend the skills of all pupils.
- Teachers make good use of ICT in English lessons.
- The subject leader does not have enough opportunities to work with class teachers to support them in their planning.

Commentary

40. The school has very variable numbers of pupils in year groups and varying numbers of pupils with special educational needs. This makes comparing different year groups' results in national tests a very unreliable measure of standards in the school. For example, in 2002, there were only eight pupils in the group in Year 2 and this year there are fourteen. Inspection evidence, early indications from this year's national tests and school assessment data shows that overall, as pupils move through the school, they achieve satisfactorily. The few pupils, whose first language is not English, achieve at a similar rate to the rest of their classmates. However, there are variations across the different strands in the subject in the standards that pupils reach. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2. In Year 2, standards in speaking and listening are in line with those expected, but this class has a third of pupils with special educational needs so, although these pupils achieve well due to good support from classroom assistants, standards in reading are below average. In writing, due to the good teaching of basic skills, a good proportion of pupils reach the basic level for their age, but few pupils reach above this level so overall, standards are satisfactory. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to achieve satisfactorily overall. As a result, by Year 6, most pupils are working at the expected levels for their age in speaking and listening. School assessment data shows that, pupils in Year 6 have made good progress in their reading skills this year and most have secure basic reading and research skills, but again, due to the fact that half the class have special educational needs, standards in English are below average. Standards are also affected by the relatively low proportion of pupils working at the higher than expected levels in their writing. Due to good teaching of basic skills and very good use and support from classroom assistants, most pupils develop good understanding of grammar, spelling, handwriting and punctuation, but few pupils' writing makes extensive use of writing techniques such as simile and metaphor to bring their writing to life.
41. Overall, teaching and learning is satisfactory, but there are consistent strengths in most lessons that make many of them fun and enjoyable for pupils. As a result, they are enthusiastic in lessons and keen to learn. In addition, teachers have high expectations of pupils so they behave well. Most teachers start lessons by sharing the aims of the lesson with pupils so they understand what they will be learning about. Consequently, lessons start with brisk, sharply focused class discussions that give pupils good opportunities to develop their basic understanding of grammar,

punctuation and reading. Teachers lower down the school place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge of different letter sounds and how to work out unfamiliar words. As a result, by Year 2, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are beginning to develop confidence in reading and can follow instructions with little help. Teachers also use ICT resources well in lessons to involve pupils and to illustrate the points they want to get across. Most lessons also end with good discussions in

which the teachers review the aims of the lesson and ask pupils how they think they have got on. The effectiveness of these parts of lessons reflects the work that the school has done with local authority consultants to develop the quality of teaching. However, the activities that pupils do in groups are not as consistently effective. Pupils with special educational needs are usually provided with tasks that closely match their learning needs and are well supported by classroom assistants. This ensures that they achieve well, although few are likely to reach the expected levels by the end of Years 2 and 6. However, other groups' tasks tend to over-reinforce what pupils have already been learning rather than extending their knowledge into how they can use their skills. In addition, although some teachers' marking is effective in highlighting what pupils have achieved and what they need to work on, this is not consistent across the school. As a result, those pupils with the potential to work at higher than expected levels do not always make progress as quickly as they might.

42. The root cause of this is that teachers do not make full use of the assessment information they have available to ensure that tasks are matched close enough to pupils' needs. The procedures to assess and track their progress are good. However, although the subject leader and the headteacher make good use of this information to set targets for pupils and to identify whole school priorities and staff development needs, class teachers are not sufficiently involved in this process so they can make best use of the information. In addition, the subject leader does not have enough time to work with each teacher to review the progress their pupils are making and to help them identify those pupils who may need extra help because they are not making the expected progress and to advise them on what they might do. Overall, the subject is well led and good improvements have been made since the last inspection in developing the systems to support teaching and learning and good use has been made of the local authority consultants to help in this, but because of the 'missing link' described above, all this work has not been translated into improved standards, which have remained stubbornly below average in recent years.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

43. Overall, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their basic literacy skills in other subjects. They have plenty of chances to research topics using books and the Internet, which is reflected in the generally secure reading standards seen in most classes. However, the opportunities for pupils to write using a broad range of styles and contexts to express their views and opinions or to describe their experiences are more limited. For example, in science, pupils are not always expected to write up investigations in their own words and many of the tasks in geography are worksheet based.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' subject knowledge has improved well since the last inspection.
- Basic number skills are taught well across the school.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use mathematics in other subjects.
- Teachers' marking celebrates pupils' success but it does not always help them to improve.

- Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

44. In the 2004 national tests, standards in mathematics in Years 2 were well below the national average and below average in Year 6. Although, overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school, early indications from the school's data and inspection evidence indicates a similar picture for this year. Primarily, this is because a below average

number of pupils are working at the expected level because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in both Year 2 and 6 groups. Although these pupils achieve well due to very good support they receive from teaching assistants, few are likely to reach the expected level. With a relatively small number of pupils in year groups, each pupil has a major effect on results and, in Year 6, the impact is greatest as this year half the class have special educational needs. In addition, when comparisons are made to the national standards there are fewer pupils in this school achieving the higher grades and this impacts on standards overall. School assessment data shows that these potentially higher attaining pupils have achieved well this year in building on their basic skills. However across the school, pupils are not always given enough activities to practise these skills in mathematics lessons and there are insufficient opportunities in other subjects to reinforce their learning, which has a negative effect on the efficacy of their mathematical skills. For example, despite being taught well, in Years 2 and 6, pupils' mental arithmetic is not always as sharp as is normally seen in most schools and even higher attaining pupils do not have an instant recall of basic number facts and computation.

45. Inspection evidence shows that, although overall teaching and learning are satisfactory, there are consistent strengths in the teaching, particularly in whole-class teaching sessions and the use of ICT as a teaching tool. As a result, basic skills are taught well. Teachers explain and demonstrate new mathematics using resources and new technology, in the form of the interactive whiteboard and pupils respond well to the enthusiasm of their teachers. For example, in a very good Year 2 lesson, the teacher modelled counting of two pence coins into a purse. She then went on to develop counting in twos in a wide variety of different ways, until everyone understood what they were doing. Relationships between teachers and pupils are also very good and contribute to the quality of the learning so that pupils responded well to the cracking pace set by the teacher as they counted in twos on the counting stick, and the whole class burst out laughing when they could not keep up. In another very good lesson in Year 4, the enthusiastic teacher used his board well to demonstrate how to add thousands, hundreds, tens and units. These teachers manage make even potentially uninspiring topics interesting so that pupils want to learn.
46. These positive aspects of teaching reflect the action the school has taken to raise standards since the last inspection. For example, teachers' subject knowledge has been improved by working extensively with the numeracy consultant from the local authority. In addition, two teachers attended a nationally planned five day course, which had been specifically designed to develop teachers' subject knowledge. There are plans in place to extend this five day course opportunity to other members of staff. Good assessment procedures have also been established which track pupils' progress as they move through the school and the information is used well to group pupils in lessons and to set annual targets for improvement for individual pupils. However, the effect of these developments on pupils' achievement are partially negated because teachers do not consistently use the information well enough to amend the national guidance sufficiently to ensure that activities pupils are given when they are working in groups are matched closely enough to their learning needs. In addition, although teachers' marking of pupils' work encourages them, it rarely refers to acquired skills or helps them understand how to improve their work. As a result, although the school now has good systems in place to build on, overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.
47. Leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory overall. The subject leader has good subject knowledge and is a good role model for other staff through his own

teaching. He is new to the role this year and has made a sound start on the monitoring of the subject by observing some lessons, checking teachers' planning and pupils' work. However, he has not had enough time to work with other teachers to use the tracking information to review the progress the pupils in their class are making to help them identify those who may need extra help and to advise them on how to improve their progress.

Mathematics across the curriculum

48. Overall, the provision to develop pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects is unsatisfactory. There are good examples in science where charts, tables and graphs are used to support learning across the curriculum. However, this is not done consistently in all subjects across the school. For example, opportunities to use co-ordinates, scales, graphs, timelines in history and geography are missed.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make good use of resources, including ICT equipment to enthuse and interest pupils.
- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to record their investigations for themselves.
- The emphasis on experimental and investigative work is developing in Year 3 to 6.
- A range of good visits are organised during the year.
- The subject leader has not had enough opportunities to monitor the subject.

Commentary

49. Standards of attainment are in line with national expectations in Year 2. Data gathered from the school indicates that the majority of pupils will achieve the expected levels at Year 6, but due to a high proportion of pupils with special needs and limited range of opportunities for more able pupils to record their own ideas in experimental and investigative work, standards are below average although achievement is satisfactory.
50. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and in class discussions give pupils good opportunities to ask as well as answer questions. Relationships in lessons are very good so pupils are confident to express their ideas. They work well together, are well focused and sensible in their approach, showing well developed and mature social skills. Good use is made of the high quality support staff to help pupils with special educational needs learn and develop their skills so they achieve well. Teachers make good use of all available resources, including the recently introduced interactive whiteboards, to include a good range of methods into their lessons. This has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to the subject and they are enthused and excited by lessons. During the inspection, this was particularly noted in Years 2 and 4. For example, in a Year 2 lesson observed, the teacher demonstrated how to make a 'mind map' so pupils could record their ideas about light at the start of a new unit of work. Pupils were very keen to contribute and eagerly put up their hands desperate to be asked to put forward their ideas and take part in using the whiteboard. A new scheme of work has been implemented this school year, which includes more experimental and investigative work and resources for the interactive whiteboard, which have been used well, for example, to support teaching about micro-organisms in Year 6. However, in some classes, the recording of investigations is currently too teacher-directed, which does not give pupils enough opportunities to express their scientific thinking in their own words and this limits the proportion of pupils who are securely working at the higher than expected levels of attainment.

51. The subject leader provides satisfactory leadership and management of the subject. The subject has not been a major focus for development in recent years. The subject leader has a broad overview of teachers' planning, but she has not yet had sufficient opportunities to do a detailed scrutiny of pupils' written work across the school or observe teaching in order to evaluate the quality of learning and teaching in her subject and to identify barriers to raising achievement. This point was made at the last inspection. However, she was able to

purchase the new scheme of work, having agreed with teaching staff that the old scheme was not addressing the development of scientific thinking skills. The scheme of work is supplemented well by visits and visitors. For example, annual visits to Science pantomimes by pupils in Years 3 to 6 enrich the curriculum, as do the visits to school by scientists from Newcastle University, who give the pupils an insight into what it is like to be a scientist and carry out research of different kinds. Pupils in Reception and in Years 1 and 2 have been able to observe more unusual animals at close range, thanks to visits to the school by Zoo Lab.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Due to good leadership, the provision and standards have improved well since the last inspection.
- Teachers use ICT well as a teaching tool in lessons.
- Resources have been improved significantly since the last inspection.
- There are too many missed opportunities for pupils to use ICT to develop their understanding of other subjects across the whole curriculum.

Commentary

52. Satisfactory standards in ICT have been maintained in Year 6 since the last inspection. However, in Year 2 standards have improved as most pupils are now working at the expected levels for their age. The good improvement is due to consistently good leadership by a succession of subject leaders. Pupils now follow a nationally accepted scheme of work and there is an ICT policy in place. To complement this, the school has spent significant amounts of money to provide a good range of ICT equipment and a wider range of resources for teachers to use so that all aspects of ICT can be taught. In addition, teachers have had training to improve their subject knowledge and confidence in teaching the subject. As a result, pupils make steady gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding and achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school.
53. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use the interactive whiteboards and projectors well in ICT lessons to develop pupils' knowledge of the different strands of the subject in whole class sessions. Teachers also try to develop pupils' understanding by providing opportunities for them to see how ICT is used in the real world. For example, pupils in Year 2 experience control technology by giving instructions to programmable toys, and in Year 6, they used the computer to control a set of streetlights. They knew what to do when the lights flashed continually and they could work out how to install a time delay. They were excited when their street lights worked properly. As a result, pupils enjoy ICT lessons, take part enthusiastically, and try hard to complete the tasks set for them. In discussion with pupils in Year 6, they were particularly keen to explain what they had done on a visit to St James Park when they had to produce a promotional film using multimedia software. Using up to date technology they learnt to rotate digital pictures, link pages, add sound, freeze frames and slide the text credits at the end of their presentation. However, despite the investment the school has made in new resources, each classroom has only three computers, so pupils have to take turns in lessons to practise their skills whilst the rest of the class do a related task. Although this is a very

appropriate approach, its success is highly dependent on the related task being very clear for pupils so that the class teacher can concentrate on those working on the computers to make sure they do the set task properly. However, this does not always happen and, as a result, pupils do not always use the skills the teacher wants them to.

54. The subject leader has good subject knowledge and is continuing to develop the subject well by identifying further areas for improvement. For example, a teachers' skills audit has been carried out and has formed the basis for a programme of professional development for staff. Through her monitoring, at the start of the year, she was aware that not all the required software was in place and so she organised for pupils in Years 3 to 6 to experience the missing elements of the ICT curriculum at the City Learning Centre at Westgate College on a termly basis. The subject leader is aware that assessment is too narrow and wants to widen its scope to include aspects such as pupils' attitude and creativity. As part of this extension to existing assessment procedures, she has started to put pupils' work in an e-portfolio and is designing a website.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

55. Teachers use ICT resources well in many lessons and this approach has a very positive effect on the quality of the teaching in the class discussions. Pupils also have good opportunities to use the boards themselves, but overall, teachers do not plan enough activities for pupils to use ICT to develop their understanding of other subjects across the whole curriculum. In geography, pupils use the Internet to research information; an electric microscope was used well in a Year 3 science lesson to look at sugar, salt and other powders, and pupils in Year 2 have produced some very striking pieces of artwork using different tools in a 'paint' program. However, pupils' work reveals few examples of tasks where they have had to use ICT to present their work as newsletters or their findings from investigations as charts and graphs.

HUMANITIES

56. Due to the timetable arrangements and the focus of the inspection, provision in **history** and **geography** was sampled by looking at pupils' work, talking to subject leaders and observing three lessons. The quality of teaching in the history lessons was good in one and satisfactory in the other. In the only geography lesson seen, teaching was good. Pupils' work and school documentation show that pupils study a balanced range of topics that provides them with opportunities to develop the full range of skills, knowledge and understanding. The school makes appropriate use of the village and local visits to places such as South Shields and Bede's World to give pupils practical experiences. However, opportunities are missed to develop pupils' knowledge of the local area and to give the subject a local 'flavour'. For example, in a topic on rivers, although the school is a few hundred metres from the River Tyne, the activities hardly referred to it and opportunities were missed to develop pupils' mapping skills by finding examples of river features such as meanders and waterfalls on a map of the Tyne. In pupils' books there are examples of where they have used their literacy skills to research specific topics, but overall, not enough use is made of the subject to use a broad range of their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills to express their ideas and imagination and to handle data through graphs and charts.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

57. **Art and design** was sampled during the inspection. Although no lessons were observed during the inspection, examples of pupils' previous work shows that good progress has been made since the last inspection. A scheme of work based on national guidelines is in place and ensures that skills are developed systematically from year to year. Teachers are beginning to use ICT as a teaching and learning tool

in the subject. For example, in Year 2, pupils use the computer to explore patterns and these are displayed well by the teacher to enhance the learning environment.

58. **Design and technology** was sampled during the inspection by looking at pupils' work, teachers' planning and talking to pupils and the subject leader. These indicate that good progress has been made since the last inspection. A scheme of work based on national

guidance is in place and ensures that pupils' designing and making skills develop systematically from year to year. The one lesson observed during the inspection was satisfactory, but Year 6 pupils said that recently they had thoroughly enjoyed designing a new playground for their school, as the task was meaningful to them.

59. **Music** was sampled during a hymn practice for Years 3 to 6, and by talking with the subject leader. Pupils listen to music each day at the start and end of collective worship where they hear extracts from different eras and cultures. They sing well together in the hymn practice sampled and the younger pupils show enthusiasm and enjoyment. The school buys in to an LEA scheme whereby music specialists give a high quality workshop to pupils and their teachers at least twice a term. In this way teachers' subject knowledge and confidence are improving. Cross-curricular links are made with music and geography through pupils learning about Indian music.
60. **Physical education** was sampled during the inspection by looking at teachers' planning, displays and observing one lesson. In that lesson, teaching was very good and pupils developed their skills very well. In addition, the teacher very clearly set out at the start what pupils would be learning and reviewed the progress they thought they had made at the end. There were very good opportunities to evaluate each other's performances so they were very clear about what they needed to do to improve. Since the last inspection, the subject leader has worked hard to develop the provision in the subject. A good scheme of work, based on national guidance, has been put into place, which ensures that pupils' skills are developed systematically from year to year, and teachers know exactly what pupils have done in previous years. A good range of out of school activities and sports clubs have been introduced and these enhance the school's curriculum well. The school has been involved in the Sports Co-ordinator Development Programme which has provided a few additional activities the school is unable to provide, but the subject leader is not fully satisfied that the school is getting the best value from the investment of time and money in the initiative and is seeking alternative sources of external support. The residential activity holiday at Robinwood enriches the Year 6 curriculum by giving pupils opportunities to take part in canoeing, wall climbing, night walking and problem solving team games. In addition, the playground has been resurfaced. At the time of the inspection, the outdoor facilities were in the process of being improved further to provide better facilities for physical education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

61. There were very few lessons in this aspect of the school's curriculum being taught during the inspection period. However, discussions with pupils and staff show that the school places a good emphasis on developing pupils' personal skills and has a comprehensive programme in place to develop this aspect of pupils' learning. All classes have weekly lessons, much of which is discussion-based, which helps pupils develop their speaking skills. Sex and relationships and drugs education is included in the programme and external agencies are involved where appropriate to help class teachers tackle difficult or personal issues. As a result, as pupils move through the school, they develop their personal skills and learn their responsibilities to each other, the school and their local community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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