

INSPECTION REPORT

**St Oswald's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary
School**

Wrekenton

LEA area: Gateshead

Unique reference number: 108384

Headteacher: Mrs Christine Wallace

Lead inspector: Mrs Margaret Shepherd

Dates of inspection: 10th – 13th January 2005

Inspection number: 267913

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

Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils: 3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 260

School address: Easington Avenue
Wrekenton
Gateshead
Tyne and Wear
Postcode: NE9 7LH

Telephone number: 0191 4878641
Fax number: 0191 4878641

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mrs Mary Gibson
governors:

Date of previous 1st March 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Oswald's RC VA Primary School serves an area with high social deprivation. The great majority of housing is rented and there are high levels of unemployment and of single-parent families. There are 260 pupils in the school, which is larger than average. There is an even balance between boys and girls. Children attend the nursery on a part-time basis and enter in the term when they are three years old. Standards on entry to the school are well below expectations. There is a mixture of single-age classes and mixed-age classes in each year group except Year 6, where all pupils of this age group are in one class. Forty-two per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above average. Eighteen per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register, which is broadly average. Under one per cent of pupils have full statements of special educational needs, which is lower than average. There is a significant minority of pupils with behavioural difficulties. The school has a Nurture Unit with specially designated accommodation and staff to support pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils. The funding for this unit initially came from Dr Barnados, but is now funded by alternative sources. Just over one per cent of pupils has English as an additional language, which is higher than usual. At the time of the inspection there were two new members of staff, who were only in their second week of teaching in the school. One of these teachers had been employed to teach French throughout the school. Both teachers were newly qualified. A high proportion of staff, including the site manager and the senior administration officer, has served in the school for many years. The changes in the requirements for the governing body meant that several governors had only been in their role for a term.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11328	Margaret Shepherd	Lead inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, personal, social and health education and citizenship, pupils with English as an additional language, French.
9928	Alan Dobson	Lay inspector	
22452	Mary Farman	Team inspector	English, geography, history, pupils with special educational needs.
29188	Gianna Ulyatt	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, science, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education.

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Inspections Limited
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
GL53 7JX

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	19
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school. The headteacher sets a very clear educational direction for developing both personal and academic high standards within a strong Christian ethos. Pupils achieve very well. Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Teaching is good. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve very well through the school; standards on entry are well below national expectations and by Year 6 standards are above average in mathematics, listening and reading and average in writing and speaking and science; standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below expectations.
- Children make a high quality start to their education in nursery and reception because the provision is very good.
- Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language achieve well, more able pupils achieve very well; pupils are fully included; the provision of the nurture unit is a very good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good; attendance is unsatisfactory despite the school's good quality attendance monitoring systems.
- Teaching is good with many very good and excellent features; there is not enough emphasis on handwriting or on the use of computers across the curriculum.
- The school uses the very good assessment systems very effectively.
- Leadership and management of the headteacher are very good.
- Personal development and spiritual, moral and social development are very good; school clubs are very varied and very good quality.
- The school takes very good care of its pupils.

There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. All the key issues have been addressed. Standards are higher, attitudes and behaviour are improved, teaching is better and leadership and management are improved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those with a similar proportion of free school meals.

In 2004, there were a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs based on literacy in Year 6, which resulted in lower standards in this subject. Standards over the past four years have risen faster than average in both the junior and infant national tests. The value added to standards between Year 2 and Year 6 is well above average. The inspection judges achievement as **very good** throughout the school. Standards in Year 6 are above average in mathematics, reading and listening, average in speaking, writing and science and below average in ICT. Standards are at the expected level in ICT up to the end of Year

5, but the older pupils have not benefited from the regular use of the computer suite, resulting in lower standards.

Standards in the national tests in Year 2 in 2004 were above average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools, standards were very high in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. The inspection judges standards as above average in English, mathematics, science and ICT.

Standards in reception are above average in personal, social and emotional development because of the strong emphasis on this aspect of the curriculum in nursery and reception. Children achieve very well overall. Standards are below expectations in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development and knowledge and understanding, and at the expected level in physical and creative development.

Pupils have very positive attitudes towards school and behave very well both in lessons and around the school. Their personal development is very good, particularly the levels of responsibility that older pupils show to younger pupils. Overall personal development is **very good**; spiritual, moral and social development is very good and cultural development is good. Attendance rates are unsatisfactory, but the school's systems for improving this are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. The quality of teaching is **good** overall with many very good and excellent features. Teachers manage behaviour very well. They have high expectations of all pupils and challenge them to do their best. Staff give pupils great encouragement to succeed. Classroom assistants work well in supporting individuals and groups and are of particularly good quality in nursery and reception. Teachers use the high quality assessment systems very effectively in English and mathematics.

The curriculum is good quality with very good opportunities for enrichment. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The curriculum for personal development is very good. The nurture unit provides very good support for pupils with special educational needs.

The school takes pupils' care and welfare very seriously and has very good systems for carrying this out. The school honours the views of pupils and uses the school council arrangements very well.

Partnership with parents, the community and other schools is good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good overall**. The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good. She creates very effective teams and has her fingers on the pulse of the school. Co-ordinators play an important role in taking the school's work forward. Management is very good. The leadership and management of the chair of governors are very good. The governance of the school is satisfactory overall because there is a high proportion of new governors who have only been in post for one term.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views are positive. They appreciate that their children like school and that they are expected to work hard. Pupils are very positive about their school. They feel secure in the school and enjoy learning new things in lessons.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- increase rates of attendance;
- implement the plans to raise standards in speaking and writing, particularly handwriting;
- raise standards in ICT in Year 6 and extend the use of ICT across the curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is **very good** at every stage. Standards are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's achievement is very good with excellent features in nursery and reception due to the high quality teaching.
- Standards in Year 2 are above average in mathematics, reading, listening, science and ICT.
- Standards in Year 6 are above average in mathematics, reading and listening, but below expectations in ICT.
- More able pupils achieve very well; pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language achieve well.

Commentary

Foundation Stage

1. Children enter the nursery with standards well below the expected level. There is a very high emphasis on personal, social and emotional development. This has a very positive impact on children's learning and standards are on track to be above the expected level by the end of reception. This is very good achievement and prepares children extremely well for their future lives in the school. Children have very immature language and communication skills when they begin nursery schooling. Nursery and reception teaching teams provide carefully structured experiences for children to develop these skills. Standards are on track to be below the expected level by the end of reception. Children handle books carefully and enjoy listening to stories. Children achieve very well in mathematical development and in knowledge and understanding of the world. They enter the school with very little understanding of these areas, but due to the very good teaching, standards are on track to be below the expected level by the end of reception. Staff take every opportunity to develop children's learning in these areas. Most children count to ten confidently, make simple observations and understand about different faiths. Standards in physical and creative development are at the expected level. This is due to the very systematic coverage of the different aspects of these areas.

Key Stage 1

<i>Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004</i>		
Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.7 (15.4)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.6 (14.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	18.5 (16.8)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 36 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The trend over the past four years has been above the national average. Compared with similar schools, standards are very high in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. This is due to the high emphasis on these subjects and the careful use of assessment. The inspection judges achievement as very good. Standards in reading are above average, with pupils reading confidently and talking about stories enthusiastically. Their listening skills are also above expectations. Pupils expect to listen carefully to staff and to each other. Writing and speaking skills are at the expected level. The school has identified this and is working hard to raise standards. There are good quality strategies in place but they have not had time to take full effect. Standards in mathematics are above average. The school uses the numeracy strategy well and teachers create a sense of fun in lessons. By Year 2, pupils handle numbers confidently in mental mathematics and use the two-, five- and ten-times tables accurately. Science standards are above expectations. Pupils have a good scientific knowledge and enjoy carrying out investigations. Standards in ICT are above expectations. This is due to the regular use of the computer suite and the systematic coverage of the curriculum.

Key Stage 2

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004		
Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.2 (27.7)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.5 (27.8)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.8 (29.9)	28.6 (28.6)
<i>There were 37 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.</i>		

3. The trend in standards in the national tests over the past four years is as successful as in Year 2, and is above average. Data shows that girls and boys achieve similarly well. The value added to the Year 6 pupils' standards was well above average compared with all schools and also compared with both types of similar schools. Compared with schools of similar free school meals, standards in the 2004 national tests were above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. Standards dropped in English last year because this class had a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in literacy. Achievement in the current Year 6 is very good. Standards for these pupils in the Year 2 national tests were well below average in reading, average in writing and below average in mathematics. The inspection judges current standards as above average in reading, listening and mathematics and average in writing, speaking and science. The high emphasis on reading continues from the infant classes. Pupils enjoy reading a range of different books and talk knowledgeably about different authors. They tackle different writing styles confidently and their spelling skills are secure, although their handwriting is untidy and they have a limited vocabulary. In mathematics, pupils handle numbers confidently, have a good understanding of shape and measurement and expect to explain their mathematical thinking clearly. In science, they tackle investigations enthusiastically and have the expected level of scientific knowledge. Standards in ICT are at the expected level through the junior classes up to Year 6. They drop at this point because these pupils have not benefited from the regular use of the computer suite.

4. The school has a clear strategy of targeting literacy and numeracy lessons at the more able pupils. This has a very positive impact on their achievement, which is very good. In the national tests in Year 2, standards compared with all schools at the higher level were very high in mathematics, well above average in writing and science and above average in reading. In Year 6, the same comparison showed standards as well above average in mathematics and above average in English. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because the school considers their individual needs very carefully. It then provides a programme of work to match those needs. The Nurture Unit plays an important role in supporting these pupils. Pupils with English as an additional language benefit from the school's strong emphasis on the learning of each individual. They are given clear guidance when carrying out their tasks to ensure that they understand the work.
5. There has been good improvement in standards since the previous inspection. Standards have risen in English and mathematics. More able pupils have much higher levels of achievement and pupils with special educational needs make better progress. ICT standards have fallen in Year 6, but since the previous inspection, a wider curriculum has been introduced in this subject.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, values and personal development are **very good**. Attendance is unsatisfactory. Punctuality is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes are very good, enabling their achievement and personal development to reach a high level.
- Behaviour is very good during lessons as well as at play, maximising the opportunities for teaching and learning.
- Pupils respond very well to the many opportunities to extend their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- A good raft of procedures to improve attendance has been implemented.
- Virtually all pupils arrive at school on time.
- A significant minority of parents do not ensure that their children attend school every day.

Commentary

6. Through the high quality of its leadership, the school devotedly caters for the needs of everyone. Pupils follow the caring role models seen among staff who truly respect the pupils with whom they work. This ensures that each pupil feels valued and is stimulated to learn. Pupils have high self-esteem and say they feel safe and secure in school. Pupils who have special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language tackle their work confidently. The very good attitudes pupils have are directly related to their relationships with adults and, as a consequence, all aim to achieve as high a standard as possible. They are eager to learn and concentrate well during lessons. Children in reception and nursery classes are excited about their work and very motivated to learn. Staff have high expectations of pupils who consequently persevere with tasks even though they are quite challenging.

7. Pupils clearly know right from wrong and confidently explain that it is unkind to hurt people's feelings. The school actively promotes good behaviour and older pupils are encouraged and praised for the way they set a good example for the rest of the school. Staff provide very clear guidance to ensure that pupils understand that bullying and harassment will not be tolerated. The school council plays an important part in reinforcing this message. All pupils willingly co-operate with each other in lessons, share equipment and resources as well as discussing issues in a sensible and mature manner. Weekly awards for good work and good behaviour are very valued by the pupils. Pupils throughout the school are delightfully polite and helpful, especially during the pastoral care sessions¹, where older pupils work and discuss alongside younger ones.
8. The Christian ethos in the school has a strong impact on the way pupils feel about themselves. Staff and pupils pray together during collective worship and this encourages the whole school to be reflective and thoughtful. Singing sessions for junior-aged pupils are a true moving and spiritual experience for everyone. Pupils show care for the elderly in the local community by taking gifts at Harvest time and by singing for them at Christmas time. The school encourages pupils to show considerable care for the wider community. Pupils develop an understanding of social responsibility through tasks such as raising money for local, national and developing world charities and have quickly responded to the Tsunami crisis. Pupils have a good awareness of local and national heritage. Through the school council, pupils have very good opportunities to raise issues, make suggestions and see a tangible outcome from their ideas, such as the improved toilet facilities for boys.

Attendance

9. The school is well aware that its attendance figures are well below average and of the negative impact it is having on a few pupils' learning. The matter is discussed regularly at governors' meetings, and parents are frequently reminded of the importance of good attendance. The school is working hard to improve the figures. An attendance co-ordinator has been appointed and many new procedures were introduced at the beginning of the school year, including using outside agencies, effectively raising the profile of attendance. These include immediate follow-up of any absences without reason, targeting the parents of all pupils with poor attendance, giving weekly awards and close liaison outside agencies. The new procedures reflect best practice but it is too soon to judge their impact. The school is trying hard to counter a local culture where some parents do not see the need to send their children to school every day. The school has had more success in improving punctuality. Around 97 per cent of pupils arrive on time. This in part is due to rigorous monitoring and having a member of staff make immediate personal contact with parents whose children arrive late.
10. During the most recent full school year (2003/4), there were eight temporary exclusions involving four pupils. These exclusions were for appropriate reasons and the school works hard, often with other agencies, to reintegrate the pupils into school life.

<i>Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)</i>		
Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence

¹ The school organises pastoral care sessions each week. Each group is made up of pupils from reception to Year 6 and they work with the same teacher each week.

School data:	7.8		School data:	0.0
National data:	5.1		National data:	0.4
<i>The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.</i>				

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	237	8	0
White - any other background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British - African	1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching is **good** overall, with many **very good** and **excellent** features. The curriculum is **good**, with **very good** quality enrichment. The school takes **very good** care of its pupils. Links with parents and the community are **good**; links with other schools are **satisfactory**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall. Teaching is very good, with many excellent features in nursery and reception; very good in the infant classes; and good in the junior classes. Assessment is **very good** and used very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning, particularly more able pupils.
- Pupils expect to work hard and teachers manage their behaviour very well.
- Classroom assistants work in a productive partnership with teachers.
- The excellent quality teaching features across all the different age groups in the school.
- There is too little emphasis on the way pupils present their written work.
- Teachers miss opportunities to use ICT in classrooms.
- Teachers use the very good quality assessment systems very effectively.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
5 (11%)	18 (40%)	14 (31%)	8 (12 %)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

11. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers set a high priority on English, mathematics and science and have high expectations of pupils' learning in these lessons. They pitch the work at the level of the more able pupils and this has a very positive impact on learning. The more able pupils rise to the challenge and thoroughly enjoy tackling the new learning. Teachers support average pupils well through additional help in their questioning or by spending more time with these pupils in explaining how to tackle the new work. Teachers use a random selection procedure² very effectively in whole-class discussion. This ensures that pupils remain alert because they never know when it will be their turn. Pupils with English as an additional language develop skills and knowledge well because teachers have a very good understanding of their needs and give them well-focused support to ensure that they understand the work.
12. All teachers work very hard to manage pupils' behaviour. This includes those pupils who have severe behavioural difficulties. This strong emphasis ensures that there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere created in classrooms, which allows pupils to work quietly and produce a good volume of work. This is apparent in both whole-class sessions and in group work. Teachers give individual pupils great encouragement to succeed, which ensures that there are equal opportunities for learning.
13. The partnership between teachers and support staff is good overall and excellent in the nursery and reception. Throughout the school, teachers work closely with classroom assistants to give additional support for pupils with special educational needs. All adults are very aware of these pupils' particular needs through the detailed individual education plans. There are well-established systems for support staff to feed back to teachers on their pupils' progress. The close partnership between the special educational needs teacher and the classroom assistant in the Nurture Unit is very good. This ensures that when pupils are withdrawn for lessons that they receive a high quality experience to take their learning forward.
14. The excellent quality of teaching occurs across the school. The highest proportion of excellent teaching is in the nursery and reception. The teaching teams set a very fast pace in their lessons. They provide very stimulating experiences for the children, who sustain high levels of concentration for their age. Both teaching teams establish clear routines for children, which provide a great sense of security because children know what to expect. This is particularly beneficial at the beginning of sessions, which sets a strong working context for learning. Both teaching teams use resources very effectively and ensure that children have plenty of opportunities for taking part in the lesson, such as picking a leaf with a number off a tree, or stroking the visiting husky dog. In the infant classes, the excellent teaching is in the mixed Years 1 and 2 class in English. It includes outstanding use of drama and the exceptional use of the Big Book³. This results in high rates of learning, both in reading and speaking skills. The excellent teaching in the junior classes features when all the pupils join together to sing hymns. The Years 3/4 teacher sets an excellent example by her own tuneful and rhythmic singing and demands extremely high standards for all pupils. She works at an extremely fast pace and is equally successful in reinforcing hymns that the pupils already know to teaching them new ones. The participation of the headteacher and

² This is organised by having each pupil's name on a stick in a jar. One stick is selected at random and the named pupil is then expected to answer the question.

³ Big Books are four times the size of normal books and are used with the whole class to ensure that all pupils can read the words.

junior teachers makes this an extremely high quality spiritual occasion. This results in pupils achieving extremely well both in singing and in their spiritual development.

15. Teachers do not emphasise the importance of producing neat and tidy work and this is reducing standards in handwriting and presentation. Teachers' own handwriting does not provide a consistently good model for pupils to copy. Teachers do not ensure that the computers in classrooms are used during group work. This reduces opportunities for pupils to develop ICT skills across different subjects.
16. Assessment systems are very good overall and staff use them very well. The school places a high value on assessment in literacy, numeracy, science, special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and is having a very positive impact on standards in these subjects and for these pupils. The school continues to trial different methods of assessment, but only uses the ones that match their needs. The headteacher works closely with the very effective assessment co-ordinator to produce a variety of good quality analyses from the end-of-year assessments. Teachers use this data well to set targets for pupils and to ensure that their planning matches different pupils' needs. The end-of-year testing is complemented by testing through the year and by the setting of clear half-termly group targets. The school uses its assessment of spelling very well to provide different groups of words for pupils to learn, that closely match their varying needs. Assessment of pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language is very detailed and provides very clear targets for these pupils. This means that the rate of progress of individuals is fully understood by the adults working with them, whether this be in the full class, the Nurture Unit, or in a withdrawal group with a specialist teacher or with classroom assistants. The school is working towards introducing much more comprehensive assessment systems in ICT, but, at the moment, they do not provide enough information about individual progress.

The curriculum

The school provides its pupils with a **good** curriculum. The provision for enrichment is **very good**. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good quality leadership and management of the curriculum ensure all subjects are covered well.
- There is not enough use of ICT to support learning in other subjects.
- The curriculum in the nursery and reception is well planned, practically based and meets the differing age ranges and abilities effectively.
- The very strong programme for curriculum enrichment and pupils' personal and social education prepares them very well for life outside school.
- The very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and strong literacy support enables them to achieve well.
- The school uses staffing, accommodation and resources well.

Commentary

17. There is a significant improvement to the quality of the curriculum since the previous inspection. The headteacher provides strong and determined leadership and management. This ensures each subject is covered thoroughly and gives pupils stimulating learning opportunities. The school works hard to gain awards such as the

Basic Skills award and the Activemark. The school introduces new elements to the curriculum systematically, such as the learning of French throughout the school. Pupils are beginning to use ICT to support work in other lessons such as English. Teachers' planning does not, however, fully include opportunities to use ICT in other subjects. This restricts pupils' understanding of its wider use.

18. The good quality curriculum for children in the nursery and reception gives them a suitably well-balanced range of experiences. These meet their developing needs effectively. All adults give children interesting and stimulating activities with a very strong focus on increasing their personal and social skills.
19. The stimulating and interesting curriculum includes a very wide range of out-of-school clubs for sporting and creative activities. The school tailors these to the needs and interests of the pupils. This is particularly evident in the lunchtime reading and writing club which is very effective in increasing self-esteem and academic skills. Activities such as dance, cheerleading and school performances help pupils develop their creative, performing and social skills. Parents support these events well. Visits to places of interest, such as the Sunderland Glass Centre, and visitors to the school make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. The school makes very effective use of a wide range of sources and expertise to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding. For instance, the site manager was instrumental in arranging the visit to the Glass Centre and gave pupils a demonstration of how to blow glass. This increases pupils' respect for all adults who work in the school. Teachers make good use of the rich local area to support work in subjects such as history, geography and science. This increases pupils' understanding and awareness of how places change over time. The school reflects its very clear values in the conduct of staff and pupils.
20. The school develops pupils' personal and social skills very effectively. This makes a very strong contribution to the very good relationships in lessons and around the school. The conduct of staff and pupils reflects the school's very clear Christian values. Pupils develop a very strong understanding of the responsibilities of living in a community through a wide range of pastoral sessions. For example, pupils of all ages work together in well-planned sessions that increase their understanding of current issues. This and the programmes for relationships, sex education and alcohol and drug misuse play a very strong part in pupils' moral and social development. The school takes good account of pupils' varying stages of maturity
21. The school makes very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs. It ensures they have full access to the National Curriculum and includes them in all out-of-school activities, including residential visits. Staff take account of pupils' targets, needs and the Code of Practice⁴ when planning work. The very good provision is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The school's very good strategies for inclusion ensure equal treatment of boys and girls. It checks test results for achievement by gender and ability and identifies strengths and areas for improvement. Teachers use these findings to plan work that addresses identified weaknesses for all abilities.
22. The school uses individual expertise to improve provision in subjects such as music. This has a very good effect on achievement. Effective deployment of classroom assistants helps support and increase pupils' learning. The school works hard to

⁴ The Code of Practice is identified by the government and covers the way that pupils' special educational needs are supported in schools.

systematically improve their buildings. Staff make good use of this accommodation to ensure pupils learn and work hard. The outdoor provision for sporting activities is good. Pupils and staff use these facilities well to increase learning. All subjects have a good range of quality learning resources that stimulate pupils and make them want to learn. The new library is attractive and inviting and the books, fiction and non-fiction, are good in range, number and quality.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are **very well** cared for at the school. They received **good** support and guidance on academic and personal matters. Pupils are **very effectively** involved in the running of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very well looked after in a loving and safe environment.
- Child protection and health and safety matters are taken very seriously.
- The pastoral care system is very effective in supporting pupils.
- Pupils see the school council as very useful.

Commentary

23. The school greatly values this aspect of their provision and it is even better than the previous inspection. Pupils are very safe and secure at school. The staff show a high level of tender loving care, very consistent with their strong Christian principles. The sense of looking after the pupils' welfare permeates through the school, from the caretaker to the headteacher, from the catering staff enthusiastically providing breakfast for some pupils to the high level of staff involvement in after-school clubs. Staff show a clear respect when speaking to the pupils and provide very good role models in terms of kindness, good manners and being polite. The pupils commented to inspectors on how they feel safe at school, how they get on well with their teachers and how they can always go and talk to the headteacher if they have any worries.
24. The school has a high level of expertise in dealing with child protection issues. Senior staff are very well trained and all staff are kept up to date with current good practice. Health and safety is considered very important. The procedures are followed rigorously, for instance in the preparation of risk assessments and the regular checking of equipment. First aid cover is very good and well organised.
25. Pupils' personal development is very well supported through the pastoral care group system. Each teacher, for one session a week, has a group made up of pupils from all ages within the school. Pupils stay within the same group and teacher for as long as they are at the school. This means that pupils build up a long-term relationship with their pastoral care teacher that is valuable in terms of support and guidance. Staff stability over a number of years has added significantly to the effectiveness of this system. Lunchtime supervisory staff provide a secure and caring environment during the midday break. They build trusting relationships, which are evident from Reception through to Year 6.
26. The school council, made up of elected pupils from Years 5 and 6, and allied to the pastoral care groups, is seen by the pupils as a vital cog in the running of the school. Each week all pupils have an opportunity to bring up concerns or ideas to their school council members. The council then discusses points raised and things happen. The toilets have been redecorated and plans are being developed for more playground equipment, but pupils think the greatest impact has been on behaviour and particularly

on the reduction in bullying. Pupils report that if anything happens they can go to see their school council member who will know what to do to sort the problem out. Pupils express great confidence in the school council system.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have a good opinion of the school.
- Parents are kept well informed on school life and their children's progress; however, a significant minority shows little interest in their children's education.
- Parents' views are regularly sought and acted upon.
- Pupils benefit from strong links with the community.

Commentary

27. The school works hard to develop partnerships outside of school and this aspect has improved since the previous inspection. Parents have a good opinion of the school. This judgement is formed as a result of a questionnaire organised by the school in autumn 2004 and conversations with parents during the inspection. No parents attended the Ofsted pre-inspection parents' meeting. Parents praised the teachers, the way their children have to work hard and that the children become mature and responsible while at the school. Parents also commented favourably on the accessibility of the headteacher and how they feel comfortable talking to her.
28. The school is interested in what parents think of the school. Newsletters contain a slip to return if a parent has any concerns or comments. There is an annual questionnaire for parents; the most recent raised queries about the schedule of parents' meetings with teachers. The school has responded quickly and changed the dates of these meetings to meet the parents' views. Some parents commented on homework and the school is seeking clarification on what parents think needs improving.
29. The school keeps parents well informed. Detailed plans are sent home for each class listing what pupils will be learning in the next term. These plans are generally well written and allow parents to be more involved in their children's learning. Parents' meetings are held twice a year, although a significant minority of parents do not take advantage of these opportunities to discuss their children's progress. Annual reports are easy to read and generally free from jargon. The level of detail is inconsistent between classes. The sections on personal development are consistently well written and often contain useful advice on how to improve. Special meetings arranged to help parents understand the curriculum are not well attended. Newsletters are regular, chatty and informative.
30. Pupils benefit from the strong ties between the church, the parish and the school. The priest is a very familiar face in the school and parishioners are invited to the weekly mass held in the school. Pupils are taught to understand they have a role in the parish, for instance by singing to elderly parishioners at Christmas and distributing goods at Harvest time. Pupils learn well to appreciate a wider community by being involved in the annual Healthy Heart celebrations on the local estate and by making use of local facilities including the library and swimming pool.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership and management of the headteacher are **very good**. Leadership of key staff is **good**. Management is very good. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher sets a very clear educational direction for the work of the school; she manages change very well.
- Key staff play an important role in developing the work of the school.
- Several governors have only just taken up their roles and have not had time to develop all of their responsibilities; the chair of governors is very effective and has a high level of commitment to the school.
- The school manages staffing issues very well.
- Planning of long-term financial management is good; the management of resources is very good.

Commentary

31. The headteacher has a very clear vision of the importance of preparing all pupils for their future lives, both academically and personally, within a strong Christian ethos. She communicates this vision very effectively to her staff and creates a very strong whole-school team which is committed to working towards these goals. She sets a very good example in her high quality relationships and knowledge of all the pupils. The headteacher sets clear priorities for raising standards and this has a very positive impact on pupils' achievement. She ensures that the staff's focus remains firmly on using their time productively to get the best from the pupils. This results not only in the development of better teaching and learning in lessons, but also ensures that the school provides a rich and varied range of clubs to extend pupils' experiences. The headteacher introduces initiatives sensitively and then ensures that the changes are carefully evaluated. This results in provision that matches the needs of the pupils very well. The organisation of sessions, such as the weekly pastoral care where pupils across all age groups work in harmony together, is a very good example of the effectiveness of this strategy.
32. Key staff have a strong commitment to taking the work of the school forward. The acting deputy headteacher has a very good understanding of the community the school serves. He has a broad experience of teaching different year groups throughout the school, which gives him a good overview of the learning needs in different classes. The leadership and management of the literacy co-ordinator, special educational needs co-ordinator, nursery and reception co-ordinator, science and assessment co-ordinator are very good. All co-ordinators contribute effectively to the school improvement plan and understand how their subject needs to develop.
33. The chair of governor's leadership and management are very good. She has a very clear vision of the educational direction of the school and understands educational issues very well. Governance of the school is satisfactory. Several governors have long-term close links with the school. The parish priest develops a very good understanding of the work of the school in his role as governor through his weekly visits to the school. However, there are several new governors that have only recently taken up their roles. They are all very keen to serve the school. They have made a good start in working with the school through strategies such as meeting with their link subject co-ordinators. However, they have only completed one term of their term of

office and have not had enough time to come to terms with all the expectations for their roles.

34. The headteacher considers staffing issues very carefully. She deploys staff skilfully, matching their expertise to the needs of the different age groups. The movement of teachers between different age groups extends their expertise and also gives these teachers a wider understanding of the learning needs across different age groups. The deployment of support staff is efficient and well organised. Induction of new staff is very good. This results in new teachers settling into school routines very quickly, giving minimum disruption to the pupils. The headteacher considers issues arising from the workload reforms very carefully. She responds to these issues imaginatively, such as introducing French teaching throughout the school, in order to release staff for their preparation time.
35. Senior management plan carefully for long-term projects. This results in ongoing programmes for improving the school's provision. Several key building improvements, such as the computer suite and the literacy room, are having a significant impact on raising standards. The headteacher works hard to gain additional grants and then uses them skilfully to extend the range of the school's work. This is particularly evident in the funding for the Nurture Unit and specialist staff. This facility works very well in supporting pupils with very particular special educational needs. The school plans its budget carefully to ensure that staffing is organised for a full academic year. This ensures that new staffing arrangements are not disrupted part way through the year. This partly explains the surplus carried over from last year's funding. The other key reason for the large surplus was money the school had been saving to contribute to the major building works of the administration block and the refurbishment of the toilets. The administration team is very efficient. It provides a warm welcome to all visitors to the school and works sensitively with both staff and pupils. The headteacher is fully committed to providing every pupil with an education that meets her or his individual needs and, together with senior staff and the chair of governors, she manages resources very well in order to fulfil this aim. The school provides very good value for money.
36. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, with the quality of the leadership and management now being even stronger.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004			
Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	594,758	Balance from previous year	64,517
Total expenditure	549,836	Balance carried forward to the next	109,439 ⁵
Expenditure per pupil	2,536		

⁵ This amount includes funding that had not been deducted for some staffing costs and the considerable building costs for the new administration wing and the refurbishment of the toilets.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

37. All the adults in the nursery and reception classes make an excellent team. Children enter the nursery with levels of attainment that are well below the expected level. The majority have limited experiences and immature speaking and listening skills. Many children benefit from five terms in the nursery and three in the reception class. The inspirational environment, the very good quality of teaching and the strong emphasis on personal development ensures all children make very good progress and achieve very well. Staff make learning fun and provide an extensive range of interesting and challenging activities, making sure all participate. All children, including those who have special educational needs, are very well supported. There are no children with English as an additional language in these age groups. All play activities have a clear learning outcome, which is clearly displayed for adults to see. Therefore, when adults interact with children their talk is focused and purposeful. Teachers assess children carefully and, by using very good systems to full advantage, they address individual needs in their plans. Leadership is very good and there is enthusiastic management of the curriculum by knowledgeable and committed staff. The indoor curriculum is particularly good and the action plan shows very appropriate developmental points for this aspect of provision. The outdoor curriculum and activities for nursery children are regularly planned, although staff are aware that this area needs further development, especially for reception children. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn at an accelerated rate because teaching is consistently very good.
- Children value each other and play and learn together because adults are very good, caring role models.
- Behaviour is very good and children are confident and relaxed because relationships at all levels are very good.

Commentary

38. Teaching and learning are very good with many excellent features. This area of learning⁶ receives very strong emphasis, and achievement is excellent. By the end of reception class, the majority are on track to exceed the early learning goals. All adults adopt a clear and consistent approach in all they do so children feel safe and secure. They know they are valued in school so they show high levels of self-esteem and confidence. Staff quickly assess children and plan activities that match their stages of development. Children are therefore challenged and enjoy their work. In many situations children are taught in small supported groups, so each experiences a clear sense of achievement. They clap and praise each other. This has a very good impact

⁶ The curriculum for nursery and reception children is broken down into six different areas of learning.

on their spiritual development and consequently on all their learning. Children show high levels of concentration, whether playing alone with the wooden house, when using the remote control vehicle with a friend, or when learning about numbers in whole-group situations. They share equipment and take turns, even when not closely supervised by adults. Children show great pride in all they do. In the nursery they enjoy showing adults their work, such as their Spot the Dog booklets and their attempts at early writing. In the reception class they are proud of their collage pictures. Adults place strong emphasis on social skills, and children's behaviour is very good because all are very clear about the boundaries. Staff encourage the children to play together and have fun when learning. They laugh in the reception class when the puppet makes mistakes with letter sounds. Children are very friendly and easily engage staff and visitors in conversation.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make rapid progress in their speaking and listening skills.
- Adults place very strong emphasis on early reading skills.
- Writing activities are challenging and purposeful.

Commentary

39. Teaching and learning are very good and, although children achieve very well, attainment by the end of reception is on track to be below the expected level. Adults place strong emphasis on speaking and listening. Children easily explain that they 'have to listen to learn', and this attitude has a significant impact on all they do. Staff support children well and teach them an extensive range of new words through role-play, for example in the 'vet's surgery' in the nursery. In the reception class, children who take Oscar home for the weekend sit on a chair and tell the class what he has done. This encourages all to be involved in interesting and focused conversation. The excellent and regular attention given to early letter sounds has resulted in several children knowing most letter sounds. These teaching sessions are fun and involve everyone. In the reception class they are further extended to listen for first and final letter sounds in words. Here, they play an extensive variety of games during which children laugh, have fun and learn very quickly because the activities are so enjoyable. Children learn to handle books sensibly and to enjoy stories. Reception children use picture books and talk very sensibly about the story and the main characters. They make sensible predictions about what might happen. Some are beginning to recognise common words and attempt to sound out unknown words with confidence. In writing, children are very motivated to learn. Nursery children spontaneously use mark making to communicate because staff role model writing for them. Older children in the reception class enjoy recording Oscar's adventures, drawing pictures and copying over or under staff's writing. Some are already attempting to write words for themselves. All form letters well because of good teaching and adults ensure they hold pens and pencils correctly.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff encourage children to see that mathematics is all around them.
- Children achieve very well because staff teach number in an interesting and enjoyable way.

Commentary

40. Teaching and learning are very good and children achieve very well. In spite of this, standards are on track to be below the expected level by the end of reception because of children's very low starting point. Adults take every opportunity throughout the day to encourage children to see that mathematics is part of everyday life. Children count each other, look for circles when baking biscuits, and discuss the shape of the sandwiches they eat at lunchtime. Staff make sure that planned activities match each child's stage of development so all are very interested and make very good progress. Activities in water and sand from which children can choose focus on counting and number recognition. Staff ensure children are clear about positional words through a range of practical activities. They make models of different heights and lengths. In lessons, staff are very focused on what they want each child to learn. They place very good emphasis on number skills so children learn to count beyond ten. Fun activities during which a puppet misses out numbers encourages children to explain that six comes after seven, for example. In the nursery, resources are used very well and children learn about simple subtraction when they see leaves falling from the tree. They learn to count backwards and forwards, and rhymes are used well to consolidate understanding. In the reception class, good emphasis is given to mathematical vocabulary, and children understand what 'partitioning of numbers' means through practical involvement. Staff use interesting strategies such as five children stand in a row, then move into different sets. In this way they learn to consolidate their understanding that $3 + 2 = 5$, but so does $4 + 1$.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults provide a very good range of activities to extend children's understanding.

Commentary

41. Teaching and learning are very good. Standards overall are below the expected level when children leave reception, but they achieve very well. Staff plan well-focused activities which inspire children to learn about nature. They take them out to visit a farm where they learn about domestic animals. They invite a husky dog into the reception class so children find out that animals need food, water and grooming. When making biscuits in the nursery, children learn that ingredients change when mixed together. They keep some dough uncooked so children see the impact heat has had on the mixture. Nursery staff encourage children to use large and small construction equipment when making models. They learn how to use glue to join boxes together. In the reception class they use a good variety of tools. Reception children visit the computer suite to develop their skills. Nursery children use the computer in their room confidently and develop understanding well through playing with remote-control toys. Nursery staff plan exciting games outside, such as children having to identify special features through photographs to find out where Spot the Dog

is hiding. All children are encouraged to discuss birthdays and special events to develop a sense of time. Staff know children well and give them plenty of opportunities to talk about family events such as the imminent arrival of a new baby. Good emphasis is given to the Christian faith and reception children attend school assemblies. They develop understanding of different faiths through activities such as celebrating Christmas by acting out the Nativity and learning about special people from other faiths such as Rama and Sita.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is an extensive range of play opportunities for children to develop good co-ordination and balance.
- Children develop skills in handling tools and materials well.

Commentary

42. Teaching and learning are very good. Standards are at the expected level when children leave reception and they achieve very well. Several nursery children arrive at school in buggies and have had limited opportunities to run and walk in large spaces before coming to school. Staff therefore place strong emphasis on large physical skills. Children have good use of the school facilities, and teaching sessions are well planned. Nursery staff plan many activities for children to learn to climb, balance, jump and run outdoors. They learn to negotiate round objects when riding tricycles. There are many good opportunities for children to run vigorously and to use smaller resources including balls to develop their co-ordination skills. Indoors they use soft play equipment and learn to move under, over and through objects. Reception children play outside with infant pupils each day, but have limited access to the enclosed outdoor area. They have regular planned indoor sessions where they learn, for example, to balance and move along benches, to climb onto a base and jump off safely. Children are learning to manipulate objects, such as small items for collage work and dough. They learn to use paint brushes, mix with wooden spoons, and use glue spreaders. They have daily opportunities to use felt pens and older children control pencils with consistent accuracy. Children enjoy their snack of fresh fruit and milk each day and know the importance of exercise to make the heart beat fast.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good play opportunities for children to express their feelings and ideas.
- Children achieve particularly well in music

Commentary

43. Teaching and learning are very good. Standards are at the expected level when children leave reception and they achieve very well. Staff provide a very good range of activities to foster children's creativity. Art materials are always on hand and children can choose what they would like to do. They learn to paint and mix colours and to make collage pictures. Staff work hard to teach children how to play in role by pretending with them. Very good emphasis is

given to music where children learn to keep a regular beat with percussion instruments. Children sing melodiously and with great enjoyment; they know the words to many songs. They are encouraged to express their feelings throughout the day. They enjoy finding posters the wrong way round and blame *Tinkerbell* for doing it. Whenever a discovery is made, children show great pleasure and anticipation.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well overall in the infant and junior classes and standards are above average in listening and reading throughout the school.
- There has been a significant improvement in speaking and writing since the previous inspection but standards are lower than listening and reading by Year 6 and pupils' presentation is untidy.
- The good quality teaching and very good leadership are making positive contributions to pupils' achievement.
- The very good support for pupils with special educational needs helps them to do well in improving their literacy skills, and more able pupils achieve particularly well.
- Pupils use their literacy skills well in other subjects and are well supported in the reading and writing club.

Commentary

44. There has been a significant improvement in English since the previous inspection. This is because of the school's focus on raising standards through a wide range of innovative approaches such as drama. In the 2004 national tests, standards in Year 2 were above average in reading and writing. The school is continuing to maintain these standards. In Year 6, standards were below average in the 2004 national tests. This shows a decline from 2003, but there was a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in literacy in the 2004 group of pupils. This depressed standards. The inspection judges current Year 6 standards as average. This is an improvement since 2004 and represents very good achievement because these pupils were well below average when they were in Year 2. The very good quality support in nurture sessions and in class ensures that pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Staff support pupils with English as an additional language sensitively and they achieve well because they expect to succeed. Teachers have high expectations of more able pupils and they achieve very well.
45. The school is successful in maintaining high standards in reading throughout the infant and junior classes. This leads to above average standards by Year 6. It represents very good achievement because most pupils enter the school with well below average skills in reading. This success is because the school places a high priority on reading and gives pupils interesting and stimulating work. For example, many pupils choose to attend the lunchtime reading and writing club and thoroughly enjoy the non-pressured work. Teachers and other adults regularly hear pupils read on an individual basis in addition to group reading sessions in lessons. They also succeed in encouraging pupils to read regularly to adults at home. This contributes positively to their progress and achievement. It ensures Year 2 pupils read accurately and talk about their books confidently and enthusiastically. All abilities use a suitably wide range of strategies to

work out unfamiliar words. By Year 6, pupils read a wide range of different books. They achieve well in talking about different authors and are confident in identifying key features of characters or plots within the texts. Pupils know how to use non-fiction texts and confidently use the Internet for research purposes. The recent refurbishment of the library is proving very successful in interesting all abilities, as well as both boys and girls, in reading.

46. Standards in writing are not as good as those in reading but there is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils write confidently but their untidy presentation and limited vocabulary restrict their achievement. The school knows this and has plans in hand to make improvements. Successful strategies for improving writing include promoting writing within other subjects, writing for fun at lunchtime and the use of writing frames. Class teachers plan creative and interesting lessons to stimulate writing for different purposes and the quality of pupils' written work reflects this. Effective marking relates to targets and learning objectives and helps pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Pupils write confidently across a range of different styles and have a secure level of spelling skills, but their handwriting is not well formed. Teachers increase the range of writing opportunities in the junior classes systematically. By Year 6, pupils tackle different styles confidently but still have difficulties with writing neatly and legibly. They use ICT effectively to support their writing. This is evident in their newspaper reports and word processing skills.
47. Standards in listening are above expectations throughout the school. Speaking standards are less good but are satisfactory overall. This is a whole-school concern and all teachers plan opportunities for pupils to talk as well as listen to each other. The opportunities for drama within lessons are having a positive effect on pupils' speaking skills. Pupils enjoy these sessions and are beginning to speak confidently and clearly. By Year 6, most pupils respond confidently to questions in whole-class sessions. Teachers make sure pupils speak audibly and take every opportunity to increase their vocabulary. This gives pupils a wider range of language and improves their understanding of English. Teachers support pupils with English as an additional language very effectively. This enables them to take full part in whole-class discussions and extends their speaking and listening skills very well.
48. Teaching of English is good overall, with many very good and excellent features. All teachers make their literacy lessons interesting and enjoyable and encourage pupils to join in all activities. The thorough planning ensures teachers and support staff are well prepared for their lessons. Teachers use the attractive literacy displays well to help pupils in their language work. All adults are very effective in encouraging pupils to undertake new learning. This produces a high level of confidence in pupils and increases their self-esteem. The very good partnership between teachers and classroom assistants is particularly effective with pupils with special educational needs and enables them to achieve well. Teachers do not put enough emphasis on handwriting and presentation skills. Staff use the assessment systems very well to ensure that the work that they provide matches individual needs.
49. The very good leadership and management of the co-ordinator are helping the school to move forward in raising standards. Her very clear action plan and monitoring of pupils' work are already having an effect on standards in writing. She is very enthusiastic and shares her knowledge very effectively with colleagues. This increases other adults' confidence and knowledge and is of direct benefit to pupils.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. Teachers ensure that pupils make good use of their reading and writing skills in other subjects. For instance, pupils write factual accounts in science, geography and history and use ICT confidently to present finished products. Opportunities for developing speaking and listening are good in the pastoral care sessions when all age groups work together.

French

51. At the time of the inspection the school was in its second week of teaching French throughout the school. It is therefore too early to judge provision overall. The quality of the lesson sampled was very good. The specialist teacher works closely with the class teacher. She engenders a great deal of enthusiasm from the pupils for this subject. There is a strong emphasis on speaking, and learning is carefully structured to ensure a high level of success for all pupils. There are good opportunities for reinforcing learning through displays and labels around the school. Across the different age groups pupils are excited about using a foreign language and are keen to engage in simple conversations when they find out that an adult can speak this language.
52. The headteacher has a very clear vision about the importance of raising pupils' self-esteem through acquiring a second language. She also greatly values this initiative to ensure pupils transfer their understanding and learning of a foreign language to develop their English language skills. This new initiative offers good preparation for pupils when they move to the secondary school.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvement since the previous inspection is very good; standards were falling, now they are rising.
- Pupils achieve very well through the school although their presentation is untidy.
- Teachers have very high expectations of all pupils.
- Assessment systems track pupils' progress very carefully and this data is used very well to raise standards.
- The school provides a rich and varied curriculum.
- Leadership and management place a high priority on this subject.

Commentary

53. The school has set a high priority on raising standards in mathematics and its strategies have been very successful. The trend in standards in the national tests has been above average both in Year 2 and Year 6. Compared with schools with a similar proportion of free school meals, standards in the 2004 national tests are very high in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. Compared with schools of similar prior attainment, standards in Year 6 are also well above average.
54. The inspection judges standards as above average in Year 2. This confirms the standards in the national tests in the years 2002 and 2003. The 2004 cohort had a higher proportion of more able pupils than usual. Pupils achieve very well in the infant

classes. In Year 1, pupils handle tens and units confidently at a higher level than expected. By Year 2, pupils enjoy working with multiples of twos, fives, and tens and calculate these sums accurately in their heads. Pupils approach mental mathematics with enthusiasm because teachers make this session fun. Teachers give pupils with special educational needs great encouragement. They provide additional questions to support their understanding. Classroom assistants form very good relationships with these pupils and work well with them during group work. This ensures that these pupils achieve well. Pupils with English as an additional language also achieve well. Teachers ensure that they understand the tasks, and their use of mathematical symbols is not hampered by misunderstandings of language.

55. Standards in Year 6 are above average. This represents very good achievement as the standards in this year group were below average in Year 2. The enjoyment evident in the infant classes continues in the junior classes. Teachers provide very good role models for pupils by approaching this subject with very positive attitudes, and in many cases, pupils cannot wait to find out what they are going to do next. In Year 6, pupils handle all the mathematical operations with confidence. Their use of positive and negative numbers is accurate. Pupils move between decimals and fractions with ease. They use formulae correctly to calculate areas and perimeters because teachers introduce them to this work systematically. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language make the same good progress in the junior classes as they do in the infant classes.
56. Teaching is good overall. It is very good in the infant classes and good in the junior classes. A key feature of all teaching is the emphasis on challenging the more able pupils. Whole-class sessions are very demanding, but teachers give every pupil great encouragement and they are not daunted by the high expectations. The use of random selection of pupils to answer questions in whole-class sessions works very well. Pupils never know if it will be their turn to answer and this produces very good levels of concentration. Teachers plan carefully for group work and ensure that there is different work to match different pupils' needs. Pupils explain their mathematical thinking confidently because teachers expect them to give detailed explanations in their responses. Teachers encourage pupils to use their own methods in calculations and celebrate the differences in pupils' mathematical strategies. Pupils produce a good volume of written work because teachers expect this. However, there is not enough emphasis on presenting work neatly. There is a great variety in the quality of teachers' own handwriting when they mark pupils' work.
57. Assessment systems are very good. Each year group's progress is carefully analysed and used to raise standards. Teachers expect to get a clear analysis of pupils' progress both in mathematics overall and in mental mathematics. The school trials a wide range of different types of assessment, but always chooses systems that work well for the school.
58. The school provides a very good balance across the different aspects of the mathematics curriculum. Investigative mathematics is threaded through all the other aspects of the subject, which gives pupils confidence in handling mathematical problems. This systematic coverage has a very positive impact on raising standards.
59. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinators, headteacher and assessment co-ordinator all work well together to analyse the school's performance and to continually strive to improve provision. However, the school plans to evaluate its use at the end of the year.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Teachers use the computer suite well to develop numeracy skills through the use of ICT programs. Year 5 teachers use information from physical education well to develop measurement and data-handling skills effectively. Pupils benefit from tasks such as collecting the different distances achieved in long and high jump and creating databases and line graphs to show the variables for the class. Pupils enjoy producing simple tables and charts in science to show the outcome of their investigations. Opportunities are missed to extend pupils' skills of estimating and measuring in design and technology and for developing an understanding of shape in art and design.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching results in all pupils achieving very well.
- Teaching is good, with some very good features, and has improved since the last inspection.
- There is very good provision for experimental and investigative science.
- The subject leader is knowledgeable and innovative.

Commentary

61. Standards in the national tests in Year 6 have been rising steadily up to last year when there was a drop because of the higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Nevertheless, standards were average. Compared with schools with similar free school meals, standards were well above average and in 2003, standards were very high. In Year 2, teacher assessment shows that standards were average at Level 2 and above, but well above average at the higher level. The inspection judges standards at the end of Year 2 as above the expected level, and at the expected level by the end of Year 6, although a significant number of pupils now reach higher than the expected levels. This represents very good achievement for all pupils. Pupils in Year 6 have achieved particularly well based on their assessment when they were in Year 2. Teachers have high expectations and pitch their lessons so that all are well challenged. Those who have special educational needs make very good progress, because of the help they receive both from teachers and classroom assistants. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well and particularly enjoy the practical work. More able pupils usually find that there is an extra challenge to keep them on their toes.
62. Teaching is good overall with very good features in both the infant and the junior classes. Teachers organise science lessons well and make learning very interesting for all pupils. Teachers ensure that pupils are very clear about what they are going to learn and link it to what has gone before. This makes learning truly meaningful for pupils. They make good references to science in everyday life so pupils are interested and motivated to learn. By Year 2, pupils have a good understanding across the range of different scientific knowledge, such as the use of different symbols to represent electrical circuits or the classification of different plants and animals. Pupils have confident investigative skills and carry out experiments enthusiastically. Teachers use

literacy well to set up investigations, such as pupils finding out why some materials are better than others for constructing a house in the story of the *Three Pigs*. Older pupils in Year 6 learn about circuits, and the problems people have with Christmas tree lights are discussed thoroughly. In this way, pupils' understanding is secure.

63. In lessons, teachers put good emphasis on investigation and experimentation. In this way, pupils' knowledge improves through practical hands-on experiences. In pupils' books it is clear that they are now developing their investigation skills. Prior to experimentation, teachers model what pupils are supposed to do so they undertake investigations with confidence and enthusiasm. Pupils are encouraged to make predictions. They observe what is happening, discuss and record their findings and draw conclusions. All pupils say they enjoy science because teachers make learning fun for them so they are well motivated to learn. They work very well together in pairs and in small groups. They show great excitement when they master the challenge of making parallel circuits in Year 6 and use switches to control each circuit. In Years 4/5 they are amazed at the unexpected discovery that the size of the seeds in fruits is not related to the actual size of the fruit. Teachers sometimes make good links between science and other subjects. For example, they use branching data in ICT. When learning about the human body they measure the distance and heights of jumps in physical education and record their findings. Assessment systems are very good and teachers use them very effectively.
64. Leadership and management in the subject are very good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable, with a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses. She shows innovation in the way she has reviewed the curriculum and liaises with other primary school science co-ordinators. She manages the curriculum well, raising the quality of teaching, and she uses assessments effectively to identify gaps in learning. She supports the nature club through which pupils have planted trees in the school grounds, created compost bins, positioned bird tables and cared for a small butterfly farm.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The regular use of the good quality computer suite is steadily raising standards.
- Standards are above expectations in the infant classes, but below the expected level in Year 6.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge in the infant classes; however, they miss opportunities to extend ICT skills during lessons in their classrooms.
- Assessment systems are not effective enough.

Commentary

65. There has been a considerable improvement in both the accommodation and the resources since the previous inspection. The large computer suite, with its good number of computers, ensures that pupils have regular opportunities to extend their skills and understanding of ICT. This is having a very positive impact on raising standards. However, the suite has only been fully in use for five terms. This has not allowed the current Year 6 pupils enough time to extend their skills in order to reach the expected level for their age.

66. Achievement is good in the infant classes and by Year 2 standards are above expectations. This is because all the pupils have plenty of time to regularly develop their skills. Teachers organise pupils carefully to ensure that pupils with special educational needs work with more able pupils. Teachers insist that each pupil has time to use the keyboard and this ensures that different needs are met fully. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well because teachers check that they understand the tasks, and the visual nature of the learning gives them extra confidence. All infant pupils open computer files and save and print their work confidently. They thoroughly enjoy working out instructions for programmable toys because teachers give such clear instructions and make the learning great fun.
67. Achievement is satisfactory in the junior classes. Between Years 3 and 5, pupils have confidence in using the range of different programs. They move between varying menus systematically and enjoy using the different available options. By Year 5, pupils enter data accurately on spreadsheets and produce simple line graphs to represent their statistics. They use publisher and multi-media presentations confidently to present their work. They produce interesting branching databases. Work in different graphics and the use of control and modelling is not as advanced as other aspects of the ICT curriculum. The Year 6 pupils enjoy working in the computer suite but their skills are not as advanced as the younger pupils because they have not benefited from developing their skills over time. The level of skills varies considerably, based on whether pupils have regular access to computers at home.
68. Teaching is good in the infant classes and satisfactory in the junior classes. All teachers plan interesting tasks and give pupils great encouragement to do their best. Pupils behave very well in the computer suite because teachers explain the rules very clearly and then insist that they are carried out. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop personal skills through this subject. They co-operate very well in pairs on the computers and are very confident in using their personal preferences or experiences in their work, such as producing multi-media presentations about themselves. Teachers in the infants have good subject knowledge and use it well to challenge more able pupils or to find alternative programs if any technical problems occur. Teachers' subject knowledge in the juniors is satisfactory overall, but they do not have the same level of confidence. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards well in the computer suite to demonstrate programs or to recap on learning at the end of lessons. However, the interactive whiteboards in classrooms had only been in place for a week when the inspection took place. Teachers were therefore tentative about their use across different lessons, but enthusiastic to extend their skills. They miss opportunities for pupils to use computers in the classrooms during group work.
69. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has prioritised its efforts on raising standards in English, mathematics and science. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is enthusiastic about her subject. She works hard over time to support her colleagues. The school evaluates some of the aspects of this subject well. It acts well on this evaluation, such as changing the pattern of lessons to maximise pupils' concentration. However, assessment systems are unsatisfactory. Although the school is considering different ways of recording pupils' progress, the current arrangements do not give enough information for teachers when pupils move into their class. There is not enough information about the range in the levels of achievement across the different elements of the ICT curriculum, which reduces the effectiveness of teachers' planning when they introduce new topics.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. The use of ICT is satisfactory overall. Teachers use the computer suite effectively to extend literacy and numeracy skills. The organisation throughout the school for one lesson per week to work on computers to extend these aspects works well. Teachers use interesting tasks to stimulate pupils' interest in this work, such as a cartoon with funny content, where pupils fill in the speech bubbles. The school has not systematically identified the way that ICT links across other subjects. Opportunities are missed to reinforce learning in other curriculum areas.

HUMANITIES

71. Only one lesson was seen in **geography**. It is therefore not possible to make a judgement about provision, teaching or learning. Pupils' work in their books and around school indicates they achieve standards that meet those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This shows a good level of achievement from a very low base and reflects the findings of the previous inspection. It is clear that a wide range of visits and visitors play an important part in making work interesting and relevant. Work in the lesson seen confirms this judgement. Pupils eagerly discussed the clothes Barnaby Bear would need for a visit to Sweden. This increased their knowledge of different climates and linked very well with their work in science. The effective subject leader has a clear overview of standards and checks pupils' work and teachers' planning regularly. She uses a simple assessment system to show how well pupils are doing as they move through the school. This gives a clear picture of achievement and progress.
72. No **history** lessons were seen during the course of the inspection. It is not possible, therefore, to make a secure judgement about provision or the quality of teaching and learning. The work in pupils' books shows their work in history is interesting and stimulating, although some say they find the subject boring. Indications are that standards meet those expected by the ages of seven and eleven. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Pupils throughout the school have a good understanding of the history around Gateshead. The school makes good use of the local area to enrich and deepen pupils' knowledge. This ensures that pupils have a clear understanding of change and the impact on people's lives. They make effective use of books and the Internet for independent research. The subject co-ordinator is currently absent but systems that check how well pupils are learning give a clear picture of achievement across the school.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

73. It was not possible to make a secure judgement about provision or the quality of teaching and learning in **art and design** because there were not enough lessons available during the inspection. Work was sampled through scrutiny of pupils' work on display. The standard of this work is at the expected level. Pupils in the infant class draw portraits from direct observation and the detail improves as pupils move up the school. They create interesting work on skeletons using white on black and learn to mix paint to match the colours of autumn leaves. Pupils in Year 6 draw reflections from faces and figures and the work displayed shows good detail. There are good links with history when pupils in Years 4 and 5 paint portraits of historical figures from the Tudor period. However, there are missed opportunities in the school to use art more creatively across the curriculum or to develop skills in ICT.

74. As in art and design, there were not enough lessons available in **design and technology** during the inspection to make secure judgements about provision and teaching and learning. Design and technology was sampled through scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and observation of one lesson. Lessons are planned using national guidelines and topics have been devised to ensure that skills are taught in a systematic way so that pupils have opportunities to develop their ideas through investigation and making. Pupils say they enjoy design and technology. Photographs of the work of older pupils show they have learned to use a variety of tools and have found different ways of joining materials. In their design books all pupils sketch their ideas and evaluate their work. Their designs include stick puppets, sandwiches, kitchen roll holders and a pencil case. In a good lesson in Years 1 and 2, pupils were examining different types of puppets to see the materials from which they are made. The teacher encouraged pupils to make up their own designs and to label each part. Displays in this class show they have designed a lighthouse and have used their science skills to make a circuit to light the bulb. Pupils in Year 1 learn to knot string and plait ribbon. They develop joining skills effectively through the use of strategies such as the use of split pins to make paper spin.
75. It was not possible to inspect **physical education** in full so there are no judgements about overall provision or teaching and learning. Judgements are made based on the evidence the school produced for their Activemark, scrutiny of teachers' planning and records, discussions with the co-ordinator and headteacher, observation of one lesson and some school clubs. Physical education has a strong profile in the school. The leadership and management of the co-ordinator are very good. She provides clear termly plans for all teachers, which ensure a very good level of continuity for pupils across all the different aspects of this subject as they move through the school. She has regular opportunities to monitor the work of staff, which helps and supports them in their teaching. In the one good lesson seen, pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieved well. They worked hard and were given plenty of time to improve their throwing and receiving skills through a good range of activities, where resources were used to full advantage. Pupils say they enjoy the subject and many of them benefit from a broad range of out-of-school activities. Standards in swimming in Year 6 are below the expected level, despite the regular opportunities the school provides each year for pupils to develop these skills. The provision of school clubs is very good. Seasonal activities, including dance, line dancing, cheerleading (for pupils in Years 1 and 2), cross-country, athletics, keep-fit, basketball and football, are popular and well attended. The co-ordinator makes very good use of government initiatives, such as the School Sports Co-ordinator programme to extend the opportunities for pupils in aspects such as basketball, athletics and indoor sports challenges. The co-ordinator organises different types of sports days each year with themes such as the Olympic Games, which extends pupils' historical understanding well. Parents support this event very well. The co-ordinator develops ICT skills effectively in this subject by using strategies such as a virtual website based on the sports day.
76. **Music** was sampled in assemblies and by talking to pupils. The standard of singing in junior classes is very high. The school has a well-considered action plan to ensure the good profile of music is maintained in the school. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who works hard to encourage external support for pupils. Over 90 pupils have instrumental lessons by trained musicians and this has a strong impact on pupils' understanding. Teachers from the Music Support Service visit the school and take time to carefully introduce pupils to instruments, including the violin. The sessions are very interesting and motivate pupils to want to learn to play.

Additional visitors to the school have recently included a Cuban drummer. Hymn practice for junior pupils is a truly spiritual occasion. During the session observed, the quality of teaching by the lead teacher was excellent. All teachers sit near their pupils encouraging them. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the sessions and all fully participate. Boys and girls in Year 6 are a particularly good example for younger pupils in the school. At Christmas, pupils sing and play instruments during the festive productions. They sing carols for the local elderly community. The school orchestra practises regularly and is well attended.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

77. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of the provision of this subject. The organisation of the school council is very good. Councillors are very proud of their role and play an active part in taking responsibility throughout the school through tasks such as ensuring pupils line up sensibly at the end of playtimes. There are very good systems for pupils to take their suggestions and concerns to the council through their weekly pastoral sessions. Councillors take these suggestions very seriously and pupils are developing a very good understanding of citizenship. The weekly pastoral sessions are a very valuable part of the work of the school. The organisation of groups with pupils from across the whole age range from reception to Year 6 develops very good social skills. Older pupils work very sensitively with much younger children and extend their relationships outside of these sessions to the playground. The programme of work for these pastoral sessions is planned very effectively. Work begins with pupils' own experiences and then develops to the international context where they learn about issues such as the United Nation's Charter for Children. The school promotes health education effectively through its science programmes.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2
Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).	