

INSPECTION REPORT

**Prior's Mill Church of England Controlled Primary
School**

Billingham

LEA area: Stockton

Unique reference number: 111667

Head teacher: Mrs J Duell

Reporting inspector: Mr A Smith
18037

Dates of inspection: 19th – 22nd May 2003

Inspection number: 247130

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Clifton Avenue Wolviston Court Billingham
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Appropriate authority:	Stockton on Tees
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Evans
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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18037	Mr A Smith	Registered inspector	Music	What sort of school is it?
			Physical Education	How well are pupils taught?
				How well is the school led and managed?
				What should the school do to improve further?
11368	Mrs K Lee	Lay inspector		Pupil's attitudes, values and personal development
				How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27477	Mrs J Mitchell	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Art and design	
			Design and technology	
			Foundation Stage	
21397	Mrs I Bradbury	Team inspector	English	
			Religious education	
			Special educational needs	
			Citizenship	
32133	Mrs J Elton	Team inspector	Mathematics	
			Geography	
			English as an additional language	
17709	Mr A Giles	Team inspector	Science	The school's results and pupils' achievements
			History	
			Educational inclusion	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Prior's Mill Church of England Controlled Primary School is much bigger than most schools with 458 pupils on roll aged between 4 and 11 years. There are 7 classes in the infants made up of pupils from the same year group. The 10 classes in the juniors are of mixed age groups. A further 72 children attend part-time in the nursery. The backgrounds of the pupils are varied and cover a wide social spectrum. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, 4.5 per cent, is below the national average. There are 51 pupils on the school's special educational needs register. This is 11 per cent of the school's pupils and is below average when compared to all schools. Their needs are wide ranging but are mostly moderate learning difficulties in language and numeracy and a small number of pupils have more complex difficulties. There are 7 pupils with statements of special educational need and this is below the national average. Fourteen pupils are from ethnic minority groups and 3 of these pupils speak English as an additional language or are at an early stage of language acquisition. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is average and includes the full range.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Prior's Mill is a good and rapidly improving school. The head teacher gives inspirational leadership that is motivating staff and pupils alike. Although, she is still relatively new to the post, she has created an exciting learning environment. She receives excellent support from staff, parents and a very knowledgeable governing body. Teaching and learning throughout the school are good, pupils make good progress and as a result standards are rising quickly. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and behave very well. This is a very caring, increasingly effective school, which provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The head teacher offers excellent leadership, which is bringing about very effective change and leading to rapid school improvement.
- There is a very strong partnership between the head, staff, parents and governors.
- The quality of teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing.
- Standards in science.
- The monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school by subject co-ordinators.
- Opportunities for creative and independent learning in the reception classes.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection in October 1997. However, much of this improvement has taken place since January 2002 when the present head teacher was appointed. Assessment procedures are now satisfactory. There is an assessment plan for each teacher, which encompasses a pupil profile and self-assessment, a file tracking individual progress from base line to Year 6, and a set of curricular, end of year review sheets for each pupil in each subject. Curriculum leaders have more opportunities to share curriculum expertise and knowledge and effectively monitor

the planning of colleagues. However, they have limited time to observe teaching and learning in their subject and this aspect of their work is a management priority for the future. Each governor gives very effective support to a curriculum area and this has brought about significant improvement to the issue of governing body monitoring and evaluation. As a result, governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				<i>Key</i>
	All schools			Similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	C	C	C	D	well above average A above average B Average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	C	C	C	D	
science	D	E	D	E	

At Year 6, results in 2002 were in line with the national average in English and mathematics and below the average in science. However, in the work seen during the inspection, standards for pupils aged eleven were above the national expectations in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics. Standards in writing and science meet the expectation. Pupils generally make good progress in the juniors other than in writing and science. The standards achieved by pupils at the age of eleven are similar to those found at the previous inspection, other than in writing and science where they are lower. It is clear that this is a school where standards are rising quickly as a result of the inspirational leadership of the new head teacher. The whole school approach to raising standards has led to more consistent, improved approaches to teaching and learning, which has effectively impacted on pupils' learning. Prior's Mill has the capacity to improve further upon the recent significant improvements.

Results in tests for 2002 for pupils in Year 2 were lower than usual, due to higher levels of pupils with special educational needs. Standards have usually been in line with, or above national averages, particularly in reading. However, in the work seen during the inspection, standards for pupils aged seven exceeds expectations in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics, although standards in writing are weaker. This represents consistently sound and very often, good progress for these pupils from when they first enter school. The standards achieved by pupils at the age of seven are similar to those found at the previous inspection.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils of all ages show very good attitudes to their learning. Pupils show enthusiasm for their life in school, which enables them to work hard in lessons and so make good progress.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of pupils is very good in lessons and around school. During playtimes and lunchtimes pupils are also very well behaved and in

	assemblies behaviour is excellent as pupils respond to the family atmosphere.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils is good. They have very good relationships with adults and each other. They follow the example set by all adults and are friendly and polite.
Attendance	Attendance levels are good in comparison with other schools with pupils arriving promptly and settling quickly into lessons.

The very good behaviour is a reflection of the social and moral teaching in school and the high expectations and calm working atmosphere, promoted by most class teachers.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching in the nursery and reception classes is good throughout and this leads to good learning. However, there are insufficient opportunities for creative and independent learning in the reception class. In the infants and juniors teaching is good and pupils continue to learn well. Teaching has improved since the last inspection; the proportion of good and very good teaching has increased. The teaching of numeracy skills is consistently good. The teaching of literacy skills lacks the same consistency, particularly in the teaching of writing where there are missed opportunities for imaginative writing. The teaching of science lacks challenge in some lessons, particularly in years 3 and 4 where pupils make unsatisfactory progress. The management of pupils is very good and this enables them to concentrate on their work and make good progress. The school works very hard to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs have full access to all aspects of the curriculum.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Recent innovations have improved curriculum provision. There is now a good quality and range of learning opportunities. Arrangements to set groups according to ability are working well in literacy and numeracy.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and the school's use of the new Code of Practice is effectively working to support pupils' progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision that the school makes for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is very good. A particular strength within this area are the assemblies, especially those taken by the head teacher, which provide inspiration and underpin the ethos of the school as a caring, loving community where everyone has worth and is valued.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a school where all pupils are valued and cared for very well. The caring ethos and procedures identified in the previous inspection have been strengthened further.

The school promotes a very good partnership with parents, which enables them to work closely together for the benefit of all pupils. Most parents are very supportive of the school's work. They

feel that their children are happy in school and that they make good progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school are very good. The head teacher gives inspirational leadership that is motivating staff and pupils alike. Subject co-ordinators have too few opportunities to observe lessons and monitor pupils' progress.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body makes a very good contribution to the work of the school. Governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are closely involved in the evaluation of the school development plan.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring and evaluation of performance is good. However, the head teacher is currently implementing a strategy of rigorous analysis of standards, frequent checking of progress towards targets in the school development plan and regular observations of teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Good. There is a clear link between development planning and finance and the head teacher and governors work hard to get the best value for the money they spend. The school provides good value for money.

There is a sufficient number of qualified teaching and support staff overall. The provision of support staff overall is satisfactory but most of these are based in the older classes supporting pupils with special educational needs. The school's accommodation is good. The caretaker and cleaners maintain the buildings to a high standard. Resources across the school are always satisfactory and often good. Lack of access to the Internet, although not the school's fault, is restricting progress in ICT and this affects all aspects of learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy coming to school • The teaching is good and their children make good progress • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems • The school expects their children to work hard and do their best • The school is helping their child to become mature and responsible • Behaviour in the school is good • The school is well led and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would like to be better informed about how their child is getting on • The range of activities outside lessons

Parents' views of the school are generally good and the vast majority of parents are positive about all aspects of school life. The inspection team agrees that parents are right in the positive views they hold of the school. Inspection findings show that parents are well informed about pupils' progress and that the school provides a satisfactory range of activities outside lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Standards have generally been maintained since the last inspection. This is not the case in writing and science, where standards are lower. However, it is clear from work seen during the inspection that overall standards have risen significantly since January 2002 when the present head teacher was appointed. She has implemented a whole school approach to raising standards and this has led to more consistent, improved approaches to teaching and learning, which is effectively impacting on pupils' learning and progress. Areas for improvement in the teaching of writing and science have speedily been identified and all staff are working very hard to raise standards in these subjects to match those attained by pupils in reading, speaking and listening and mathematics. Pupils in the Foundation Stage make good progress. Attainment on entry to the school is in line with the national average and by the time they enter Year 1 their attainment in communication, language and literacy and in mathematics is at least in line with national averages.

2 It is clear from work seen during the inspection that standards in English are good in speaking and listening and reading throughout the school and satisfactory in writing. At the end of Year 6, results in English were at the national average but below average when compared to similar schools. In the most recent national tests seven year old pupils achieved results below the national average in reading and writing, particularly the boys. However the number of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading was above the national average. Under the leadership of the new head teacher, the need to raise standards, predominantly in writing has been quickly realised. A good programme of intervention has been introduced with the focus on making writing interesting particularly to raise boys' standards throughout the school. This includes additional help to boost progress in writing for older pupils, extended writing lessons to help pupils write more fluently, as well as additional literacy support for the less able pupils. As a result, pupils make good progress in speaking and listening and reading and satisfactory progress in writing where there are opportunities for improvement. The school has assessed pupils' progress in all classes over the last year for both reading and writing and this shows consistently good progress.

3 Standards of work in mathematics seen during the inspection are good throughout the school. This judgement matches the findings of the previous inspection report. These standards are higher than the most recent national tests where the standards for seven-year olds were below national averages and well below average when compared to similar schools. In tests for 11 year olds standards were at the national average, but below average when compared to schools in similar contexts. Presently pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs, make good progress as they move through the school.

4 In the work seen during the inspection standards in science for pupils aged seven and 11 are satisfactory. Importantly those achieved by the older and more able pupils have risen as a result of a more consistent policy of requiring pupils to apply their learning into appropriate scientific investigations. However there are still important gaps in understanding across all areas of study that prevent all pupils from completing investigations with the necessary independence and confidence. Present standards in Year 6 are rising and are higher than in the most recent national tests, although the high numbers of pupils with special education needs affects the results. The most recent written tests for 11 year olds show standards to be well below the national average and also in comparison with similar schools. Standards at the higher level 5, when compared to similar schools nationally, are low. Boys do significantly better in these tests than girls. These results continued a trend of low

standards since the last inspection.

5 Standards in information and communication technology are in line with those expected for pupils at the ages of seven and eleven. Since the last inspection the school has improved its hardware and embarked on staff training and makes effective use of its new computer suite. Pupils are enthusiastic and confident using ICT and make satisfactory progress through the school. However, further progress is being hampered by the lack of an Internet connection, although this is not the fault of the school.

6 Standards in religious education are satisfactory and this is the same as during the previous inspection. Co-ordination of the subject has improved and this is beginning to raise standards. Limited evidence shows art and design standards to be in line with those expected nationally at the age of seven and 11 years. However there is limited evidence of three-dimensional work or work with textiles. Display of work has a high profile in school. Since the last inspection standards in music have improved and pupils match the standards expected by the age of seven and exceed them by 11. By the end of Year 6 standards in games and athletics are average and have been maintained since the last inspection. Standards in geography, history and design and technology have been maintained since the previous inspection and match those seen in schools nationally.

7 Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress, which is in line with the previous inspection. The good progress they make is the result of good support received from the classroom assistants, the school's use of grouping for teaching and learning in English and mathematics and good individual education plans support their progress well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8 Pupils of all ages show very good attitudes to their learning. This has improved since the previous inspection and is now a strength of the school. Pupils show enthusiasm for their life in school, which enables them to work hard in lessons and so make good progress. They try hard and concentrate well due to the good teaching and interesting lessons. For example, Year 6 pupils showed excellent attitudes in a science lesson, investigating the principles of dissolving. They concentrated throughout the lesson and collaborated very well in groups as they took part in the experiment to find the factors which affect the dissolving of jelly. Most parents are agreed that their children are happy to come to school and pupils themselves say that they learn "fun stuff". Attendance levels are good in comparison with other schools with pupils arriving promptly and settling quickly into lessons.

9 The behaviour of pupils is very good in lessons and around school. During playtimes and lunchtimes pupils are also very well behaved and in assemblies behaviour is excellent as pupils respond to the family atmosphere. There have been no exclusions and parents are right to be happy with the high standards of behaviour. This very good behaviour is a reflection of the social and moral teaching in school and the high expectations and calm working atmosphere, promoted by most class teachers.

10 The personal development of pupils is good. They have very good relationships with adults and each other. They follow the example set by all adults and are friendly and polite. For instance, pupils at the lunchtime Gardening Club were very eager to show how their plants were growing and are very proud of their efforts to make the school look more attractive. As they get older, they are confident to share their opinions and thoughts in class because class teachers value all answers. They work very well in pairs, in groups and as a whole class. For example, in a music lesson Year 3 and 4 pupils worked very hard in small groups to compose a tune for a line in a poem that the class had written. They then came together as a class and were able to add the lines to play the whole tune while singing the words. There is an appropriate range of responsibilities for older pupils, which they

are happy to accept. They help at lunchtime with younger pupils and the members of the school council act as friendship monitors in the playground. The school council is giving older pupils a say in the school and some of their ideas have been adopted such as the playtime equipment which was bought by the Staff Parents Association (SPA) on the council's suggestion.

11 The attitudes and behaviour of pupils with special educational needs is very good in line with all other pupils. They are enthusiastic and interested in the activities in class particularly when additional staff support them in lessons. In all aspects of school life, pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated and relationships between all pupils are very good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12 The quality of teaching is good overall, and includes some teaching that is very good and some that is excellent. Teaching has improved since the last inspection, the proportion of good and very good teaching has increased. There are examples of good and sometimes very good teaching in all year groups. Only a few lessons were unsatisfactory. These reflected the weak planning and organisation of the sessions and the poor match of work to the pupils' abilities.

13 The quality of teaching in the nursery and reception classes is good throughout. The two teachers and the nursery nurse in the nursery work very closely together as a team to ensure continuity and progression. The balance between adult lead activities and those, which children choose themselves is good in the nursery, and this ensures that the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs are met. This progress continues through the reception classes, although children here have too few opportunities for creative and independent learning.

14 Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. This is used in very good lessons to stimulate pupils' learning and encourage a love of the subjects they teach. For example, in an English lesson on the use of persuasive techniques in writing in Year 5, the very good knowledge of the teacher made the lesson purposeful and enabled the pupils to interact throughout the lesson and understand the task. Pupils knew how well they had done and how to improve their work. However, in a Year 3/4 science lesson, the teacher's poor understanding of what needed to be taught or what pupils knew and already understood led to a poor match of work for pupils with varying abilities and an unsatisfactory lesson.

15 The National Literacy Strategy introduced since the last inspection has been satisfactorily implemented. However, the head teacher has identified the need to raise the confidence of all teachers in the strategy and improve their planning in order to improve its effectiveness. On occasions, at both key stages, the length of time pupils spend listening while sitting on the carpet is too long, leaves insufficient time for other activities and reflects some teachers' lack of confidence in the process. The National Numeracy Strategy has been effectively implemented and has a positive impact on teaching, learning, attainment and attitudes since its introduction into the school. Skilled questioning, prompting, a lot of revision and a wide range of teaching methods ensure that all pupils have full access to the curriculum and make good progress in their learning according to their abilities.

16 Teachers' planning is generally satisfactory and identifies clearly what pupils need to learn and is very well shared with pupils so that they know what is expected of them. Where lessons are planned very well, for example in Year 2, the whole class reading of a text is very well introduced and enables the lesson to move with very good pace to an effective plenary. The pupils are challenged throughout the lesson with very good questioning and prompts, which lead to good progress. Teachers use an appropriate variety of methods to stimulate pupils, for example in a Year 2 history lesson where pupils engage in role-play as an artist recording the events of the Fire of London from an eyewitness

point of view. This enables them to describe their feelings vividly and to give very accurate interpretations of what happened.

17 The management of pupils is very good and this enables them to concentrate on their work and make good progress. A feature of this very good management is the mutual respect between teachers and pupils. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to lessons and their contributions are valued so that they grow in confidence and have an eagerness to learn. Very good management and high expectations of pupils in a Year 4 music lesson resulted in pupils working with enthusiasm so their levels of attainment were above those expected for pupils of this age. In most lessons the pace is good and so pupils concentrate well and achieve well.

18 Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Teachers know pupils very well and they rely on this knowledge to assess pupils' day-to-day learning. However, the system is often insufficient to track pupils' progress accurately over time and to enable them to set short-term targets that will lead pupils forward. The amount and type of homework set is appropriate for younger pupils while homework set for pupils in the older classes is good and prepares them well for secondary school.

19 The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good. The teachers and support staff know their pupils well and relationships are very good enabling pupils to learn with confidence. When teaching and learning are particularly good, work is set to meet individual needs, for example, in a literacy lesson for 11 year olds, the introductory quiz helped the pupils to settle quickly and to practise their phonic skill in finding words with a short 'a' sound. Following this the teacher gave the pupils opportunities to discuss the books they had read which they were able to do fluently and well, and the pupils were keen to volunteer to read aloud. In a very good lesson for younger pupils the teacher's very good routine for helping pupils with difficulties in concentrating, by the use of a teddy bear, helped the pupils to listen to the story throughout. The special educational needs support assistants work closely with the class teachers and the good practice of early viewing of the lesson plans enables them to prepare for working with individual pupils. This is reinforced by the very good practice of discussing the intended work with the class teachers, and assessing and recording pupils' progress, which has a positive impact on the pupils' learning.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

20 Recent innovations have improved curriculum provision. There is now a good quality and range of learning opportunities. Arrangements to set groups according to ability are working well in literacy and numeracy. Curriculum coordinators have made good improvements since the last inspection in developing curriculum policies. These have been reviewed in all subjects and updated in line with the school's intentions on raising standards. They reflect current national guidelines and guide teachers on what they are expected to cover within each of the subjects of the National Curriculum. However, further adoption of national and commercial schemes to the needs and learning potential of all pupils in lessons is needed. This is especially the case in mixed aged classes where tasks given do not consistently challenge pupils of all ages and abilities. The curriculum provides experiences for the children that are based firmly in the nationally identified goals for learning. The introduction, in reception, of the full literacy hour and mathematics lesson however is too formal and results in the children sometimes sitting for too long periods. There is an imbalance of the curriculum in the reception class with too few opportunities for creative activities and independent learning.

21 The school has identified the need to improve standards in literacy and numeracy and these areas of the curriculum are given preference in time allocation. Appropriate school improvement strategies and curriculum planning arrangements are improving standards in these areas and further

identifying the need to further improve writing across the whole curriculum. Subject coordinators have been given relevant responsibilities to monitor the delivery of the curriculum. There is a growing awareness of the quality of provision for learning through the curriculum as they evaluate planning in their subject areas. The school might now usefully examine the depth and relevance of the curriculum in other subjects in order that standards can be improved to match those in English and mathematics.

22 The pupils with special educational needs have full access to the whole curriculum, where necessary additional support is used to ensure they have full access to all subjects and activities.

23 The provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good. The coordinator has developed a rolling programme that allows for the progression and continuity of skill and knowledge acquisition as pupils pass through the school. Policies have been recently updated to reflect national expectations for citizenship, sex and health education. The school is involved in the Stockton Healthy Schools Programme and working towards a 'healthy schools benchmark'. Parents are actively involved in this project visiting the school to observe the work being done. PSHE is well integrated into circle time for the younger pupils. Music and poetry is used in a Year 1 class as a means of controlling feelings of anger. Good literacy strategies in a lesson involve Year 3 and 4 pupils in story telling and discussions centred on healthy teeth. The programme is enhanced by the coordinators work in continually evaluating and further developing the programme.

24 Citizenship is part of personal, social and health education, and there are aspects of it found in other subjects. For example, in a geography lesson the older pupils learn about environmental issues and fair trade. In religious education, the pupils understand the need for rules for their own safety, such as the 'green cross code'. The school council makes a very good contribution to the pupils understanding of citizenship. The pupils on the council who are representatives elected by their peers, are very articulate and have high enthusiasm for school. They have an agenda and minutes for each meeting and although they sometimes report back to their classes, there is a missed opportunity for all the pupils to find out how their requests or questions have been answered.

25 There are satisfactory arrangements to enhance pupils' learning through extra-curricular clubs and visits. This is a developing programme. The sporting initiatives established through contact with Northfield School are significantly improving both teachers and pupils' understanding of football and table tennis. External educational visits compliment the work done by teachers in history, science, music and geography. There is also a growing list of visitors to the school with expertise in aspects such as keep fit, dance, and environmental health.

26 The good links with partner institutions and the local community increase the learning opportunities for pupils. The Local Education Authority has recognised the school as a good model for training because of its expertise and dedication to internal development. This is also recognised by local universities who arrange for their under-graduates to undertake periods of training at the school. The head teacher has established strong links with both local primary and secondary schools to share good practice and raise expectations of staff as well as to improve the transition to secondary education. A list of community speakers enhances the assembly and lesson provision. These include regular visits from the local church, the fire brigade and the police. A growing awareness and use of parental interests and expertise is also making significant contribution to the learning of the younger pupils in the school.

27 The provision that the school makes for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is very good overall.

28 The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Assemblies, especially those taken by the head teacher provide inspiration and underpin the ethos of the school as a caring, loving community where everyone has worth and is valued. The lighting of the 'thinking candle' focuses the pupil's attention on reflection. Regular visits from members of the church make a valuable contribution to the development of spiritual awareness. Value is given to work through the high quality of display, so that human effort is appreciated and recognised. The school is successful in creating an ethos where everyone is valued and cared for.

29 The provision for moral development is very good. An effective behaviour policy promotes good behaviour and an effective reward system encourages good behaviour. Moral values are stressed and emphasised throughout the school. Staff provide good role models and have high expectations of good behaviour in lessons.

30 The provision for social development is very good. Younger pupils have the opportunity to take responsibility within the classroom while older pupils take on responsibilities as playground monitors. Many lessons provide scope for pupils to work in pairs or groups. All pupils have the opportunity for outside visits and visitors to the school contribute to pupils' social development. The school council is made up of representatives from Year 3 upwards. Candidates are elected and are required to put forward their reasons for wanting to be a council member. The school council interviewed the candidates when the new head was appointed. The present head was their choice! Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity for a residential visit.

31 The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Through the geography curriculum pupils learn about the cultures of other people such as the Aborigines in Australia studying both the art and their beliefs. Religious education lessons give some insight into the cultures of India and the Asian countries. Local culture is well represented by studies in history, for example Captain Cook and from river studies of the Tees, Tyne and Wear. Work in History in Year 2 included 'social and moral changes' with comparisons being made between Victorian Times and Britain since War World Two some contribution is made through music and art and design although this is an area where there is room for further development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32 This is a school where all pupils are valued and cared for very well. The caring ethos and procedures identified in the previous inspection have been strengthened further. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting were very complimentary about the way in which the school cares for their children. Pupils too are very sure of the school's care. Year 2 pupils feel that the staff are "kind" and "help you if you're poorly". The school obviously takes great care to support Year 2 pupils through the national tests as pupils spoke happily about having "quiz week last week" and getting "biscuits for brain food". The school promotes the welfare of its pupils very well. There are very good procedures for ensuring the health and safety of pupils and for child protection. There are clear safety routines, which operate throughout the day and the caretaker is conscientious in keeping a check on school security.

33 All staff promote very good relationships with pupils, which help them to try hard and do their best. Pupils know their targets for improvement and are confident that they "only have to ask" if they need help in class. There are consistent systems to reward pupils' effort and achievement, both individually and for the whole class. For example, younger pupils receive certificates and have their names recorded in the "Achievement Book" while older pupils are working towards a "Gold Credit Card" reward. There is very good provision for supporting and promoting pupils' personal development, including a good programme for personal, social and health education and also

citizenship. The school uses a very effective but simple worksheet, entitled “How high up the ladder of success have you climbed this school year?” to provide very good opportunities for pupils to make their own assessment of their progress in lessons and in their behaviour and attitudes. Class teachers also write very good comments on pupils’ personal development in the annual reports to parents.

34 The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and combating bullying which ensure the very good behaviour seen in school. Pupils know the rules and sanctions and are confident that they can tell any adult if they have a problem or drop a note into the “chat box” and it will be sorted out. There is good monitoring of attendance by class teachers and the school secretary whose records show that much of the authorised absence is due to parents taking their children out of school for family holidays. The school sends regular reminders to parents about holidays and the head teacher is strict in only authorising the agreed ten days in the year.

35 Assessment procedures are satisfactory. There is an assessment plan for each teacher, which encompasses a pupil profile and self-assessment, a file tracking individual progress from base line to Year 6, and a set of curricular end of year review sheets for each pupil in each subject. The school analyses its end of year results in mathematics and English very well. Pupil tracking using these results is in place and analysis of test questions is used for target setting. In mathematics teachers are trialing the new unit plan assessment tasks, which enable teachers to analyse performance after each unit of work. However, in all other subjects there is one formal assessment per year, which is agreed between teachers and then updated to form part of the report system to parents. Pupils’ profiles are kept and contain an annual figure drawing along with a piece of writing, which is marked and levelled. Ongoing assessment, however, against National Curricular levels and Sacre requirements is not formalised; no regular written assessment to inform future planning is in evidence and, although each co-ordinator keeps a profile of work for each year group, this is not annotated against the appropriate levels.

36 Satisfactory procedures are established in the nursery for the continual assessment of children’s progress. An entry profile is built up from the time children enter the nursery and this is continued into reception, building up a satisfactory record of children’s progress

37 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and the school’s use of the new Code of Practice is effectively working to support pupils’ progress. All pupils on the school’s register of special educational needs have individual education plans written by the class teachers and monitored by the special educational needs co-ordinator. Individual targets are reviewed appropriately each term; parents are invited to discuss their children’s progress and their new targets.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38 The school promotes a very good partnership with parents, which enables them to work closely together for the benefit of all pupils. Most parents are very supportive of the school’s work. They feel that their children are happy in school and that they make good progress. They agree that the teaching is good and that the school expects their children to work hard and do their best. They also feel that the school is well led and managed. The inspection team agrees with all these positive views. A few parents are not as happy with the level of homework or the range of extra-curricular activities. The inspectors disagree with those parents and judge that the school makes good use of homework and that there is a satisfactory range of clubs after school and at lunchtime, similar to most schools. The school has recently sought parents’ views on homework in a questionnaire and has plans to introduce more activities such as First Aid training for Year 6 pupils.

39 Almost all parents who replied to the questionnaires sent out prior to inspection feel

comfortable in approaching the school if they have concerns. A few do not feel the school works closely with them and a similarly small number are less happy with the information they receive on their children's progress. Inspectors cannot support the views of these parents. Overall, the school provides very good information for parents. This is a big improvement since the last inspection when the information for parents was judged to be unsatisfactory. The main prospectus paints a very clear picture of the school's work and the one for the Foundation Stage gives very reassuring information for parents of young children starting out in their life in school. There are regular newsletters telling parents of school events and also of the curriculum for the term. These are written in a friendly, welcoming style which parents appreciate. The Home Contact book is used well as a dialogue between home and school for homework and also for reporting any mishaps such as minor bumps. The annual reports contain very good comments for parents on their children's progress, stressing what they do well and what they need to improve. They also share pupils' targets with parents and highlight the effort that pupils make in lessons. The school also provides very good opportunities for parents to learn about the new curriculum. For instance, a group of parents of Year 3 and 4 pupils are taking part in a course on helping their children with reading and literacy and hoping to continue on to numeracy.

40 Parents are very involved in the work of the school and make a very good contribution to their children's learning. This high level of interest in their children's education adds to the very good partnership between home and school and encourages pupils to do their best. As a result, all pupils make good progress. For example, parents and staff, through SPA, organise regular events and raise a great deal of funds which provide extra resources such as reading books and transport for visits out of school. A number of parents work in the classroom and help to raise standards. For instance, the children in the nursery benefit from the exercise class run by a parent. Also, the school is able to improve the swimming skills of children in the reception classes, partly due to the many parents who volunteer to accompany the classes to their lessons. Parents are also very interested in helping their children at home. Many parents listen to their children read and some make helpful comments for the class teacher in the Home Contact book such as "read mostly using the pictures as there were a lot of new words".

41 For those pupils who have a full statement of special educational needs the annual reviews of these statements are appropriately organised. The pupils' individual education plans are of good quality and have specific targets they are continually referred to and available for scrutiny in the classrooms. Parents are informed on a regular basis about their children's progress towards their individual targets and links with parents are very good.

42 The school successfully builds up positive relationships with parents. An effective induction policy, with meetings and visits for parents and children ensure a smooth transition from home to school. Parents are welcomed into school to help and are very well supported. The transition from nursery into reception is smooth due to an effective programme of visits of the reception staff to the nursery and visits of the nursery children into the reception classes.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43 The leadership and management of the school are very good. The head teacher gives inspirational leadership that is motivating staff and pupils alike. Although, she is still relatively new to the post she has created an exciting learning environment. She is bringing about very effective, well considered change, which is leading to rapid school improvement. Her strength of character combined with an eagerness to involve all members of staff, encourage a mutual respect from staff, pupils and parents. As a result, there is a very positive and caring atmosphere in the school, together with a common sense of purpose, a strong commitment to improve and a very good capacity to succeed.

44 The head teacher adopts a management style, which ensures that the views of all staff are heard and valued and, as a result, all staff work together well as a team and the day-to-day management of the school is very effective. They are well supported by very efficient school secretaries who make a very good contribution to the life of the school. The head teacher manages and monitors the school's finances very well. Good use is made of the Local Education Authorities financial services and the head teacher and governors work hard to get the best value for the money they spend. Grants given to the school, for example to support pupils with special educational needs are used well. The school has effectively implemented the minor recommendations of the most recent audit inspection by the Local Education Authority.

45 The governing body makes a very good contribution to the work of the school. The chair of governors is fully committed to the school and has worked very closely with the head teacher. They share the same agenda of high expectations and the raising of standards. The chair has been particularly successful in creating a governing body, which works together extremely well. Each governor gives very effective support to a curriculum area and this has brought about significant improvement to the issue of governing body monitoring and evaluation raised at the previous inspection. Governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are closely involved in the evaluation of the school development plan. This plan provides a useful framework for managing improvements and is based on an accurate analysis of what the school does well and where it needs to improve. Priorities are clearly identified and monitored regularly to ensure that targets are met.

46 The role of subject co-ordinators has improved since the last inspection. More effort is made to share their subject expertise and they keep themselves up to date with teachers' planning. However, they have very few opportunities to observe lessons and monitor pupils' progress and this hampers their effectiveness. The head teacher monitors the work of teachers on a regular basis and therefore has a clearer picture of what is working and where additional support is needed to secure improvements. She analyses the results of school-based as well as national tests and is supporting teachers to track more effectively the progress of individuals and groups of pupils and to set realistic but challenging targets. As a result standards are improving and the school is able to pinpoint areas for further development, for example standards in science and writing.

47 The leadership and management of special educational needs are good. The useful policy guides all staff enabling them to identify pupils who require additional help to support their progress. The policy clearly states the involvement and inclusion of all pupils in all aspects of school life. The co-ordination of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and there are close links with the governing body. The governor responsible for special educational needs is kept well informed through regular updates by the co-ordinator. Resources to support the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is good and additional support from outside agencies is valued by the school and has a positive impact on the progress made by the pupils.

48 There is a sufficient number of qualified teaching and support staff overall. The provision of support staff is satisfactory but most of these are based in the older classes supporting pupils with special educational needs. There is limited general classroom support of pupils in the younger classes and the large reception classes do not have a full time teaching assistant allocated to them. Staff new to the school feel that they have good support and the school is recognised by the local authority as a good model for the training of students.

49 The school's accommodation is good overall and this is in line with the previous inspection. The caretaker, who takes great pride in the site, maintains the buildings to a high standard. The building

is well appointed, light and the two halls are used effectively for assemblies, lunches, physical education and music. However, the reception classes have no outdoor play area and this has a negative impact on the teaching and learning of the full Foundation Stage curriculum. The pupils' very well displayed work decorates the school and the pupils are good at looking after the building. There is no litter in the grounds and there are plenty of litterbins around the playground to help pupils keep it tidy. The head teacher and the caretaker on a regular basis carry out risk assessments and the governing body's premises committee inspects the site annually. There is disabled access to the buildings via the use of ramps and the school is negotiating with the Local Education Authority for the installation of a toilet for the disabled and a parking bay, however, there is no access for disabled to the upper floor of the two-storey building.

50 Resources across the school are always satisfactory and often good. The library is well stocked and well organised in both buildings. Mathematics and English have particularly good resources. Resources for humanities' topics are updated as and when new topics are studied. Lack of access to the Internet, as a result of problems experienced by the Local Education Authority, is restricting progress in ICT and this affects all aspects of learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51 In order to further improve standards in the school the head teacher, staff and governors should:

Improve standards in writing by:

- * providing additional opportunities for pupils to write more imaginatively and in different styles and contexts;
- * using writing more effectively in other subjects.

(paragraphs 2, 67, 72, 86, 89, 105, 111, 131)

Improve standards in science by:

- * ensuring that all classes have well planned opportunities to carry out scientific investigations.

(paragraphs 4, 84, 85, 87)

Improve the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school by:

- * allowing subject co-ordinators to observe and assess teaching and learning in their subject.

(paragraphs 46, 73, 83, 90, 99, 108, 113, 123, 127, 132)

Improve the balance of the curriculum in the reception classes by:

- * providing better opportunities for creative and independent learning.

(paragraphs 13, 20, 54, 55, 65)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	81
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	41

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	23	35	19	3	0	0
Percentage	2	28	43	23	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	36	458
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		22

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	51

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7%
National comparative data	5.4%

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0%
National comparative data	0.5%

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	31	34	65

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	26
	Girls	31	33	33
	Total	52	54	59
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	80% (97%)	83% (97%)	91% (97%)
	National	84% (84%)	86% (86%)	90% (91%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	23	25
	Girls	30	28	32
	Total	51	51	57
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	78% (99%)	78% (96%)	88% (97%)
	National	85% (85%)	89% (89%)	89% (89%)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	37	34	71

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	30	34
	Girls	32	30	33
	Total	60	60	67
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	85% (85%)	85% (76%)	94% (92%)
	National	75% (75%)	73% (71%)	86% (87%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	29	31
	Girls	29	30	27
	Total	56	59	58

Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	79% (84%)	83% (80%)	82% (89%)
	National	73% (72%)	74% (74%)	82% (82%)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

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	383	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	4	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	6	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	19
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	125

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	36
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	97
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002 - 2003
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	£
Total income	1,029,298
Total expenditure	1,031,902
Expenditure per pupil	2065.87
Balance brought forward from previous year	84,464
Balance carried forward to next year	81,860

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	530
Number of questionnaires returned	215

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	42	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	47	46	5	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	48	1	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	51	9	4	2
The teaching is good.	48	48	1	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	48	9	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	27	2	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	39	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	47	43	7	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	61	35	1	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	47	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	38	14	6	15

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

52 The provision made for children in the Foundation Stage is good both in the nursery and the reception class. The school operates an admissions policy for children to start in the nursery in September and January after their third birthday. Some children will, therefore, have a year in the nursery while others have longer as they transfer to the reception class in January or September as rising fives. Attainments on entry to nursery are broadly average.

53 Strengths in the Foundation Stage are:

- effective teaching, through both the nursery and reception classes, which leads to good learning.
- effective teamwork and planning in the nursery that addresses all areas of learning.
- very good relationships between adults and children, and between children themselves

54 Areas for further development are:

- More opportunities for creative and independent learning in the reception class.

55 Children receive a positive start and make good progress through both the nursery and reception classes, continually building on what they have learnt. They achieve well because the teaching across all areas of learning is consistently good. The teacher and the nursery nurses in the nursery work very closely together as a team to ensure continuity and progression through the nursery. The balance between adult led activities and those; which children choose for themselves is good in the nursery, and this ensures that the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs are met. This progress continues through the reception classes, although children here have too few opportunities to have some control of their own learning. At the end of the reception year most children are on course to attain the early learning goals in all areas of learning and some exceed them in language and literacy.

Personal, social and emotional development

56 The quality of teaching is good and as a result children learn well and make good progress. Children settle quickly into the nursery enjoying the interesting activities that are provided for them. Children develop an enthusiasm to learn. They are becoming independent and after a relative short time in the nursery they can choose activities. Independence grows whilst in the nursery, where children manage their own coats, into reception where children are able to change into kit for physical education. Routines are quickly established and children know how to self register when they arrive in the morning by finding their name and posting it in the 'post-box'. They willingly help to tidy away in the nursery and by the time they are in reception efficiently put things away by themselves. From learning to take turns from an early age, older children were observed working collaboratively together, playing a shapes game and organising a teddy bears' picnic. Adults provide good role models in their caring relationships with children and with each other. They make good use of praise to encourage children to try hard, to raise their self-esteem and promote their confidence in learning. Children in the reception class demonstrated considerable confidence in a class assembly where each child stood up in front of the audience, which included parents, to describe the toy they were holding. Children's personal and social development takes place in a calm, ordered atmosphere of mutual respect. Children develop positive attitudes and good working routines from the time they start nursery.

Communication, language and literacy

57 The quality of teaching in this area of the curriculum is good. As a result, the children learn well and they make good progress. Throughout the nursery and reception classes children are introduced to the joy of stories and staff take every opportunity to engage children in conversation, giving them time, encouragement and support to express their knowledge and thoughts. This means that they learn a great deal about language and literacy and have good opportunities to extend their vocabulary and develop speaking and listening skills. Children practise and further develop these skills well in role play areas in the nursery, but the lack of stimulating role play areas in the reception classes limits children's opportunities to develop their imagination and language skills. In the nursery, children playing in the jungle take on roles of animals or explorers. Although little actual conversation took place children were engrossed in their chosen characters with explorers peering round trees with cameras and binoculars.

58 The introduction of the literacy session in the reception classes is effective in developing children's literacy skills. Children are actively involved in whole class and group sessions but children are sometimes required to sit for too long before beginning the activity. This occurs when the whole literacy hour is delivered using the format intended for older pupils. It is more appropriate for children of this age for the literacy elements to be woven through the day rather than concentrated into one formal session. Stories are used effectively in the nursery and reception classes. Children in the nursery enjoy the hidden story depicted through the pictures of Handa's Surprise as Handa takes a basket of fruit to her friend and the animals help themselves on the way. In a shared reading session, in the reception class, children use the contents page to locate information about bears and are introduced to the term 'non-fiction'.

59 Most children know the sounds of single letters and a number of consonant blends, while higher attaining pupils also know vowel blends and use this knowledge to help them read and spell new words. Higher attaining pupils are confident young readers while lower attaining pupils use pictures and require more support to predict unknown words. Writing materials are readily available in the nursery and reception, for example note pads by the side of telephones and in the writing centre in both the nursery and reception classes.

Mathematical development

60 The quality of teaching, attainment and learning in this area is good. Children achieve well through the nursery and reception classes through a wide range of well-planned activities and the quality of the interaction between children and adults. In the nursery children are introduced to counting and numbers through a range of well chosen informal activities and this is continued into the reception class together with planned numeracy sessions. Through good teaching children's interest is stimulated and this results in good achievement through the Foundation Stage so that children reach the expected levels of attainment by the time they enter Year 1.

61 As with the literacy hour, when the mathematics lesson is delivered formally, children can remain sitting and inactive for too long. The more able children in the reception classes can count accurately to 20 and back, and work with written numbers to 20. As a class they count to 50 and beyond. Higher attaining pupils in reception are beginning to use the correct mathematical terminology when adding the spots on dominoes. By using dominoes they quickly work out doubles of numbers, although a few children have already memorised these facts and have immediate recall. When working with shapes children know the names of common two-dimensional and some three dimensional shapes. Squares, triangles, circles and rectangles are identified in the classroom, although sometimes there is some confusion between squares and rectangles. Children developed an understanding of spatial awareness by packing three-dimensional 'cakes' in the form of cubes, spheres and cones into boxes.

62 The use of praise, encouragement and effective use of questioning are significant factors in the development of the children's mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

63 The quality of teaching, learning and progress is good. Throughout children's time in the nursery and reception classes they have range of experiences that help them to learn about the world and they achieve well. The theme of toys and teddy bears in the reception classes was used effectively to develop children's knowledge and understanding of old and modern toys. An extensive display of both old types and modern toys provided the children with plenty of experience of playing with a wide variety of toys and children readily explained what mechanisms made them move. By rolling cars down a slope covered with different surfaces children discovered that cars traveled further when the surface was smooth. Effective use is made of children's experience visiting relatives or going on holiday to other countries. Stimulated with dolls dressed in costumes from different countries children found countries such as Spain, Hong Kong and Australia on a world map. In the nursery children learn to click on the mouse to control programs while in reception they learn new skills in the computer suite through appropriate direct teaching. Children know how to turn the computer on and log on although they need support in managing the keyboard accurately to put in their user name and password.

Physical development

64 The quality of teaching, learning and children's progress is good. Most children are on track to achieve the early learning goals in this aspect. Staff successfully teach the skills to help children gain safe control of finer movements, such as using glue spatulas, paintbrushes and cutting with scissors. In the nursery children weave materials through large plastic netting to make a jungle wall while in the reception class children weave paper strips to make table mats for the Teddy Bears' Picnic. Satisfactory use is made of the outdoor area in the nursery where children have the opportunities to use larger spaces and to ride wheeled toys. The nursery staff make good use of the hall. Children enjoy their journey 'through the jungle' as they climb, balance, and slide through the 'trees' and 'swim' across rivers, that have been created using large apparatus. They show confidence and good control of their bodies. The afternoon children really enjoyed dance sessions taken by a parent helper. At the time of the inspection the reception children did not have access to an outdoor play area but good use is made of the hall for physical development lessons and they have the opportunity to go swimming, where good teaching and support leads to good progress.

Creative development

65 In this area of learning, the quality of teaching and learning is good in the nursery and children are provided with good opportunities to develop creatively. Reduced provision in the reception class, for example the lack of a role play area and the daily provision of paint and sand, do not give children the same opportunities to develop creatively. In contrast to the nursery children, creating their own journey through the jungle, a group of reception children with teddies and the rucksack full of good resources for the picnic were asked where they were going for the picnic. The initial response was 'the carpet' although after some prompting and encouragement the location was changed to more imaginative venues such as wood or by a river. However by the end of reception the attainment of most children is in line with the expectations of the early learning goals.

66 Children concentrated well during a class music session in reception. In pairs they successfully composed a repeating pattern of claps and then later played their rhythm on a variety of

percussion instruments. Children enjoy singing and songs are used effectively at different times of the day either as a whole class in reception or in smaller groups in the nursery. The children particularly enjoy role-play in the nursery. They use props and other resources with good imaginative skills.

ENGLISH

67 Attainment in English is good in speaking and listening and in reading throughout the school and it is satisfactory in writing. Last year at the end of Year 2, there were a high number of pupils with special educational needs and the results were just below the national average in writing, particularly those of boys, however the number of pupils reaching level 3 in reading was above the national average. At the end of Year 6, the pupils' results overall for English were above the national average, but below in numbers of pupils reaching the higher levels. These standards are not as high as those reported in the previous inspection report, under the leadership of the new head teacher, the need to raise standards, predominantly in writing has been quickly realised. A good programme of intervention has been introduced with the focus on making writing interesting particularly for boys throughout the school. This includes additional help to boost progress in writing for older pupils, extended writing lessons to help pupils write more fluently, as well as additional literacy support for the less able pupils. The pupils make good progress in speaking and listening and reading. They make satisfactory progress overall in writing but there are opportunities for improvement. The school has assessed pupils progress in all classes over the last year for both reading and writing and this shows consistently good progress. This includes pupils with special educational needs who make good progress in line with their peers and against the targets in their individual education plans. The National Literacy Strategy introduced since the previous inspection implementation is satisfactory, however the new head teacher has identified the need to continue to ensure that all teachers have confidence in the use of the strategy to improve its effectiveness. On occasions, the length of time the pupils spend listening while sitting on the carpet is too long, leaves insufficient time for other activities, and reflects some teachers' lack of confidence in the process.

68 In speaking and listening pupils make good progress and at the end of Year 2, the pupils are confident in answering questions and try to explain words that are new to them. They listen carefully to discussions and demonstrate this by relevant responses. They are able to take turns in speaking and listening and are keen to answer questions. Pupils use a rich vocabulary, particularly liking words such as 'disconsolate' when discussing one of the Katie Morag books. They ask and answer questions about Australia in partner work in geography, following the example of the teacher in answering questions. When discussing their reading books the more able pupils have a very good vocabulary, which they use well, but are sometimes shy in discussing their work with someone they do not know well. At the end of Year 6, more able pupils can discuss significant themes and characters in a book. They listen with concentration to each other; and question others' ideas and opinions responsively. When discussing the school council, pupils are very articulate and able to describe the proceedings of the meetings very well. The less able pupils are keen to share memories of books they have read and are enthusiastic about answering questions about different authors.

69 By the end of Year 2, pupils have made good progress in reading. More able pupils read books of their own choice, with expression using appropriate strategies. When asked to explain the strategies used one pupil replied that he 'puts the sounds together'. Pupils enjoy reading and as one boy said, 'find out interesting stuff'. The less able pupils are less confident in the use of strategies for unknown words but are able to work out most words with a little help. The pupils are able to make some predictions on what might happen next from the text they have read. The pupils know the names of the authors they read and they are able to compare stories by the same author. Their good progress in reading is very well supported by the pupils taking their reading books home together with useful comments made by the teachers in the home school books, such as, 'Please encourage your

child to follow the words with his finger' when reading. At the end of Year 6, the pupils build on the work they have previously done, continue to make good progress and the majority are confident readers. They continue to take books home and the very good support of the parents is significant in the progress the pupils make. The pupils are able to discuss their favourite authors with confidence. For example, one pupil reading a Jacqueline Wilson book can explain that the book deals with social problems, such as bullying. They read with expression and accuracy and the choice of books available to them is interesting and very appropriate for their ages. The less able pupils are encouraged to identify different elements of what they are reading, such as tenses, whether it is in the first person and the main characters. They use the skills they have learned to identify words that are new to them and listen to each other read quietly while following the text.

70 By the end of Year 2, the pupils' progress in writing is satisfactory. The more able pupils write with a well-formed cursive script, their writing is clear and imaginative, they use speech marks with confidence and accuracy and express their ideas fluently. They are able to insert punctuation into a paragraph and use full stops and capital letters consistently and make good progress. The majority of the pupils use cursive script (but this is less well formed), understand compound words and write in sentences, for example when writing a story. Less able pupils' spelling is less accurate, handwriting is uneven, and the work rate is slow. At the end of Year 6, the pupils' work continues to show satisfactory progress. The more able pupils' handwriting is neat, uniform and cursive; there are very few errors in spelling. The pupils develop their skills in writing for different purposes, for example, letters and reports. They understand how to structure a report, paragraph by paragraph and use punctuation accurately. The majority of pupils write effectively for different purposes, for example, when writing about the big events on board a ship, their writing is lively and thoughtful and words are chosen adventurously and for effect. The less able pupils' punctuation and handwriting is inconsistent as is their handwriting, and some have difficulty with simple spellings, such as 'very' which is spelt phonetically as 'verey'.

71 The quality of teaching and learning are generally good with some examples of very good teaching. During lessons, the pupils concentrate well, listening to each other and waiting their turn to answer. The examples set by teachers are very good, such as, during one lesson observed in Year 1 where the standard of handwriting modelled by the teacher helped the pupils to know exactly what they needed to do. Where teaching is very good, as observed in Year 2, a brisk start to the lesson helped pupils to concentrate on their work immediately. This, linked to very good questioning and high expectations of the pupils' behaviour helped the pupils to complete the task given to them. Where lessons are planned very well, for example, such as one observed in Year 2, the whole class reading of a text is very well introduced and enables the lesson to move with a very good pace to an effective plenary. The pupils are challenged throughout the lesson with very good questioning and prompts, which have a very positive effect leading to good progress. In one lesson observed, in Year 4, a brisk start in revising the previous days work helped the pupils to concentrate quickly and was well supported by the calm, firm and quiet manner of the teacher. The clear explanations of the learning objectives, in the same lesson, helped the pupils know what they were going to learn. The relationships between the pupils and staff are very good and the teachers listen to the pupils with concentration and respect, giving them confidence to ask and answer questions. An example of very good teaching was observed in Year 5, when the teacher's very good subject knowledge and planning made the lesson purposeful and enabled the pupils to interact throughout the lesson and understand the task, know how well they had done and understand how to improve. In Year 6, the pupils' behaviour is very good and this is the result of well-planned lessons, good pace and stimulating introduction to tasks.

72 In some lessons, however, when the pace of lessons is too slow, the length of time spent by the pupils listening, while they sit on the carpet, causes them to become restless and lose concentration. This occurs in a few lessons for older as well as younger pupils and is a reflection of

the lack of confidence some teachers have in the implementation of the literacy strategy. The teachers carry out assessment regularly to inform planning; this includes the use of both statutory and non-statutory tests at the end of each year, as well as formal reading tests. Assessment information is effectively used to track the progress the pupils are making in both reading and writing and to group the pupils for formal teaching sessions and over time has a positive impact on the progress the pupils make. All pupils have specific targets for English that are in their books or on display in the classroom, which enables them to understand the progress they are making, and what they need to learn next, which is good practice. The use of information and communication technology to support pupils with special educational needs is good but there are no examples in pupils' books of drafting and writing using a word processor to support their work in English.

73 The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is very committed to raising standards across the subject and this is a good improvement since the last inspection. There are clear priorities for the development of English across the school and it is fully inclusive ensuring that all pupils have full access to the subject. However, there is no time for the co-ordinator to monitor the teaching and learning in the literacy hour through observation and this is an area for development. The curriculum is satisfactory, as is the implementation of the literacy strategy. Resources for the subject are good. The libraries in both buildings and for different age groups are very well organised and used. The factual books are well ordered and there is a good range of appropriate fiction for all age groups. There is an appropriate reading scheme and the fiction is colour coded so that pupils can access a range of books at the same level as their reading scheme and this has a positive effect on the pupils' enjoyment and interest in reading.

MATHEMATICS

74 In the 2002 national tests in mathematics, results in Year 2 were below those of schools nationally and well below similar schools. At Year 6 results showed that standards were in line with expectations for this age group, but below average when compared with similar schools. However, not enough pupils reached the higher level 5 or above. Standards of work in Years 2 and 6, as seen during the inspection are now good compared with standards expected nationally. This judgement matches the findings of the previous inspection report. Pupils including those pupils with special educational needs, make good progress as they move through the school.

75 A significant majority of pupils in Year 2 make decisions about which operations and problem-solving strategies to use. They are also familiar with the terms odd and even, correctly add and subtract numbers to 100 and know the properties and lines of symmetry in simple shapes. The higher attaining pupils work with numbers up to 1,000 and the lower attaining pupils are confident in halving numbers to 20.

76 At Year 4 the majority of pupils readily recall multiplication facts in the 3x and 6x tables and know that the 6x table is double the three times. They also convey information using block graphs. Higher attaining pupils are confident using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

77 By the time pupils are in Year 6 the majority can multiply by 10, 100 and 1000. They can change fractions to decimals and to percentages. They draw angles accurately and know the angle sum of a triangle and that of angles at a point.

78 The higher attaining pupils have exceptionally quick mental recall; they can plot and interpret co-ordinates in the 4 quadrants, use brackets appropriately and reduce fractions to their simplest form. They write formulae using algebraic equations and can group data in equal class intervals representing it in frequency diagrams. Lower attaining pupils at Year 6 are able to find perimeters of simple shapes and areas by counting squares. They practise the four number operations regularly and use simple fractions, decimals and percentages.

79 The quality of teaching is good with examples of very good practice seen in the infants and juniors. This is the same as in the previous inspection report. Where teaching is very good pupils are given very challenging, varied and interesting activities and resources, which maintain high levels of effort, concentration and enjoyment. Pupils in Year 2, not content with their initial attempts, strove hard to show they had successfully divided their shapes into equal thirds. In a Year 4 class after an imaginative introduction of a word problem called Captain Cats, the emphasis on pace and method soon had most pupils competing and collaborating to find a solution.

80 The National Numeracy Strategy has been effectively implemented and has a positive impact on teaching, learning, attainment and attitudes since its introduction into the school. Teachers are now beginning to get to grips with the new unit plans and are using these in their own planning. Skilled questioning, prompting, a lot of revision and a wide range of teaching methods, including games ensure that all pupils have full access to the curriculum and make good progress in their learning according to their abilities. These together with good resources, rigorous end of year assessment analysis, setting, booster classes and the use of other subjects to teach data handling play significant parts in improving attainment levels.

81 Pupils were, however, given few opportunities during the inspection to develop their mathematical skills through the use of information and communication technology. Where this did occur pupils received faster feedback on their work and were able to modify it more quickly. For example in

Year 2 pupils constructed flags according to prescribed fractions and colours. The programme rejected wrong partitions and it was noticeable how quickly in one class pupils transferred their knowledge to paper exercises and how in another, they became more adventurous in their pattern making, always ensuring the number of squares matched halves or quarters.

82 Most teachers have high expectations of pupils' attitudes to work. Written work is usually neatly and appropriately presented in exercise books and little time is wasted on organisation or misbehaviour. Lessons in many classes often reveal good classroom management skills and the ability to quickly deal with any lack of focus or distraction. These features enable a brisk pace to be maintained. Pupils' effort and interest were both good in many observed lessons. Pupils' school and homework both show a consistent focus by teachers on basic skills in number, shape and measurement. Pupils also receive opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge to solving problems, individually and collaboratively. This is consistent across most classes. However, sometimes the opportunities for mental work are prevented when pupils are allowed to do their calculations on white boards. Also in a small percentage of classes pupils spend too long on the carpet and there is not enough time for purposeful activity. Better differentiation to extend the more able pupils could be achieved by task variation rather than outcome and by starting extension activities sooner rather than later.

83 Leadership and management of mathematics are good. The co-ordinator manages resources, inducts new staff, updates the school policy, analyses SATS questions and gives training. She is currently working on a mathematics booklet for parents and has a thorough grasp of the issues involved and a clear picture for future development. Summative assessment analysis, pupil tracking and target setting are good and have developed substantially since the previous inspection and these give teachers a very good picture of individual pupils' attainment and progress as they move through the school. Regular monitoring of planning helps to give the co-ordinator a coherent picture of the subject, which helps to ensure some consistency in the progress of pupils. Regular discussions between head teacher, co-ordinator and staff after the analysis of results also improve reflective self-evaluation and lead to adjustments in lesson focus to meet the needs of pupils. Such discussions are ongoing. There are, however, still insufficient opportunities for the subject co-ordinator to observe lessons and ongoing assessment throughout the school. This needs to be done in a fuller and more systematic way so as to improve discussion between staff and provide greater consistency across the school.

SCIENCE

84 The 2002 teacher assessments for Year 2 indicate that standards in science are below the national average. The 2002 written tests for Year 6 showed standards to be below the national average and well below when compared with similar schools. Standards at the higher national levels, when compared to similar schools nationally, are low. Boys do significantly better in these tests than girls. The 2002 results continue a trend of low standards over recent years. Until recently there has been less than appropriate attention given to these problems resulting in science results being lower than English and mathematics. The major reason for this is attributable to the past weaknesses in the whole-school approach to investigative work.

85 Inspection findings show pupils' current standards at Years 2 and 6 to be in line with national averages. Importantly those achieved by the older and more able pupils have risen as a result of a recent more consistent policy of requiring pupils to apply their learning into appropriate scientific investigations. However there still important gaps in understanding across all areas of study that prevent all pupils from completing investigations with the necessary independence and confidence. Present standards in Year 6 are imbalanced in national terms by the high numbers of pupils with special education needs.

86 Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. The youngest pupils learn the important sections of an experiment. They ask questions like “how to stop a ball rolling” and “which tights will stretch the longest.” Similarly Year 2 pupils plan an experiment relating height to the size of feet. Further connections with literacy and numeracy skills will improve the recording of results and the patterns in measurements. Work with planned experiments is just beginning to enable pupils to make sufficient progress in acquiring the necessary skills and understanding to access the higher National Curriculum levels.

87 Achievement between Year 2 and Year 6 is satisfactory although further challenges are now needed to increase levels of understanding on areas such as forces, electricity and materials so that pupils of all abilities can participate in the experiments planned for them more independently and confidently. Imaginative role-play, connecting experiments to commercial interest really captures pupils’ imagination. Year 5 pupils achieve very well comparing drying speeds of clothes and pupils are getting more confident in recording their results and interpreting graphs for trends. When Year 3 and 4 pupils experiment with melting speeds the work is not always challenging the different ages and abilities in the class. For example there is a low expectation for the use of appropriate scientific vocabulary to be used. This is restricting the progress pupils make in understanding important scientific concepts.

88 The school presently under-uses the potential for ICT to further improve pupils understanding of science. Further work is needed to use numeracy skills, especially in the interpretation of results. The use of graphs to show results is beginning to improve this but they are not conclusively interpreted as part of the conclusions of an experiment. Improvement in experimental procedures is enabling pupils with special educational needs to make better progress, for example, a small group of Year 6 pupils receive very good support as they are guided through an experiment on dissolving materials. The structure and pace allows them to formulate their own findings. Their work is enhanced as they write to a company excitingly informing them of their results. No evidence was seen to support test results that boys make better progress than girls. However, in some group work boys and girls do not support each other in their experiments, rather working independently of each other. More gender inclusion in groups would allow a sharing of understanding and findings.

89 Overall teaching observed is good but some lessons were better than others. Outcomes from observations show the impact of recent training and improvement strategies. Much of this improvement is due to teachers’ questioning, expertly linked to hypothesis for a lesson. In all lessons observed, pupils show a keenness for learning scientific phenomena. They work productively and collaboratively when fulfilling the tasks involved in experiments. Pupils make very good progress in Year 6 lessons when considering factors that affect dissolving. Because teachers identify realistic learning outcomes, they successfully change the variables to consider fair testing. However, a lack of relevant experiences prevents extended writing, using scientific vocabulary, to formulate conclusions. Pupils nevertheless record their findings and begin to communicate what they have found out. In doing so they show good levels of understanding of graphical representation and measurement. In a Year 3/4 lesson pupils made unsatisfactory progress when studying the effect of exercise on the body. Work lacked focused exploration and investigation because pupils did not have a clear idea what was being tested. The teacher in this case had an unsatisfactory understanding of both the content to be taught at this stage or what pupils knew and understood already. In contrast, teaching in a Year 1 class posed interesting and challenging questions about clothes drying. In a plenary pupils used their knowledge of condensation and fair testing to suggest differing ways of drying and made good progress in their understanding of conservation of heat. Year 2 pupils reviewed their predictions about which metals would be magnetic and grouped them according to properties. They made good progress because they were asked to predict outcomes, but this is not always the case in lessons.

90 Recent improvements have been made in science since the last inspection. The coordinator has a very good understanding of the requirements for science in the National Curriculum. Her vision for the subject and an analysis and prioritisation of needs has been successful in improving policy and procedures and instrumental in the raising of recent teaching standards. Science visits to Teeside University, the Planetarium and Northfield School are significantly raising the profile of the subject. School and subject development plans recognise that present monitoring systems are not effectively remedying the problems of inconsistent pupil progress. For example learning is not always matching good standards in teaching. Present assessments of what pupils achieve are not informing the next stages in their learning. These problems are heightened in lessons where mixed ages are taught. This means that many pupils are still not fully involved with investigative work at the appropriate level to acquire further skills and knowledge at their own levels of understanding. The school now needs to continue the developments in science in line with the work done in English and mathematics, especially in the area of individual target setting.

ART AND DESIGN

91 The limited evidence available during the inspection indicates that standards are in line with those expected nationally at the age of seven and 11 years. Judgements are based on work on display and discussions with the co-ordinator and the three lessons seen. However there was little evidence available of three-dimensional work or work with textiles. No judgement is made on teaching in Years 1 and 2. Display of work has a high profile in school and attractive displays of sunflowers were made up from contributions from a number of classes, together with screens covered in collage with colour themes, which enhanced the entrance hall of the Infant building.

92 In Years 1 and 2 art and design is suitably linked to a study of Australia when pupils look at Aboriginal art and experiment with painting patterns on different materials such as hessian, sandpaper, and stones. Pupils also have the opportunity to paint pictures to illustrate stories. Pupils have sketchbooks but these are under used to develop skills in drawing or for designing work.

93 Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. Teachers rely on following a curriculum based on national guidelines. These provide guidance for teachers to develop skill as pupils move through the school but they do not address the progression of skills through mixed aged classes. Although the new co-ordinator is keen and interested in the subject she has not had the opportunity of any training so is unable to support staff fully, either in the teaching of skills or to give inspiration in the subject. Although the work of famous artists is studied and the techniques they used explored and practised opportunities are lost to use art and design to support other areas of the curriculum.

94 Pupils in Year 3 and 4 studied the work of Andy Warhol before working on producing a repeated pattern of the same image, changing the colour of shading. The introduction to this lesson was successful in generating discussions about ways of producing repeating patterns and the techniques used by Andy Warhol and then Jasper John. Pupils were confident in choosing their own media for their work and a group of higher attaining pupils worked well collaboratively to produce layered images in the style of Jasper John.

95 A strength in a Year 5/6 lesson was the confidence in which pupils discussed their work with pastels as they drew pictures, which depicted reflections. They had good knowledge about perspective, foregrounds and backgrounds, which they used in the pictures. At the end of the lesson pupils demonstrated confidence in their work by the high proportion of them who wanted to show their work to the class.

96 Assessment in the subject is unsatisfactory. The use of a figure drawing once a year is totally inadequate to assess pupils' knowledge, skill and understanding of such a wide subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97 The limited evidence available during the inspection suggests that standards are in line with those expected nationally at the age of seven and 11 years. This judgement is based on portfolio of photographs, work on display and one lesson in Year 5/6. Pupils with special educational needs make steady progress through the school because of the good support they receive. There was insufficient evidence available during the inspection to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in this subject.

98 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make glove puppets and practise sewing skills producing samplers. Moving vehicles are made from construction kits followed by models with wheels and axles. The study of structures leads to models of playground equipment. Suitable design sheets are used to support pupils designing skills. Materials and tools are selected but there is limited evaluation of finished products. In Years 5/6 slippers were designed, made and evaluated and then finally judged by groups of pupils against a list of given criteria. This gave pupils valuable experience in working collaboratively.

99 The curriculum is planned using national guidelines for the teaching of design and technology. These provide guidance for teachers and a range of activities to develop pupils' skills as they move through the school. However in mixed age classes too little attention is paid to the development of skills across a wide range of attainment and previous knowledge and all pupils are given the same task. The co-ordinator has not had the opportunity for training since taking on the responsibility for the subject and therefore has no plans for its development. Teaching is not monitored.

GEOGRAPHY

100 Standards in Year 2 and 6 match those expected for their age and pupils make satisfactory progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Standards have therefore been maintained since the previous inspection. There is enough evidence to show that teachers develop secure geographical skills by effective use of fieldwork in the local and wider community. The planning of work is satisfactory and although pupils use books confidently to research information, ICT is used on few occasions in geography lessons.

101 In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop fieldwork skills by looking at their own area surrounding the school. They survey types of housing, buildings, land use and its environmental effects. They are familiar with the main compass points and by following the adventures of Barnaby Bear they have become familiar with the general shape of the world's landmasses and seas and with certain holiday destinations and their customs. Geography topics are organised on a two-year rolling programme. This year, Year 2 pupils have studied the contrasting area of Australia. Pupils know the shape of Australia, its climate and principal physical features for example the Bush, the desert, Ularu and the Great Barrier Reef. They know about the Aborigines and have experimented with Aborigine art work. The pupils have had access to books, videos, pictures, artefacts, photographs, postcards and visitors. They are excited by the project and speak enthusiastically about the changing colours of Ularu.

102 In Years 3 and 4 pupils continue to develop their mapping skills by drawing the network of streets around the school, by drawing a plan of the school and by labelling a map of Europe. Pupils are also confident with 2 figure grid references. They consider how the school environment can be improved and whether the site is environmentally friendly. This has a good effect on their personal,

moral, and social education. This year St. Lucia has been studied as a contrasting area. Pupils know that Castries is the capital city and they learn about the climate, and crops and can demonstrate the similarities and differences with the United Kingdom.

103 In Years 5 and 6 pupils can read Ordnance Survey maps and compile maps to show the River Tees from source to mouth and the rivers Tyne and Wear. Pupils have visited various sites on the River Tees and can speak confidently about the river's key features using the correct technical vocabulary. For example one pupil stated, "A river becomes bigger because of its tributaries," whilst another said, "Waterfalls are formed when soft rock is eroded and water falls to a different level."

104 The quality of teaching is good. This is an improvement on the previous report. Teachers have good subject knowledge; use technical vocabulary and good resources. They are also enthusiastic about the subject and give clear and interesting explanations, which pupils easily understand. Relationships with pupils are very good and humour is often used. This sustains pupils' concentration and makes them confident enough to give extended answers and to ask supplementary questions.

105 In one very good lesson pupils worked in pairs and used hot seating to ask each other questions about Australia. At first they limited themselves to the question they had written but as their confidence grew they asked other questions and a more natural dialogue ensued. Some pupils learned new facts but all pupils were able to practise summarising and categorising. Speaking and listening skills were also developed in a group feed back session where tasks were differentiated to meet the range of ability. In the same lesson, strong questioning by the teacher made a group of pupils think more deeply about how to advertise High Force, what features to describe and what language to use. Pupils present their work neatly on a range of topics and in a variety of formats. However, the opportunities for writing are as yet underdeveloped. There is no extended writing in evidence and most pupils' written contributions are brief.

106 Time spent on the subject is also limited owing to the emphasis on English and mathematics. Infant pupils spend less than 2 per cent on the subject and lower juniors 2.5 per cent. The inclusion of environmental projects does, however, augment this subject, but overall, limited time affects the depth of study.

107 Geography has been identified for development in this year's school improvement plan. Resources for this subject are satisfactory and the co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership. She updates the policy, monitors planning and assessment and maintains a subject portfolio, which enables her to monitor curricular coverage and pupils' progress appropriately. By discussion with colleagues she is also able to identify gaps in knowledge, training and resource provision. For example she is aware that more atlases are needed.

108 Nevertheless, the co-ordinator does not monitor teaching and day-to-day assessment on a regular basis and is therefore unable to further influence progress in this subject.

HISTORY

109 Standards in history are in line with national expectations at the age of seven and 11. The inspection team observed two lessons; other evidence is taken from teachers' planning, discussions with pupils and samples of their work. Standards are improved by pupils' enthusiastic responses to the imaginative tasks given in history lessons, which help them to research and record their findings independently.

110 Pupils' achievements in history are satisfactory overall. They are sometimes good but less so when limited by curriculum provision. The achievements of pupils between the ages of five and seven are satisfactory. They make sound gains in understanding a sense of time. Chronological timelines are understood by studying famous people like Guy Fawkes, Captain Cook and Beatrix Potter and special events and celebrations like Remembrance Day. In doing so they develop an awareness of how to sequence the order of important aspects of the event and interpret evidence from pictures. Year one pupils summarise their understanding of the Fire of London using computers.

111 The achievements of pupils between Years 2 and 6 are satisfactory. In a Year 3 study of the Greeks pupils extend their knowledge of how societies change. In doing so they compare the similarities and differences of life in the cities of Sparta and Athens. A Year 6 visit to a Victorian museum improves pupils' understanding of the roles of servants. Other pupils develop investigatory skills, role-playing archaeologists piecing together Egyptian artefacts. However, the use of local places of interests and resource artefacts to aid learning are under-developed. There is a strong correlation between good and satisfactory standards achieved and the amount of specific detail pupils' account for. Year 3 pupils improve their understanding with extended writing and recording of the life of Jason and the Argonauts. Creative skills are developed further when reading and writing about King Midas and his magic touch. Year 4 pupils write with good empathy on the every day life of Viking villages and reasons for invading other countries. Year 6 pupils begin to cover cultural and social understanding of Victorian and Twentieth Century Britain. However, minimum curriculum time and undeveloped links between history and literacy skills, reduces these pupils' ability to think and record their own ideas. This is not fully capitalising on the good progress pupils make in earlier years. The school is not presently utilising the scope of ICT for research purposes.

112 Two lessons of history teaching were observed. Strengths in both are the tasks given to actively encourage pupils to develop good research and evaluatory skills. Planning is imaginative and in both lessons objectives are identified to show what new understanding and skills will be learnt. Year 3 and 4 pupils acquire good historical vocabulary working as Roman soldiers to identify the planning and consequences of the invasion of Britain. Pupil use maps to locate and compare the invasion options. They work in pairs brainstorming what it would feel like to be a soldier. They consider 'mission briefs as leaders, scribes and presenters. In other lessons, Year 2 pupils engage in role-play as an artist recording the events of the Fire of London from an eyewitness point of view with vivid feelings and accurate interpretations of what happened.

113 The new coordinator has begun to develop an accurate view of the next stages of development. There is a need for her to advance her skills in the subject in order to be able to monitor work and teaching to further improve standards. The coordinator has begun to collect a portfolio of pupils' work that is valuable in demonstrating the standards to which teachers should be working. These guides are needed to improve the way key historical skills are recorded and evaluated to plan future lessons. Presently pupils are not building on what they learn from year to year and develop further understanding of the periods studied. These assessment skills are especially needed in mixed aged groups where planning is not identifying the wide range of abilities and previous experiences.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

114 Pupils in both key stages are enthusiastic and confident using ICT and reach levels of attainment that are in line with national expectations at both seven and 11 years of age. Pupils, including those with special educational needs make steady progress through the school. Since the last inspection the school has improved its hardware and embarked on staff training. The school is now able to make effective use of it's new computer suite. However at the time of the inspection the school was not linked to the Internet.

115 The strengths of the subject are:

- the use made of the new suite;
- the knowledge and understanding of the staff
- the confidence of the pupils

116 Areas for development include:

- a greater use of ICT across the curriculum to support the work of other subjects. This particularly applies to the use of computers located in the classrooms.

117 Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. During these first two years pupils learn about the use of technology in every day life and the importance of giving exact instructions to machines such as a tape recorder. Basic keyboard and word processing skills are taught. At the time of the inspection Years 1 and 2 were not using the computer suite to teach ICT skills and therefore were using their allocated time for literacy and numeracy lessons. In a Year 2 numeracy lesson the teacher stimulated interest in fractions by using a PowerPoint presentation. Pupils then went on to use a fraction programme effectively, discovering patterns created by halves and quarters. In this lesson all pupils were suitably challenged by the various tasks that had been set for them, as a result of this good teaching pupils maintained interest and concentration and therefore made good progress. In a Year 1 lesson pupils were practising moving one step forwards, backwards, and sideways in preparation for programming a robot toy or directing a screen turtle. Apart from remembering 'left' and 'right' this task offered little challenge and did not take pupils understanding any further forward. Children in the reception class demonstrated that they could already programme a small robot toy even though they were not required to make it reach a fixed end point.

118 Teachers' confidence and knowledge results in good teaching in Years 3 to 6. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 confidently used 'Colour Magic', a paint programme to create symmetrical patterns. The smart board was used effectively during the start of the lesson by the teacher and pupils to demonstrate the tools available to create patterns. Pupils were given clear criteria and required to evaluate the program in terms of its ease of use and the limitations. Higher attaining pupils designed wallpaper for a child's bedroom using 'Word'. Here they were required to compare the advantages and disadvantages of both programs for designing. This lesson successfully met the needs of pupils of differing abilities in this mixed age class. In a Year 5 and 6 class all pupils work on a similar complex task using a PowerPoint presentation. Explanations by the teacher were clear, although not inspired, therefore pupils worked hard with confidence. However, as all pupils tackled the same task, lower attaining pupils experienced some difficulties and therefore had to wait for more support before they could continue.

119 The subject is well led by a new co-ordinator who has sound plans for future development. The system is due for an update and should be connected to Broadband in the autumn. Plans are in hand for the purchase of new software with a view to increasing the use of ICT to support subjects across the curriculum.

MUSIC

120 Since the last inspection standards have improved and pupils reach the standards expected by Year 2 and exceed them by Year 6. Pupils make good progress in their learning in response to the good teaching in this subject. They receive a broad and balanced musical education and are very enthusiastic about the subject. Music has a prominent place in this school and is highly valued. The school choir is very good and pupils from Year 4 upwards are able to join. They sing in tune, with expression and enjoyment, which reflects the enthusiasm of the teacher who leads them and the school

has every right to be proud of them and their performance levels. The pupils sing particularly well during assemblies and this has a positive impact on their confidence in performing. Music is suitably used in assemblies to act as a focus as pupils enter and leave.

121 Pupils in the infants learn about the dynamics of music. They understand how symbols can be used to represent sounds, for example in a Year 2 class where they effectively identify different groups of instruments before performing well in unison, using the symbols as a support. In the juniors, pupils build effectively on what they have learned. There are good cross-curricular links, for example, when pupils in a Year 3/4 class make very good use of a poem that they have written themselves to extend their understanding of rhythm. They say the words of the poem while they clap in very good rhythm. In whole school assemblies and singing practices, pupils are constantly taught the correct musical vocabulary and no learning opportunities are missed. As a result, by the age of 11 many pupils recognise and explore the way in which music reflects time and place, for example, when Year 5/6 pupils respond very well to their teacher's suggestion to play as if ' water has gone over a waterfall '. Using this advice, they are able to polish and improve their own work.

122 Teaching is good overall. Teachers show secure subject knowledge, place good emphasis on developing important skills, give much encouragement and use resources well. These strong features help to ensure that pupils respond well. They expect to work hard and take their studies seriously. They behave very well, maintain good concentration and seek to improve their performance in everything they do.

123 Management and leadership of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has every right to be proud of the school's achievements and improvements in music. She is hard-working, enthusiastic, talented and confident and has clear plans for the continued development of the subject. She maintains an overview of teachers' planning, has worked hard to raise teacher expertise but has no opportunity to work alongside colleagues and to gain a clearer understanding of teaching and learning in music in the different groups. Resources are good and very well organised.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124 During the inspection week, it was only possible to observe games and athletics lessons. Dance, gymnastics and swimming lessons were not observed. Therefore, judgements are based on limited observations of the physical education curriculum, teacher's planning, assessment records and discussions with teachers and pupils. These indicate that by the end of Year 6 standards are average and have been maintained since the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve appropriately.

125 By Year 6, pupils are able to perform a range of basic skills such as throwing, catching and hitting with suppleness, control, accuracy and safety. They generally work well in teams and show good understanding of the tactics and rules of a relay game, for example in a Year 5/6 athletics lesson where pupils effectively improved their skills at passing a baton. The school places great importance on teaching pupils to swim. Lessons begin for the youngest pupils and continue up till the end of Year 4. As a result, standards in swimming are above average with most pupils able to swim 25 metres and the majority more than 100 metres.

126 The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and often good. Teachers focus very clearly on the skills to be taught and developed and ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully involved and supported. Teachers' relationships with pupils are very good and they manage pupils well. They have high expectations and pupils respond very well to them. Lessons are rigorous and provide a good range of activities. They begin with a vigorous warm up and end with a cooling down

period. Particular strengths are teachers' enthusiasm and lively approach, which ensures that lessons move with very good pace. In a good games lesson observed in Year 2, the teacher ensured that there was good pace and that pupils had opportunities to evaluate each other's work and improve their skills from the comments made. This immediately improved the pupils' bat and ball skills and their ability to hit the ball and control its direction. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good. They clearly enjoy the activities planned for them and respond with enthusiasm. They co-operate very well with each other and follow teachers' instructions carefully. Pupils are very keen to demonstrate their skills and sensitively appraise each other's performance in order to improve it.

127 The subject co-ordinator is new and has only been in post since September but already she has analysed and evaluated physical education provision and identified areas for further development and is now providing sound leadership. She is working closely with the secondary school, which has been designated as a Sports Status College. Teachers from the secondary school have provided in-service training in Prior's Mill. There is a sound range of extra-curricular activities. The co-ordinator oversees teachers' plans but has had no opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

128 Attainment and progress in religious education are satisfactory and this is the same as during the previous inspection. The subject now has a co-ordinator who is enthusiastic and keen to raise the standards in the subject and this is an improvement since the previous inspection.

129 The pupils understanding of the Christian and other world faiths is supported very well in assemblies, for example in assembly the story of Shiva helped the pupils to understand that it is good to think before speaking or acting. An opportunity for a Year 1 class to go on a pilgrimage to Durham Cathedral gave the opportunity for the pupils to take part in a spiritual occasion. The whole of the religious education curriculum helps the pupils to understand the beliefs of other people, groups and societies and makes a good contribution to their understanding of different cultures. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of the subject and make satisfactory progress in line with all pupils.

130 By the end of Year 2, the pupils learn about praying to God and write simple prayers. They know about the need to handle religious books and artefacts with respect, such as not touching the scrolls of the Torah. By the end of Year 6, the pupils know about Islam and the Five Pillars of Islam and understand the prayer rituals, as well as the times of prayer. They know the basic characteristics of the Hindu gods, Shiva, Brahma and Vishnu, and the roles these take as the different faces of God. The older pupils show an understanding of the Old Testament's major events, such as Cain and Abel, the fall of Jericho and the death of Moses, and are able to link these to Bible references. In the pupils' books, there are examples of pupils writing in Hebrew with an English translation. The pupils know about the Ten Commandments and are able to interpret them in modern language.

131 Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In good lessons, the use of resources, such as cards showing different characteristics of Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma, help the pupils to learn about what these characteristics mean. They learn to identify that all people have different sides to their characters. In these lessons pupils persevere with their work, pay attention and concentrate well. In another good lesson observed during the inspection, the teacher's excellent demonstration of how Muslims prepare to pray helped capture the pupils' interest and focus. Very good opportunities given to the pupils to ask question, such as, 'If Muslims recognised Jesus was a prophet why don't they celebrate Christmas and Easter?' led the teacher to extend their understanding by discussing festivals such as Eid in the Islamic faith. Where teaching and learning are only satisfactory, pupils are very interested in the introduction about different aspects of the Hindu gods, but lose concentration when

doing a practical activity because the teaching lacks energy and enthusiasm. The teachers' do not have consistently high expectations of the pupils' behaviour, allowing them to shout out rather than take turns. Although the majority of the pupils' books are marked consistently, there are occasions when work has not been marked for a period and this does not support the pupils learning sufficiently. There are opportunities for some extended writing across the school, but many photocopied worksheets are used which do not extend the pupils thinking and examine their full understanding of the subject. Teachers' planning is satisfactory overall; however, where teaching is good, it is because of the depth of the teachers' subject knowledge and their use of resources, as well as high expectations of good behaviour.

132 The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has only been in role for a year and there is insufficient time for the monitoring of the subject. The resources for the subject are satisfactory to support teaching and learning. The curriculum is in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus and the pupils' progress is assessed annually, but not against the attainment targets in the syllabus. The co-ordinator has recognised that assessment needs to be at the end of each unit of study and with clear links to the attainment targets. All aspects of the Locally Agreed Syllabus are covered but because of the time given to the subject not always in sufficient depth to meet all the assessment criteria, and so this is an area for development.