

INSPECTION REPORT

ENGLISH MARTYRS' R.C. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newcastle-on-Tyne

LEA area: Newcastle

Unique reference number: 108503

Headteacher: Mrs Denise Kendall

Lead inspector: Michael Onyon

Dates of inspection: 9-11 February 2004

Inspection number: 256073

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Primary
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	460
School address:	Beaufront Gardens Fenham Newcastle-on-Tyne Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	NE5 2SA
Telephone number:	0191 274 7463
Fax number:	0191 274 9197
Appropriate authority:	Governors
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Thomas Laidler
Date of previous inspection:	6-9 July, 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a Roman Catholic aided primary school taking pupils from 3 to 11 years old, serving an economically deprived area in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Since the previous inspection the social characteristics of the area served by the school have declined and the school has also admitted a large number of pupils from a neighbouring school that closed. At the time of the inspection there were 410 full-time pupils in 14 classes, with an additional 51 children attending part-time in the nursery. Many pupils start school with low standards of attainment, particularly in terms of language development. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below average, most pupils having learning or language difficulties. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is higher than in most schools. The school is recognised as a Beacon school, sharing its expertise in ICT, the assessment of pupils' progress through the use of ICT and leadership and management. In addition the school has achieved accreditation as a 'Healthy School' and has also worked with other schools through a local Education Action Zone.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18146	Michael Onyon	Lead inspector	English as an additional language, information and communication technology, physical education
9974	Daljit Singh	Lay inspector	
32133	Joan Elton	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage, English, citizenship, history
15474	John Fairclough	Team inspector	Special educational needs, science, art and design, design and technology
32943	David Townsend	Team inspector	Mathematics, geography, music

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA

Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 9PU

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's effectiveness is good, providing good value for money. Children's attainment on entry is low. The good quality of teaching has been maintained and developed since the previous inspection, and, as a result, pupils achieve well. Standards are above average at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science, and well above average in information and communication technology. Leadership and management are very good, with a very clear focus on seeking continuous improvement. Governance is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The good quality of teaching enables all pupils to achieve well particularly in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT).
- The very effective leadership of the headteacher, very well supported by key staff, promotes very effective teamwork, enabling the school to continuously seek improvement.
- ICT is used very effectively to support teaching and learning in subjects across the curriculum, to enhance teachers' planning and to support the very good quality assessment of pupils' work.
- Very effective links with the community and other schools and colleges are helping to raise standards.
- Induction arrangements, for pupils new to the school, are very good, enabling them to settle quickly and achieve well.
- A minority of parents are not fully involved in the school's efforts to ensure the attendance of their children.
- Opportunities are not always taken, in lessons, to achieve an effective balance between adult led and pupil led activities, limiting the development of pupils' independence.

Since the last inspection, improvement has been satisfactory. At that time the school was identified as a good school, and has maintained its high quality. The key issues identified have been addressed well. Sufficiently challenging work is provided for higher attaining pupils, with opportunities for independent research. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' work have been considerably improved, with clear targets for pupils to improve now regularly set. Standards at the end of Year 6, in 2003, were better than those in 2002, and are on course to improve this year.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Schools in similar contexts are those with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

Although overall standards of attainment, as represented by national test results, are average in mathematics and science, and below average in English, present standards are higher than in 2003 and represent **good achievement** for the pupils taking account of their low starting point, increased levels of pupil mobility, and the intake of a large number of pupils from a school that closed. In comparison with schools in similar contexts, results at the end of Year 6 are well above average in mathematics and above average in English and science. Many children enter the nursery with low initial standards and achieve well reaching the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception, in all six of the required areas of learning. Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is

satisfactory, and attainment is average in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement in Years 3-6 is good. Inspection evidence indicates that the present standards by Year 6, are above average in English, mathematics and science and well above average in ICT. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well. **Pupils' personal qualities are good.** Their attitudes to learning are positive and they behave well. The school's strong valuing ethos effectively supports **good spiritual, moral and social development** of pupils. The rate of attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. The quality of teaching is good overall. Examples of effective teaching were seen in English, mathematics, science and ICT and teaching is consistently good in the Foundation Stage. Teachers show a strong commitment to the school and work effectively as a team. The good quality of teaching seen at the previous inspection has been maintained and contributes to effective learning. There are good relationships with pupils, and teachers use an effective range of teaching strategies, with good planning and organisation of lessons encouraging good learning, with the school looking to further develop opportunities for pupils' independent learning. Teachers use ICT very effectively to support the good quality teaching and learning, and teaching and learning support assistants provide effective support being effectively involved in the preparation of pupils' work. Whilst there is an appropriate emphasis upon English, mathematics, science and ICT the curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils' personal, social and health education is developed well. The care, support and guidance offered to pupils are good. The school's partnership with the community and other schools is very good. Whilst the partnership with the majority of parents is good a minority of parents could improve their support of the school's efforts to improve attendance.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. There is a clear vision to build on the successful work of the school and to continuously improve. The school reflects well on its work and has been particularly effective in building upon its role as a Beacon school and working with partners in a local Education Action Zone to effectively maintain and raise standards. Pupils' achievements are effectively monitored and evaluated with targets for improvement in English and mathematics effectively shared with pupils and parents. All statutory requirements are in place. The governing body provides good governance, they know the school's strengths and weaknesses well and are fully involved in helping to shape the future of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Overall, parents regard the school very highly. In particular they feel their children make good progress, the teaching is good, there is good quality leadership and management and staff are approachable. Pupils also are supportive of the school and feel that their views are listened to and that they contribute to the life of the school. Pupil representatives play a full part in suggesting future developments through their involvement in the school council.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Form a more effective relationship with a minority of parents who do not effectively support the school's efforts to improve attendance.
- Achieve a better balance of pupil initiated and adult led activities, in classrooms, to further encourage pupils' independent learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is a measure of how well pupils are doing, taking their progress and their capability into account.

Achievement is good overall, and standards are above average by the time pupils leave the school. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage and there is satisfactory achievement for pupils in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3-6 pupils achieve well. Achievement for pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Whilst standards are average in relation to the goals that children are expected to reach by the end of reception, they represent good achievement given the low starting point of most children.
- Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6.
- As a result of the school's very good provision, standards in ICT are above average by Year 2 and well above average by Year 6.
- Since the previous inspection a large number of pupils have been admitted from a neighbouring school that closed. This had a negative impact upon the results of national tests, but the school has maintained standards previously achieved.

Commentary

1. In the National Curriculum tests for 2003, standards were average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Teacher assessments in science show standards to be below average. By the end of Year 6 standards were below average in English and average in mathematics and science. It can be seen from the table below that standards at the end of Year 2 were lower than those in 2002. When compared with similar schools nationally results at the end of Year 2 are average in writing and mathematics and above average in reading. At the end of Year 6 results improved in mathematics and science from 2002 to 2003, but declined in English. When compared to similar schools the results are above average in English and science and well above average in mathematics.
2. The fluctuating pattern of results is informed by the school's detailed 'tracking' procedures, illustrating the impact of an intake of pupils from another school that closed. The evidence of inspection indicates that standards are average in Year 2, in reading, writing, mathematics and science and above average in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. School data also indicates that children are entering the Foundation Stage with lower levels of attainment than at the time of the previous inspection.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.6 (17.9)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.2 (15.9)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.7 (17.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Most pupils enter the Foundation Stage with levels of attainment below those expected nationally, and also below comparable local averages. As the result of good and very good teaching, children achieve well in relation to the goals they are expected to reach by the end of

reception. Standards, as they enter Year 1, are average in reading, writing and mathematics. In Years 1 and 2 pupils had previously achieved better than indicated by the 2003 results, however, several pupils have joined the year group tested at the end of Year 2, with a negative impact upon results. Currently in Year 3, the year group is receiving well-targeted support aimed at improving standards as they progress through Years 3-6. Care is taken to provide a variety of opportunities for learning so that pupils new to the school find it easier to learn in their new environment. In their responses to the parental questionnaire, parents rightly expressed the view that standards are good and that their children are encouraged to do as well as they can.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.4 (27.6)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.2 (26.1)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.4 (27.9)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 56 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. A strong feature of the school is its provision in ICT, which has improved since the previous inspection. As a result of its well planned use and the timing of opportunities for pupils, standards in ICT are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. Achievement is good and pupils do well because of the extensive range of opportunities to use ICT. All classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards that are used consistently by teachers, not only to teach ICT skills, but also to support teaching and learning in other subjects. Pupils are confident in their use and application of ICT, produce procedures without difficulty and regularly search the Internet to find a range of information. The effect of the improved provision and its use by teachers has impacted positively on standards across the school.
5. In the period since the previous inspection data indicates that the level of attainment of children entering the school has declined. Social characteristics have changed and the school now serves an area of deprivation. Most children enter the school with below average standards and achieve well in the Foundation Stage because of good quality teaching and the way that activities are well matched to their needs. They reach the goals they are expected to reach in all the areas of learning by the end of reception. In Years 1 and 2 pupils consolidate and broaden their skills and reach average standards; above average in ICT. They continue to build upon their skills as they move through the school and by the time they leave they do better than most pupils of their age. They achieve particularly well when compared to pupils in similar schools. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, achieve well as a result of the encouragement they receive from teachers and other adults.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships with other adults are good. They are supported by pupils' broadly satisfactory attendance, which enables them to achieve well. Pupils value the education they receive and this pleases their parents. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good; their cultural development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils are keen, enthusiastic learners and actively engage in academic and social activities.
- Most pupils have pleasant and purposeful dispositions and caring attitudes, which support constructive relationships.
- A minority of parents do not effectively support the school's efforts to improve attendance.

- The provision for pupils' personal development is good and enables pupils to serve their school with pride.

Commentary

6. Most pupils enjoy learning, work hard and are confident and motivated learners. Pupils' positive desire to learn was evident in most lessons inside and outside school. During the inspection Year 6 travelled to the Newcastle United football ground to participate in an ICT lesson in the learning centre. They were observed working in a very disciplined and conscientious manner. Throughout the lesson their behaviour was exemplary and very effectively supported by their very good relationship with the teacher. Pupils also enjoy activities after school; for example, Irish dancing. This activity enabled pupils to broaden their cultural and social experiences and learn in an adventurous and harmonious atmosphere. The school is a calm and orderly community as a result of high expectations about conduct and the very good use of praise and reward for good behaviour. For example, school rules are made very clear to pupils and there are incentives to behave well and make good efforts in learning. However, very occasionally, levels of concentration are affected by some pupils who sometimes waste time by being noisy and disruptive, affecting both teaching and learning.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.6	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

7. The school admitted a large number of pupils from a school that closed and has worked hard to build good relationships with the parents of the pupils. However, a minority of parents do not effectively support the efforts of the school to improve attendance or to ensure that their children attend promptly.
8. Inspection evidence indicates that relationships between pupils and with adults, as well as inter-racial and boy/girl friendships are based on mutual respect and are instrumental to raising achievements, and enable pupils to develop physically and emotionally. The interaction between the school community helps pupils to learn in a happy and friendly environment. Staff provide good role models for pupils' own behaviour and pupils respect and value each other's opinions and co-operate well in lessons, for example, the sensible way in which they work on computers, sometimes helping others and discussing approaches to problems.
9. Pupils enjoy the responsibilities they are given as members of the school council, class and school monitors and organising fund-raising events. They exercise their independence with maturity and pride. They serve their school and wider community in an assertive way and the school is seeking additional opportunities to develop independent learning in lessons.

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	1	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	5	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0

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

10. Collective acts of worship, activities prior to lessons, during lunchtimes and after-school clubs, such as basketball and visits to places of interest and stimulating displays effectively enhance achievement and provide good support for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils learn to think about their faith and culture, which enables them to learn and care for their community and environment, as part of their Catholic faith and as better human beings. Their positive experiences help the school community to appreciate teachings from other faiths and cultures in a satisfactory way. Whilst this is an improvement since the previous inspection the school could further develop its knowledge of other racial minorities by building on visits into the community and providing more regular contact with people from other racial groups.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good, with consistently good teaching in the Foundation Stage and Years 3-6. Assessment is used well. The curriculum is good, and the school's accommodation and resources are good. Provision for pupils' care, support and guidance is good. Overall, the school's partnership with the majority of parents is good, although a minority of parents could do more to support the school. The partnership with the community and other schools is very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Overall, assessment is used well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching interests and involves pupils very well through very good use of resources and the support and encouragement of teaching assistants.
- Use of ICT to record lesson plans enables good monitoring and supports less confident teachers well, by ensuring that all lesson planning is good.
- Very good assessment procedures contribute to the close monitoring of individual progress and to the identification of clear targets for learning.
- The marking of higher attaining pupils' work, particularly in English, establishes challenging individual learning targets so that the pupils understand what they need to do to improve.
- The lesson plans of some teachers are often dominated by unit plans from national guidance and do not always fully reflecting the learning needs of individual pupils.

- Often, where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, too much of the lesson is given to teacher-directed activities, limiting opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 61 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	17 (28%)	25 (41%)	19 (31%)	0	0	0

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

11. The school has maintained the good quality of teaching of the previous inspection and has improved the use of assessment information so that improvement in teaching and learning is judged to be good. The use of the school's networked ICT system for planning teaching, supports close monitoring and ensures a good structure for teaching in all lessons. However, this does at times inhibit the expression of more adventurous teaching. As a result, pupils are not always given opportunities for independent learning through different tasks. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage is underpinned by consistently very good teaching in the nursery class and the very good contribution of teaching assistants. Whilst, overall, there is good teaching in Years 1 and 2, it is stronger in Year 1 than in Year 2. Good and very good teaching is found throughout Years 3-6. Parents expressed a very positive view of the good quality of teaching in the school.
12. Pupils are interested and involved in the majority of lessons as a result of the skilful use of interactive whiteboards. Appropriate software supports teaching in many lessons. For example, a 'big book' for shared reading in an English lesson in Year 1 enabled all pupils to access the text easily when it was displayed on the large screen. Practical resources and artefacts are used well in subjects such as science, art and design, religious education and history. A science lesson was much improved when xylophones and chime bars were used to 'tune' the sounds made by blowing across the neck of bottles. This very good engagement of the pupils is linked to clear expectations about behaviour and contributes much to pupils' good attitudes and behaviour observed in lessons. However, time was not always used well in lessons; direct teaching was sometimes overlong and did not always leave pupils with sufficient time for the completion of independent activities. For example, in an English lesson, pupils' work on paragraphs did not develop fully as a result of insufficient time for independent work after an overlong explanation of skills to be used. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good involvement in all learning activities because well-trained teaching assistants ensure full attention to teaching and effective completion of tasks.
13. Very good assessment procedures provide regular information about pupils' achievement and this is analysed to identify areas of learning for development. The analysis of national tests effectively compares the school performance against that of other schools. Pupils' progress is monitored closely and accurate predictions are made about future attainment. The school monitors the progress of different groups of pupils and acts accordingly to improve their learning by setting individual and class targets in subjects. In Years 1 and 2 pupils display their learning targets with their photograph where they sit. In Years 3-6 targets for individual pupils are displayed in different ways. On occasion, the outcomes of pupils' assessment are not explained to pupils in a way that will best help their future learning. The school's development plan acknowledges the need to involve pupils more in the process of setting targets.
14. Teachers have a good knowledge of their pupils' abilities and adjust expectations accordingly. Learning is mainly differentiated by the quality of pupils' work. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good involvement in all learning activities because well-trained teaching assistants ensure full attention to teaching and effective completion of tasks. Relationships are good and pupils are aware of what is expected of them. Where lesson objectives are based too broadly on the guidance of national strategies they are not easily accessible to all pupils. Pupils'

knowledge of which aspects of learning they find difficult are not always represented in their targets and there is sometimes an imbalance in the time taken to present information and opportunities for pupils to learn independently.

The curriculum

Overall, the curriculum is good. There are good opportunities for enrichment, for example, through extra-curricular activities in sport and music. The arrangements for staffing and the school's accommodation and resources support the implementation of the curriculum effectively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned and evaluated, enabling most pupils to achieve well and develop their capabilities.
- Opportunities for enrichment are good, both within and beyond the school day.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good and aids the pupils' development well.
- Whilst the needs of gifted and talented pupils have been identified, the school is seeking to continue to improve the opportunities available to these pupils.
- The school's staffing in terms of teachers and support staff is good and assists the teaching of the curriculum well.
- The school is well resourced and its spacious accommodation enables the curriculum to be delivered effectively.

Commentary

15. The curriculum has been comprehensively reviewed and updated to take account of new developments and the needs of most pupils. Detailed schemes of work have been compiled, subjects have been carefully timetabled and curriculum delivery fully monitored to ensure that statutory requirements are fully met. The detailed planning has helped to ensure that all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. It specifies clearly the expectations of pupils' learning for each subject and year group and, consequently, teaching in each subject is well prepared and pupil achievement is good overall.
16. A very stimulating and lively environment is created in the Foundation Stage, where children's work is attractively displayed and where a warm, calm and caring atmosphere pervades. The outdoor play area contains safe resources to develop physical education and much indoor equipment is used outside. Further development of the outdoor area is planned along with a general school grounds programme and this should ensure opportunities to extend the whole early years curriculum.
17. The school supports the curriculum well through a good range of visitors, educational visits and activities outside lesson times. Younger pupils particularly appreciated recent visits to St. Mary's Cathedral, the quayside and the theatre, which provided real contexts for learning. Nearly all parents who responded at the time of inspection believed that there is a good range of activities that pupils find interesting and enjoyable. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, including sports and arts based activities such as Irish dancing, choir, art club, ballet and football. Parents appreciate the good quality of opportunities available through activities outside usual lessons. The school successfully identifies gifted and talented pupils and these pupils undoubtedly gain from the enrichment activities provided. The school improvement plan identifies the desire to extend the range of opportunities currently available.
18. There is good curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs, as the result of the good assessment of their needs and good planning, by teachers and support staff, to meet those needs. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are also well provided for, with equal opportunities provided for all pupils in all areas of the curriculum.

19. Opportunities for pupils' personal, social and health education are systematically planned for across the curriculum and enriched by talks from community members such as the local police constable on themes such as 'personal safety'. Links with a feeder secondary school have enabled staff to share expertise and initiate, for example, a music project, which gave Year 6 pupils experience of working with older peers.
20. The school has a good number of teachers and teaching assistants, which enable them to organise classes in a manner that supports the needs of the pupils well. As a result, most pupils receive good equality of opportunity, including the more able for whom work is carefully extended and pupils with English as an additional language, who receive targeted support. Boys and girls achieve equally well overall across the wider curriculum, as do pupils from ethnic minorities, due in part to the effective systems for identifying pupil needs in subject planning.
21. The school's accommodation is spacious and enables the curriculum to be fully delivered. Resources are good; the ICT equipment purchased to enhance subject teaching is a particular strength and resources to enable each scheme of work to be taught have been effectively identified and developed.

Care, guidance and support

The school has successfully sustained the good quality of care reported in the previous inspection enabling pupils to learn in a happy, safe and secure environment ensuring good achievement and growth for all pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers care for pupils well and celebrate their achievements, regardless of pupils' ability, providing a stimulating learning environment.
- Induction arrangements for pupils are very good.
- The school ensures that it listens carefully to pupils and provides them with an effective opportunity to play an active role in the running of the school.

Commentary

22. The school ensures that all pupils learn in a friendly, happy and stimulating environment that effectively promotes Catholic values such as care and justice for all. New children to the school are gradually and sensitively inducted through several pre-school integration sessions. A 'buddy' system operates so that they can turn to an older pupil for friendship to help them settle. When the school admitted the large number of pupils from a school that closed, the staff took time to visit the school and to assess the needs of pupils, talking with them about what life at their new school would be like.
23. Teachers and support staff listen to their pupils and celebrate their achievements, both inside and outside the school community. Providing good levels of personal care and collective academic support, guidance and advice that are conducive to learning, effectively ensures the well-being and welfare of all pupils, regardless of religion, ability, ethnic and racial origin.
24. The quality of care ensures that children who leave the school for the high school settle happily and calmly into their new school. The headteacher from the local high school wrote, 'English Martyrs' is devoted to the well-being and progress of each child. The excellent foundation in attainment, personal growth and faith is characteristic of their children'. The inspection team endorse this message. The school's designated officer for child protection is well trained and deals with any issues effectively. There are good arrangements to inform staff about child protection policy and procedures. Risk assessment is undertaken as required for general health and safety matters.

25. However, very occasionally, during some playtimes and lunchtimes, supervision by temporary staff, unfamiliar with the expectations of the school, is not consistent, leading to some silly behaviour not being challenged in the usual rigorous way. This affects the learning of others in such situations.
26. The positive work of the school council ensures that pupils are heard and action is taken to address their concerns. Pupils are given an effective opportunity to become responsible citizens and learn to care for others at an early stage of their education. The school has responded to their suggestions by providing playground equipment and window blinds for some classrooms, enabling pupils to learn in a more constructive and meaningful way. Pupils expressed the view that they are fully involved in the activities of the school and parents have a very positive view of the care, support and guidance provided for their children.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school continues to sustain a very effective relationship with other schools and the community. The relationship with the majority of parents is good, however, a significant minority could do more to support the school. This invaluable partnership between school and its stakeholders effectively supports pupils' achievement and their personal development. Links with the community have improved well since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school values its partnership with other schools, providing many opportunities to encourage pupils' achievement.
- Very effective links with the community contribute effectively to the good quality of teaching and learning.
- The school is working to improve its relationship with a minority of parents who are less involved in their children's education.

Commentary

27. The school continues to enjoy a very constructive partnership with its feeder high schools, which ensures that the children experience a coherent education and the transition to the secondary school is smooth and very positive. The work between schools to enhance the curriculum and the sharing of expertise with staff in the English, mathematics and science departments has helped to raise academic standards. Staff continue to meet regularly to plan jointly and introduce activities that both enrich the curriculum and help the children to move with confidence to the high school. The school's Beacon status has enabled it to work very effectively with a number of partner schools, in particular developing the very good quality of work in ICT.
28. The school actively supports the high school summer school and the headteacher sits on the high school governing body.
29. The school continues to make very effective further use of its Beacon status and has involved other professionals to promote teaching and learning in partner schools helping to raise academic standards. Its work as part of 'The Water of Tyne' programme enabled a number of schools in the community to effectively promote dance and music, as well as enhance pupils' cultural experiences.
30. The school choir frequently entertains the community and has been praised for its entertaining skill and inspiring work. The experience has enhanced learning and enabled pupils to become valued members of the wider community.
31. Most parents have rightly reported their positive relationship with the school, which enables children to learn in an effective way. However, a small number of parents do not consistently

support the school's policy on regular attendance and timekeeping. This inevitably affects the achievement of their children, the good work of the school and good relationship between the majority of parents and the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The headteacher provides very effective leadership, supported by the very effective work of senior staff. Management is very good and governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher leads by example very effectively and her leadership enables subject co-ordinators to fulfil their roles very well.
- All staff work very effectively as a team, sharing a commitment to improvement.
- The school uses ICT very effectively, in support of leadership and management and in developing the quality of teaching and learning.
- The school is reflective and self-critical, very effectively monitoring and evaluating its work, continually striving to provide the best for all pupils.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and effectively provide both challenge and support.

Commentary

32. The headteacher provides very strong and caring leadership and the commitment she shows to raising standards, in all aspects of the school's work has contributed to the maintenance and improvement of the good quality of education offered since the previous inspection, effectively promoting a productive, inclusive climate for learning. Indicators of deprivation illustrate a trend of decline in children's attainment on entry and social indicators show a significantly different picture from that at the time of the previous inspection. The headteacher, supported very well by all staff, in particular the senior leadership team and 'phase' leaders, have successfully identified and tackled these issues to ensure that pupils continue to achieve well. The strong sense of teamwork, where all adults, including teaching assistants, work together, means that the school has few areas of weakness. Subject co-ordinators monitor standards in their subjects very well and quickly, and effectively address any areas for development. The school has achieved Beacon status, since the previous inspection, and has effectively shared its expertise, in leadership and management, with other schools in the area, with staff from other schools visiting and also taking part in training sessions. The deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher fulfil their responsibilities very well, working in close partnership with the headteacher.
33. A very positive feature that contributes to the good standards in many of the aspects of the school and the good achievement is the way that the school continually evaluates and reflects on its provision. For example, ICT is used very effectively to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress and to store the school's planning documents. As weaknesses emerge decisions are made quickly to plan appropriately challenging work for the pupils, to ensure that weaker areas are addressed and improved. The focus upon improvements in writing is an example of this process. The way that teaching assistants are deployed makes the best use of their considerable skills, with structured career development offered as an opportunity to extend their skills. The current focus on improvements in pupils' writing and the further development of ICT, are examples of the school's commitment to improvement. Parents recognise the very good quality of the school's leadership and management.
34. ICT systems are used very effectively to enable the regular assessment of pupils' progress and to evaluate the results. Careful analysis is undertaken of the patterns and trends in performance and attention given to perceived areas of weakness. For example, the impact felt when the school admitted a large number of pupils from a school that closed. Teachers used

assessment data well, carefully planning to meet the needs of the 'new' pupils. The leadership team have a very clear understanding of the quality of teaching and learning and of pupil achievement, and are working hard to achieve a consistent level of very good teaching. As a result, there is more very good teaching than at the time of the previous inspection. Monitoring information provided by the school illustrates a trend of increasing very good quality in teaching and learning. The very effective use of ICT in teaching and learning is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement and is likely to be felt more as it becomes embedded in practice. There has been an increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs since the previous inspection and the very good management of provision ensures good support for pupils and full access to all learning opportunities enabling the increasing number of pupils to achieve well. The provision is monitored well by the link governor who has a good overview of provision. Planning of the curriculum is very effectively maintained, through the ICT system, enabling teachers to quickly amend their lesson plans and also to provide up-to-date information, about progress and achievement, for parents and pupils. Attendance is also recorded electronically enabling rapid monitoring. Patterns of absence are identified and issues identified quickly; in the school's efforts to improve both attendance and punctuality.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,036,566
Total expenditure	1,048,409
Expenditure per pupil	2,484

Balances (£)	
Balance from the previous year	74,760
Balance carried forward to the next year	57,555

35. The governors are also members of the team, many working closely with subject co-ordinators, undertaking their role, effectively, as critical friends questioning and supporting the work of the school. The school complies with all statutory requirements. In addition senior staff are 'paired' with subject co-ordinators, providing additional challenge and support and enabling co-ordinators to develop their skills in monitoring and evaluating work in their subject areas. Many governors use their own areas of expertise well, for example, the specialist skills of a number of governors are valued and mean that the school makes the best use of its funds. The school manages its budget well to maintain its level of staffing and whilst the proportion of the budget currently in balance is slightly more than five per cent it has been carefully allocated to enable improvements, detailed in the school's development plan, to take place. Additional funding gained from the schools Beacon status, and involvement in the Education Action Zone, has been used very effectively to build and maintain the quality and effectiveness of the school's ICT resources.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

36. Provision in the Foundation Stage is very good because teaching and learning are good overall, with very good teaching often observed. There is more very good teaching than at the time of the previous inspection as the result of very good leadership and management monitoring and evaluating provision in the classrooms. There are very good indoor resources. Children enter a very stimulating and lively environment where their work is attractively displayed and where a warm, calm and caring atmosphere pervades. The outdoor play area contains safe resources to develop physical education and much indoor equipment is used outside. Further development of the outdoor area is planned along with a general school grounds programme, and this should ensure opportunities to extend the whole early years curriculum.
37. Teachers and well-trained support staff work very well together and have very good relationships with the children. There is a good adult child ratio and children learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are very well supported. Curricular planning is exceptionally good because of its detail, flexibility and progression towards the Early Learning Goals. This encompasses some interesting and imaginative activities for the children, both teacher led and child chosen. It is also regularly reviewed and refined by the co-ordinator with all teaching staff. These structures, along with a clear system for continuous assessment of the children, firmly underpin work in the two reception classes and nursery.
38. Induction into the nursery and reception is particularly good and prepares children and parents sensitively for the experience with a variety of visits, informative booklets and staggered admissions. Effective links with home are maintained by termly consultation meetings with parents, to share assessment information by newsletters and individual work plans, the home-school reading programme and the diaries sent in by parents when children take home the class bear!
39. Although children enter the nursery with a wide range of ability, attainment is generally below average in all areas except physical development. However, children's attitudes are very positive, they make good progress and achieve well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Routines and procedures are well established.
- This area of learning is taught directly and across the curriculum.
- Co-operative learning is encouraged.

Commentary

40. Routines and procedures are quickly established in a friendly and helpful atmosphere. As nursery children enter, they use a name tag to register and sit on the carpet ready for prayers. They know how to line up sensibly and how to take turns. They put on the correct clothing for different activities and are regularly reminded about personal hygiene. They listen well and enjoy relating home experiences to the class. They respond immediately without fuss when they are told to stop or change activity and always say sorry if their concentration lapses when the teacher is giving instructions. By the time the children reach reception they use the convention of raising their hand to answer and are confident modelling work on the Smart board in front of the class.

41. Curricular topics develop children's understanding of the emotions and the special nature of human life. Using pictures, artefacts and general discussion teachers encourage children to reflect on their own feelings and relationships. In the nursery, children exclaim that "Teddy is feeling sad", whilst in reception one child wrote, 'I was sad when I lost my Spiderman suit'.
42. Teachers are very good role models. They are courteous to each other and to the children. They listen and ask supplementary questions not only to extend language, but also because they are genuinely interested in the children as personalities. They use the words 'please', 'thank you', 'sorry' and 'excuse me' often, and give praise when they hear children doing the same.
43. Teachers encourage children to work together, to help each other and to share. In reception an effective 'buddy' or talking partner system encourages co-operation in oral lessons and thus maximises on pupil participation. Children are taught to play games as a group fairly and to speak the truth at all times.
44. Overall, teaching and learning are good throughout the Foundation Stage with a significant proportion of very good teaching. There is consistent very good teaching in the nursery. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection and, as a result, children achieve well reaching most of the Early Learning Goals in this area of the curriculum.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are very good role models.
- Children are given many opportunities to listen and to talk.
- Basic skills are well taught.

Commentary

45. As many children enter school with such low level skills, teaching staff give priority to this aspect, particularly speaking and listening, and letter recognition. Teachers identify opportunities for a variety of language use and develop these through role-play activities, collaboration with other children and by maximising adult-child interaction. Adults ask questions, give commentaries, intervene to introduce vocabulary into a child's conversation and generally help children express themselves. Staff use good standard English and they enunciate clearly, often using dramatic intonation and gesture. Children echo the teacher's expressions and try hard to be heard by the rest of the class when making a contribution. Even in the nursery, children alter their voice and tone to portray a character in a puppet show. Confidence in speaking grows quickly in the nursery and is further advanced in reception because children feel at ease and are encouraged. They explore new words and expressions, but do not feel awkward when they make a mistake.
46. Children follow structured programmes for handwriting and the use of phonics. Teachers sit closely beside them to ensure correct positioning and the use of tools so that letters are formed correctly. Teachers' skilful use of ICT, particularly the interactive whiteboard, ensures that pupils benefit from their clear vision of letters and their combinations. The Smart boards provide many opportunities for pupil interaction and teachers use Powerpoint presentations very well to sustain interest and provide the necessary repetition to consolidate learning in basic reading and writing skills. Imaginative activities involving a wide range of equipment, which many children choose, further extend the teaching focus.

47. During the inspection 85 per cent of reception children could write their first names and 40 per cent could write their family name. Pencils were used effectively and children recognised letters and could hear and say initial and final sounds in words. Teaching and learning in communication, language and literacy are very good. Despite their low starting point children are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers develop mathematics through a range of varied activities.
- Teachers make very good use of equipment to teach basic concepts.
- There is a good match of work to the differing abilities of the children.

Commentary

48. Teachers use every opportunity to teach mathematics. When checking attendance they use the occasion for children to check the accuracy of their figures. When pictures are used they question children about the first, second and third of these. Artefacts such as teddy bears are used to draw children's attention to measurement comparison. Children then put the teddies in order according to different criteria. Teachers also use a variety of counting strategies in order to signal the end of one activity and the beginning of another.
49. When mathematics is the main focus of a session teachers interest the children by their use of equipment. They also use the children themselves to effectively illustrate teaching points. In one very effective nursery lesson cars containing a pattern of dots were matched with home-made dominoes that transformed into garages! No wonder the children were intrigued!
50. Teachers are also very skilled at matching work to ability. They work side by side with children helping them to organise their equipment and teaching them good work habits such as checking and accurate counting. They ask children a series of questions to help them reflect on the solution altering their language appropriate to the listener. By the end of a reception lesson on shape, lower attaining children could match objects to drawings, the average attainers were applying mathematical language such as "curved, corners and faces" to a number of cubes, cuboids and cones and the higher attainers were identifying cylinders and comparing their principal features. Equipment used to achieve this ranged from the Smart board to modelling clay.
51. Overall, teaching is good in this area of learning with very good teaching often seen in both reception and the nursery. Children achieve well and reach all the Early Learning Goals.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

It is not possible to make an overall judgement of provision in this wide area of learning as little teaching was seen.

52. Display evidence reveals that the children are familiar with stories, dolls and toys from other countries and that they study half-termly topics such as 'Night and Day', which widen their general understanding of the world. They also create graphic pictures using ICT software. In reception children are confident moving images on a screen when the interactive whiteboard is in use.
53. Lessons in the nursery and reception also indicate that the historical and geographical aspects of the Early Learning Goals are being well developed. Teaching in both lessons observed was very good because all pupils were engrossed in their work and teaching was enthusiastic and

challenging. There was a variety of whole-class, independent and collaborative work and adults effectively supported well-matched activities. By example teachers taught how to handle with care old and precious toys. They encouraged close observation so that the children were able to discern features of ageing and they were able to appreciate how artefacts have value in people's lives. In the second lesson children learned about the sun and discussed possible protection from its rays. Activities consolidated and extended concepts and provided opportunities for basic skills such as cutting, matching shapes and role play. These activities included putting suitable clothing for sunny weather into sets, dressing paper dolls, sand and dough play, completing jigsaws showing hot weather scenes and maintaining a weather station. All these activities are useful in widening children's knowledge and understanding of the world and the school's assessment information indicates that children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have many opportunities to refine their fine motor skills.
- Children are taught how to control their movements.
- Outdoor play needs further development.

Commentary

54. Children's fine motor skills are developing well and opportunities to practise these occur throughout the day. Nursery children move puppets effectively and observations of display work reveal they have used a wide range of painting, pen and printing techniques. Reception children are confident cutting out clothes and sticking them onto paper figures so that they match. They fashion wet sand. They mould, cut and impress clay into recognisable structures. Teaching of fine motor skills in both the nursery and reception is very good. It is also very good in teaching gross motor skills.
55. In outdoor play nursery children energetically climb, slide and ride tricycles about the yard. Teachers give good demonstrations with very helpful commentaries involving ongoing assessment and lots of individual praise and instruction. By the end of one lesson children had made good co-ordinating progress in rolling, throwing and catching a textured ball.
56. In indoor physical development lessons teachers encourage further robust movement, greater body awareness and increased control of equipment. Children successfully throw quoits into a ring so that they land flatly, and roll hoops to other children over increased distances.
57. Outdoor resources for physical development are limited. Reception children use the same area as the nursery as well as the schoolyard. There are few co-operative vehicles to offer progression from the tricycles. There are no ground markings and the grassed area is featureless. However, the children enjoy the climbing apparatus and the landing surface is safe.
58. In physical development children's attainment at the beginning of the nursery is in line with national expectations. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. By the end of reception all have reached the Early Learning Goals with many doing better.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers organise imaginative activities.
- Children experience a creative, but structured, environment.
- Children are taught skills, but are encouraged to experiment.

Commentary

59. Teaching and learning in creative development are very good in both the nursery and reception. Teachers try hard to give the children imaginative activities so that they are involved in the context as they acquire skills and knowledge. In reception they discuss stimulating images of the sun and depict their own interpretation by mixing a range of colours and using them in circular movements. In the nursery children make their own puppets and use them imaginatively in role play projecting into the feelings and situations of their various characters. In reception children give very convincing weather reports from their weather station using appropriate symbols, gestures and formal language.
60. All three classrooms are organised so that children have open access to equipment for each of the areas of learning. However, teachers choose the range of activities for selection so that the children gain experience across the full curriculum rather than repeating from a more limited range. Children are given time and space to follow through their own ideas and teachers extend learning by discussion, provision of materials and general encouragement. Children's achievement is good and they are on course to achieve most of the Early Learning Goals.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Issues raised in the previous inspection have been successfully resolved.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Teachers use resources very effectively.
- More time needs to be given, in lessons, to pupils' activities.
- Further strategies are required to improve pupil participation.

Commentary

61. The school has resolved all the issues raised at the time of the previous report. It now has a well-stocked and easily accessible library, and Internet access gives pupils opportunities to extend their skills through independent study, homework and investigation. Marking is encouraging, accurate and sets clear targets for improvement.
62. Teachers analyse writing very well indeed. They prioritise what a pupil needs to improve first and make suggestions about linking different parts of the text. The school is focusing on story composition and its effect and analysis of pupils' work reveals consistency of marking across the year groups, with teachers giving praise for similes, metaphors, unusual, but effective, word order, connectives and complex sentences. Teachers also make helpful comments on the structure of stories and the way an argument is presented.
63. Standards by Year 2 are average, but above average by Year 6. In Years 1 and 2 all pupils use a variety of strategies to decipher an unknown word, they can describe a book's characters, they can predict a feasible storyline and many are conscientious about reading at home. Library skills are developing and most pupils can write neatly using a legible handwriting style. Their writing reveals the correct use of tense and is mainly, but not always, written in sentences with the correct punctuation. Spelling is fairly accurate and pupils use time connectives such as 'later on', 'first', 'suddenly' and 'eventually'. Subordinate clauses starting with 'when' and 'while' are present in many pupils' current work. The higher attaining pupils use direct speech, questions and exclamation marks, and include such similes as 'as quick as a mouse'. Pupils in Years 3-6 continue to read with enthusiasm, can answer literal and non-literal questions on a more sophisticated text, and can talk and listen with assurance in a discussion about film versus book. Not many use paragraphs when the text requires it, but the majority can defend a viewpoint and give some consideration to the opposite point of view. Lower attaining pupils find the structure of this more difficult, but higher attaining pupils are able to consider both sides of an argument and make their final decision with appropriate justification. The setting arrangements in Years 4-6 are effective, enabling pupils to achieve well.
64. Teaching and learning are good. In Years 1 and 2 the main focus at the beginning of lessons is very effective because explanations are clear and repeated in many forms. Teachers motivate the pupils by the use of games, questioning and leaving the text at an interesting point in the storyline. Teachers use very good resources. They are particularly effective using the interactive whiteboard so that all the pupils can see clearly examples of words and sounds and realise their versatility. Moreover, all pupils can self-assess because of the many examples and exercises projected in smooth sequence. Phonics are taught systematically and pupils achieve well. Most lessons are conducted at a good pace and the variety of activities to develop the first part of the lesson is always interesting and differentiated with very clear support for pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs. Finally, the plenary builds effectively on previous learning.

65. All these features are present in lessons in Years 3-6 and the detailed planning and structures continue. However, the difference in lesson quality across the school between satisfactory and very good lessons is related to the opportunities presented for pupils' independent work, their participation, opportunities for collaborative work and the balance of time between teacher exposition and pupils working through a task. In one exceptionally good lesson pupils used an aide-memoire to discuss and act out a road accident so as to make a formal report. The pupils were actively on task, working for the whole of the lesson. The teacher began to model the formal diction required, but this quickly developed into a collaborative exercise with many pupils offering suggestions before they wrote themselves. This they did well. They had justified and rehearsed their viewpoints and were now able to write to the point and quickly using a framework. Pupils found such flexibility with the literacy strategy framework 'exciting'.
66. Where teachers provide writing frames and time structures, praise and incentives for working without the teacher, these sessions are more productive. Also use of strategies such as 'talk-partners' and whiteboards maximise active participation compared with raised hands and single replies. Sometimes in lessons, pupils are raring to begin the task, but they have to wait for an overly long teacher led session to end and they feel frustrated that they cannot develop the task as fully as they would like owing to time restraints. Where pupils' work is used for teaching purposes the result is more effective because it is relevant and encourages independent learning.
67. The leadership and management of English are very good with a clear focus on the changing pattern of attainment on entry. Analysed data indicates a clear pattern of improvement with pupils, including those admitted from another school, achieving well. The subject is led by a team of three people with one from each key stage and one from the leadership team working exceptionally to ensure consistency and continuity. There is regular dialogue analysing the results of monitoring and training, and staff check pupils' progress against predicted results. This information is disseminated to the staff and used to establish future school priorities and to provide class and individual targets. Progress since the last inspection has been effectively consolidated because of the improved management structure.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

68. Teachers give spoken instructions well, always using the correct technical terms for each subject and insisting that the pupils do likewise. They give priority to speaking and listening across the curriculum and allow time for pupils' extended answers. They encourage pupils to ask questions of themselves and other pupils. Shared texts in literacy are often material from other subjects and pupils record their findings in science, design and technology and other subjects in a variety of formats. For example, sometimes pupils illustrate with labelled diagrams such themes as the lifecycle of a frog or write an imaginative account of Katie Morag's adventures on the island of Struay.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising once again after a recent fall and are above average by Year 6.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to mathematics and achievement by the end of Year 6 is good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Younger pupils are not confident enough at rapid mental calculation and need to be taught strategies more effectively.
- The subject is led and managed very well.

Commentary

69. Current standards in mathematics are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. At the time of the last inspection, standards in both year groups were above the national average. Since then, standards have fallen slightly, but are rising again. Results at the end of Year 2 took a dip in 2003, primarily due to the changing nature of the school's intake, including an increased number of pupils who start school with lower than average mathematical understanding. In Year 6, current standards have once again risen to above average levels because improvements in the teaching have ensured good levels of achievement for older pupils.
70. Overall, the school does well for its pupils, with all groups making good progress and achieving well. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants and so achieve well. Boys and girls are currently making similar progress. Pupils from minority ethnic groups also do well. Pupils show real enthusiasm for the subject and maintain very good levels of concentration and productivity.
71. The current pupils in Year 2 have made satisfactory progress and standards are in line with those expected nationally. They are developing a knowledge and understanding of place value and recalling addition and number facts up to at least ten. They can count accurately and sequence numbers. The proportion of pupils reaching above average levels in Year 2 is set to rise marginally. Whilst younger pupils sometimes lack confidence with their mental calculation skills, the setting arrangements for Year 4 onwards and the teaching of older pupils ensure that Year 6 pupils develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of key mathematical concepts and skills than their peers nationally.
72. The quality of teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to very good and is good overall. A particular strength in the teaching seen was the effective use of the computer Smart boards, which teachers used to enhance their demonstrations of key concepts very effectively. For example, Year 2 pupils were able to see and plot mirror image shapes reflected on a line of symmetry.
73. Where teaching is effective, the initial level of challenge for pupils is high and is gradually increased as the lesson unfolds. Questioning is used to prompt deeper thinking and pupils' understanding of key concepts. The pace of these lessons was always brisk, so that pupils made good gains in their learning over time.
74. The setting arrangements for Years 4–6 work well for the more confident mathematicians in particular, who benefit from good teaching that is closely matched to their needs. Teaching in Year 6 for all pupils is consistently good and better. Careful planning ensures that the teaching of numeracy is always consistent and that pupils receive a broad and balanced mathematics curriculum.
75. However, in the teaching seen for younger and less confident older pupils, pupils were given insufficient opportunities to actively explore new concepts and practise key skills together during the teacher led sections of lessons. Consequently, these pupils are not sufficiently accurate at mental calculations and lack awareness of the strategies needed to approach problem solving. Opportunities are sometimes missed to enable pupils to learn independently, encouraging them to make their own choices.
76. The subject is very well led and managed through a teamwork approach, having actively analysed the impact of the intake of a large number of pupils, enabling all to achieve well. Realistic targets are set that pupils understand and pupils' progress is rigorously monitored. A regular programme of monitoring has been in place for some time and enables key improvement issues to be identified and good practice to be shared. The changes in pupil intake mean that improvement has been consolidated since the previous inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

77. Pupils use mathematics well as part of their work in other subjects and such opportunities are planned systematically term by term. For example, they use graphs and tables to record data in geography and science or measure materials in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Years 3-6 as a result of good teaching giving pupils' factual knowledge and experience of investigative work.
- Very good leadership of the subject encourages investigative work and is seeking to further develop teaching of the skills of scientific enquiry.
- Opportunities are not always taken by teachers to offer practical activities to pupils.
- A good structured curriculum means that pupils receive a wide range of scientific experience.

Commentary

78. Standards achieved by the school in national tests are steadily rising, but remain in line with the national average. This is better than the average for similar schools. The evidence of inspection shows above average standards by the end of Year 6. Standards are average by the end of Year 2. Pupils achieve well. Year 1 pupils successfully investigate the water resistance of different materials, Year 5 pupils effectively use their knowledge of sound to create a simple scale of notes by blowing into bottles containing different amounts of water and Year 6 pupils use their knowledge of solubility to investigate reversible and irreversible changes. Pupils' understanding of controlling variables and setting up fair tests is well established. Year 6 pupils write clear accounts of their science work, use diagrams well and make good conclusions, for example, when working on the evaporation of solutions. They use ICT very effectively to support their science studies and to represent the outcomes of their work. Achievement is good.
79. Overall, teaching is good. In Years 3-6 it is consistently good and very good. All teaching effectively seeks to involve and interest pupils through practical work and makes good use of resources to illustrate scientific knowledge. Good teaching uses secure subject knowledge and planning that challenges pupils in their learning. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are involved well through careful organisation of groups and pairings for experimental work together with well-directed support for lower attaining pupils. Very good teaching places the learning in the nature of a quest to test the accuracy of a prediction and pupils develop investigative skills of trial and error. For example, when they used their knowledge about sound to vary the amount of water in bottles, creating a musical scale by blowing across the mouth of the bottles.
80. The very good leadership of science is developing the subject well. Despite a change of intake and considerable evidence illustrating increased social deprivation good standards have been maintained and teaching has improved showing good improvement since the previous inspection. As a result, improvement is good. Links with a local secondary school that has science college status mean that there is an expert input to the subject and that imaginative topic packs are readily available to support teaching. The curriculum modifies national guidelines to extend learning, especially for the experimental parts of the subject. Links with other subject areas are well planned, for example, music - when studying sound. ICT resources such as interactive whiteboards are used well in lessons. The need to use investigations to develop skills of enquiry in the pupils is recognised.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and all pupils, regardless of gender, additional language and special educational needs, are achieving well, reaching well above average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Care has been taken to ensure that all pupils gain the maximum possible benefit from the school's investment in ICT resources.
- Pupils' achievement is assessed very well and the information evaluated to inform the better planning of succeeding lessons.
- The provision, and effective use of interactive whiteboards, in all classrooms, very effectively supports teaching and learning in other subjects of the curriculum, providing very good opportunities for pupils to practise their skills.

Commentary

81. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6, with very good achievement throughout the school. Since the previous inspection the computer suite has been established and interactive whiteboards installed in all the classrooms. Great care has been taken to ensure that all pupils have as much time as possible with the computers to develop their skills. Work in ICT is a strength of the school. The positive impact of very good teaching and learning, taking place in the suite and in the classrooms, is impacting upon standards. Perceptive assessment ensures that opportunities are provided for all pupils to gain additional experience and to extend their skills. The assessment process used in school has formed a model of good practice and is shared, through the Beacon partnership, with other local schools.
82. Older pupils prepared a multimedia presentation. They added graphics and sound, creating pages that offered users a variety of options, based on their work in history, looking at life in Britain in the 1960s. For younger pupils, good links were made to science using a database program, enabling them to sort and classify materials. They routinely log on and off the system, open files and save their own work, effectively accessing and linking the contents of different programs to compile their own information. Pupils work independently and also help each other to gain the most from their experience. Teachers prepare lessons well and sensible timetabling enables maximum use to be made of the computer suite. The use of ICT is having a considerable impact upon achievement in other subjects of the curriculum.
83. The very good subject co-ordinator works very effectively with colleagues, to develop the subject, sustaining and improving the skills of both teachers and pupils. Under her leadership teachers are involved in suitable training, and teaching assistants provide invaluable support that contributes effectively to the quality of learning and the progress of the pupils. Good improvement has been made in standards attained by pupils, and very good progress in the provision of equipment, since the previous inspection. The subject co-ordinator and the headteacher have a very clear and positive vision about future developments in the school's effective use of ICT.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

84. Information and communication technology is used consistently to deliver teaching and learning in other subjects of the curriculum and is leading the improvement of teaching and learning. Teachers consistently use the interactive whiteboards, installed in every classroom, to present a range of information to pupils and also to enable them to 'interact' with the information. For example, in a Year 3 lesson in mathematics, pupils were able to highlight on the whiteboard, the information needed to assist their mental calculations of mathematical problems. In a Year 5 lesson in English, pupils used the whiteboard to compare and contrast different ways in which legends had been written. Pupils have opportunities to practise skills learned in the computer suite, in other lessons, for example, word-processing work in English, enabling pupils to 'draft' a

story, to refine and edit it, producing a finished product of high quality. Throughout the school the quality of work on display, illustrating the range and depth of pupils' ICT work, is of high quality.

HUMANITIES

Work was sampled in geography and history, with one lesson seen in geography and two in history. It is not, therefore, possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects.

85. In **geography** there is every indication from pupils' work seen that standards are broadly average in Years 2 and 6, which was the case at the time of the last inspection. Pupils in Year 2 have studied their local community, learnt to identify different features of the immediate environment and can talk about the key characteristics of their own and contrasting localities. Pupils in Year 6 are able to express views about environmental issues and identify how improvements to an area might be undertaken. They have learnt key geographical skills, such as the use of keys on maps and the identification of longitude and latitude references for key cities around the globe. In the lessons seen, pupils in Year 1 were taught well and ICT was used effectively to record class findings on a recent local parking survey. In Year 5, the teacher enabled pupils to enquire at first hand, trying out the process of water filtration for themselves as part of a project on water changes in the environment.
86. In the two lessons observed in **history** teaching and learning were judged good and very good. Lessons were well planned and involved interesting resources such as pictures, photographs, coins, toys and information found on the Internet. Pupils were encouraged to observe artefacts closely for their materials, purpose and signs of age. They were taught to be critical of the possible accuracy of personal memories and to appreciate that there are different opinions about different historical events. Teachers questioned pupils well to draw their attention to various features and suggest scenarios where artefacts may have been used. This engaged the pupils and they reflected on how artefacts trigger memories. The pupils were very enthusiastic in these lessons and applied their knowledge well to games, worksheets and activities. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that pupils make some interesting visits to develop their understanding of a period of time. Such visits include Kilhope Lead Mining Centre, Bede's World, Bessy Surtees' House, Arbeia Roman Fort and the Laing Art Gallery. Pupils have also examined photographic evidence of their own school over 50 years. Teachers ensure that pupils' knowledge of chronology is effectively developed and pupils present their work in a variety of ways; by oral and written accounts, research, worksheets and by the use of Power point slides. Work is marked correctly and teachers comment to encourage their pupils.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

As a result of the focus on English, mathematics, science and ICT there was not enough evidence to report on any of these subjects individually, because not enough teaching was seen or there was not enough evidence to judge achievement. However, work was sampled in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education.

87. Since the previous inspection the school has developed a scheme of work in **art and design** and pupils' work on display reflects teachers' and pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. The work illustrates a wide range of experience of techniques in a range of mediums. For example, silk painting linked to an art gallery visit that also developed literacy skills through extended writing. Sketches by Year 6 pupils use shading for texture and light effects. From the work seen standards are good by Years 2 and 6. Year 2 pupils use art and design, and design and technology skills to produce good abstract images in the style of Jackson Pollock. Art and design is used as a natural part of subjects such as history and geography. Year 2 pupils created good quality shape patterns and designs based on images from a church visit. Pupils in Year 5 painted good pictures of Victorian toys as part of their history topic. Leadership and management of art and design are good. Teachers are enthusiastic and a thriving art club extends pupils' already good experience in the subject.

88. Scrutiny of the **design and technology** work on display shows models of a good quality, which indicates good development of skills in Years 3-6. Samples of work seen are at a good standard and demonstrate a variety of techniques and the use of a wide variety of materials. Skills are evident in the construction of wheeled vehicles; fairground rides that transfer power through a right angle and bridges constructed from straws. Year 6 pupils have used scientific skills to test bridges for load bearing capabilities. Questions of cantilever construction, the strength of triangles and the need to distribute forces on load bearing platforms were considered in designs. Links with history are evident in the construction of models of Greek temples. Evidence of standards at the expected level was seen in Year 2, in a portfolio of work. Good leadership of the subject ensures that the curriculum provided for the pupils is good with a full range of activities and opportunities for pupils to develop skills.
89. In **music** it is not possible to make any overall evaluation of provision. Documentation was studied and an extra-curricular activity, the school choir, was observed. A good range of music activities and tuition is available to pupils across the school, including the opportunity for all pupils in Year 3 to learn the descant recorder. Peripatetic music teaching is available to older pupils through the work of visiting tutors, and the school currently offers tuition in instruments such as the keyboard, clarinet, flute, guitar and trumpet. The quality of singing in the school choir lunchtime activity session was very high. Pupils sang with confidence, demonstrating the ability to successfully maintain singing parts within a round and to perform harmonies and counter-melodies. Expectations are very high and pupils' performance skills are carefully honed, including their attention to phrasing and enunciation. Whilst the song in question is a piece in progress, the rendition of this song is already of a high quality.
90. Three lessons in **physical education** were seen during the inspection. The teaching observed ranged from good to satisfactory. The lessons involved an effective warm-up and good explanations about the effects of exercise. Pupils selected dance movements with control, followed instructions and observed each other, being effectively encouraged to evaluate their performance and act upon improvements. In a gymnastics lesson pupils were able to sensibly and safely put out the large apparatus, under supervision, and to use it appropriately to develop a sequence of movements, including balances and the transfer of their weight from one part of the body to another. The resources for physical education are good. There is a good range of games equipment for both outdoor and indoor activities and gymnastic apparatus is appropriate and well kept. There are two halls, and thoughtful timetabling enables all pupils to have access to the indoor facilities. Scrutiny of documentation and discussion with pupils suggests that all strands of the curriculum, including swimming, are covered. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

91. There was not enough evidence to report on this area in full. The school has its own units of work for citizenship. This develops from aspects of religious education teaching and incorporates a well-structured programme to develop pupils' economic, social, political and environmental education. Its main aim is to develop pupils into active and responsible citizens. The school holds elections every year to elect members of the school council. Every year group is represented and the council meets regularly and has affected change in the school. Members of the church and local community are invited to extend the pupils' education and these visitors include the road safety department, the fire brigade and the police, visiting drama groups, general helpers and parish volunteers. The programme is taught across the curriculum, often in circle time and personal and social education where the emphasis is on empathy, rights and responsibilities.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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

