

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC JUNIOR

Birtley

LEA area: Gateshead

Unique reference number: 108388

Head teacher: Mr D Slowey

Lead inspector: Mr D. Byrne

Dates of inspection: 14th - 16th June 2004

Inspection number: 257739

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Junior
School category: Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils: 7 to 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 104

School address: School Street
Birtley
Chester le Street
County Durham

Postcode: CS28 7HG

Telephone number: 0191 4102231

Fax number: 0191 4922400

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Rev A Duffy

Date of previous inspection: 8th June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a small school in a suburban location near to Gateshead. It is a voluntary aided Catholic school educating 104 boys and girls aged from 7 to eleven years of age. A significant number of pupils benefit from living in advantaged homes. The school population has been relatively stable in recent years with low levels of pupil mobility. Virtually all pupils are of White British ethnic background and none speak English as an additional language. The attainment of children when they start the school in Year 3 is above average overall. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is just below the national average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including Statements of Special Educational Need, is below the national average. In 2003 the school gained an achievement award and was also judged to merit the Basic Skills award. The school fulfils the criteria of being classed as a healthy school. In sport the school has gained the Football Association (FA) Charter and also received the Local education authority's Physical Education Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
28076	Mr D Byrne	Lead inspector	English, science, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, special educational needs, personal, social and health education and citizenship.
9224	Mr M Vineall	Lay Inspector	
31807	Mr D Carpenter	Team Inspector	Mathematics, art and design, French, music, physical education.

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school with some excellent strengths. Pupils achieve very well and reach very high standards overall. Pupils benefit from very good teaching with some excellent features, and are inspired by a lively and exciting curriculum. The school is very effectively led and managed and effectively governed. The school gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good teaching overall results in pupils achieving very well and reaching very high standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Teaching is excellent in Year 6 but in Year 3, although satisfactory, it does not match the high quality elsewhere.
- The headteacher creates excellent teamwork between senior staff, resulting in a very good ethos that results in very high levels of pupils' personal and academic development.
- Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to school and to others.
- A very good curriculum that is very well enriched by visits and visitors inspires pupils to want to learn.
- Very strong support from parents and good links with the community enhances the pupils' education.
- Resources are of a high quality, but some parts of the accommodation are cramped and lack space.
- The governing body makes a good contribution to the school's management but it could do more to monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum.
- The school is a very caring and secure place for pupils to learn.

There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. The impact of leadership and management is much greater and has resulted in significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and in the level of achievement. Standards have risen significantly, particularly in English, mathematics, science and design and technology. The curriculum has been developed very well and there are effective plans for ensuring that the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are used to support learning across the curriculum. Assessment is now effectively used to inform planning. The quality of the school's prospectus has been improved and meets requirements.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			Similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	A*	A	A
Mathematics	A	A*	A*	A*
Science	A*	A*	A*	A*

Key: A* - very high; A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Inspection evidence shows that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those identified as being more able, achieve **very well** overall, although in Year 3 achievement is only satisfactory. By the end of Year 6 standards are very high in English, mathematics and science. In other subjects, standards are above expectations, except in art and design and history, where they are well above expectations. Standards in the national tests in English, mathematics and science have improved significantly since the last inspection. Results in each subject have been very high every year since 2000 and in science they have been in the top 5 per cent of all schools nationally. In 2003, standards were also in the top 5 per cent of all schools nationally in mathematics and were very high in English.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal development is very good with **very good** levels of spiritual, moral and social development and good levels of cultural development. These contribute to very good attitudes and behaviour and the development of very good relationships. Attendance and punctuality are both very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **very good** quality of education with some excellent features. Teaching and learning are **very good** overall, although there are some variations. Teaching and learning in Year 6 is excellent with some excellent features in Year 4 and good teaching in Year 5. In Year 3 teaching is satisfactory overall. Effective assessments are made of pupils' attainment and progress and all assessment information is used effectively to improve the quality of teaching. Very good teamwork between teachers and support staff makes sure that pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and are fully involved in all parts of school life. A very good curriculum that is very well enriched by a range of educational visits and visitors stimulates pupils to learn at a very good rate. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, but some parts of the school need improving to reach acceptable standards. Resources are good in terms of quantity and quality. Pupils receive very good levels of care, with very good attention paid to their health and safety. The school involves pupils' very effectively in the running of the school and successfully engages them in evaluating their own performances. Very good partnerships exist with parents and there are good links with the local community and other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** overall. Governance is good. The headteacher and senior staff form an excellent team and together they have an exceptionally clear vision for the school's development. Very high standards are expected of pupils and staff and the most rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning results in a very good system of school improvement. The headteacher creates a very good ethos within the school that is rooted in Christian belief. The school is a very caring and happy community that is always striving to do better.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very good levels of satisfaction with the school. They feel the school sets high standards both academically and in terms of personal development. They value the "family" atmosphere that is evident in the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They enjoy the very good quality of teaching and the stimulating lessons this provides. They feel they are listened

to and given the chance to be involved by contributing ideas about ways of improving the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise the quality of teaching and levels of achievement in Year 3 to meet the high standards elsewhere in the school.
- Develop even better strategies for involving the governing body in the monitoring of the curriculum.
- Strive to improve the teaching space available in the building.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Pupils achieve **very well** overall and reach **very high** standards by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the school have been consistently well above the national average in English, mathematics and science for many years.
- Pupils achieve very well overall because the needs are met for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher-attaining pupils.
- Standards in subjects other than English, mathematics and science are good overall with some good use of literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance learning.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.7 (31.0)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	31.9 (30.1)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	32.6 (32.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- 1 Standards are much higher in English, mathematics and science than they were at the time of the last inspection. In the 2003 national tests, pupils in Year 6 reached standards in English, mathematics and science that were very high. In mathematics and science, standards were in the top 5 per cent of all schools nationally and also in the top 5 per cent of similar schools based on the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. These very high results in the national tests have been maintained for a number of years. Inspection evidence supports the reliability of the national test results. Statistical data indicates that the rate of pupils' progress between Years 3 and 6 is very high in English, mathematics and science, and inspection evidence shows that pupils learn at a very good rate in their time in the school. There is no evidence of any difference between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are given very good support and achieve very well.
- 2 In subjects other than English, mathematics and science, pupils achieve well overall and do very well in art and design and history. Standards in most subjects are higher than they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils apply their good literacy skills to enhance learning in all subjects through applying their very good skills of reading and writing to locate information and record findings. Their ICT skills are also used effectively to support learning and pupils' knowledge and understanding of computers are above expectations. In art and design, high quality teaching that challenges pupils' perceptions of art, coupled with effective teaching of the work of great artists and their

techniques, creates a love of the subject amongst pupils. As a result, pupils work very hard and reach standards that are well above the expectations for their age. Standards in design and technology are good and improving. Improvements in the curriculum have boosted provision, and pupils acquire a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. In the humanities, pupils respond well to the efforts of staff to present material in a stimulating and interesting way. Standards in history are well above expectations. Pupils are particularly good at using research skills to learn about history and have a very good knowledge and understanding of key events and people from a range of historical eras. Good provision in physical education helps pupils to achieve well and reach standards that are above those expected for their age. Achievement is satisfactory in French, and given the limited time per week for each class, pupils do well in learning the rudiments of a modern foreign language.

- 3 Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are given very good support, and this results in pupils doing very well. They make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Higher-attaining pupils are very effectively challenged and pushed to the limits of their potential. Expectations by staff of such pupils are high enough to capture the pupils' imaginations whilst ensuring that although work is hard, it is very satisfying to learn.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**, promoting amongst pupils **very good** attitudes, behaviour and levels of personal development. Attendance and punctuality are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and staff manage the school community very effectively to promote very good levels of spiritual, moral and social development.
- The provision for cultural development is good, but there is a relative weakness in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures.
- Pupils are proud of their school and have the confidence to use their initiative and to state their beliefs.
- Pupils care for others and behave very well.
- Pupils love coming to school and enjoy learning.

Commentary

- 4 Pupils are highly motivated to learn. Even during the last lesson of the day, pupils are eager to learn and show great enthusiasm for lessons. In response to the lively and exciting lessons provided, pupils work very hard and almost always do their best. Pupils enjoy playing and learning in an environment that is free from harassment or bullying. Everyone thinks of others and is considerate and helpful. The headteacher and staff work hard to create a safe and secure atmosphere in school. Great store is placed on creating a strong sense of community. The school assemblies make a strong contribution to developing a sense of "family", but also initiatives such as playing music of the pupils' choice during lunchtimes generates a sense of belonging for pupils. Discussions with pupils showed that they see the development of friendships as being a positive legacy of being in school. Plenty of educational visits, including a residential one, effectively extend the development of pupils' social skills beyond the classroom. Pupils develop a strong sense of spirituality. Opportunities to sit in the school garden at playtimes, as long as they have a book to read enables pupils to

experience times for quietness and personal reflection. In lessons, pupils are given many chances to see the wonder of art and nature and to develop their sense of wonder. Moral development features strongly throughout school life. Pupils have a good sense of right from wrong. Through debates such as the threats to the rainforests and about the lives of others less fortunate than themselves, pupils are encouraged to consider a range of moral issues and dilemmas. Pupils have a strong affinity with, and respect for, their own cultural backgrounds. They also have a sensitivity, understanding and appreciation of the way people of other cultures and faiths live. Pupils are more aware of the similarities than the differences between themselves and others. There is no evidence of racism or racist behaviour.

- 5 Pupils are proud of their school. They talk of the meaning of their logo with pride and appear to want to live up to its underlying message of care for others. It underpins the strong code of behaviour that pervades all aspects of school life. Personal responsibility is very well developed. Pupils respond well to expectations for them to manage aspects of the classroom and often take it upon themselves to organise or help others, both in lessons and out at play. Pupils show confidence and initiatives and willingly support and help others. The pupil and school council is an effective and improving group that enables pupils to have a say in the way the school runs. Those with special educational needs are totally included in all that goes on.

Attendance

- 6 Nearly all pupils attending the school have very good attendance. The school has very successfully created a culture of good attendance and of arriving punctually. Parents are very supportive of the importance of their children attending school and of arriving on time. There is no unauthorised absence.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.4	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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are very **good** overall. The school provides **very good** levels of care and **good** levels of support, advice and guidance. **Very good** links exist with parents and good links with the community and other schools.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **very good** overall. Teaching is excellent in Year 6, but only satisfactory in Year 3. **Very good** assessment procedures are established.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent teaching in Year 6 is demonstrated by exceptional pace, very high expectations of all pupils and very good use of resources to inspire and motivate pupils.
- In Year 3, expectations are not as high and pace is relatively slow, resulting in pupils not doing as well as in other classes.
- Some excellent use of ICT in Years 4 and 6 adds an extra dimension to lessons and captures the pupils' imaginations, but in Year 3 its use could be better.
- Very good teamwork between teaching assistants and class teachers results in pupils with special educational needs being given very good support.
- The very good use of educational visits broadens pupils' experiences and motivates them to learn.
- Marking and homework make very positive contributions to pupils' learning.
- Assessment is very effectively used to involve pupils in their own education and in directing very effective support for pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 20 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	6	6	4	0	0	0

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

- 7 The quality of teaching is very good overall and excellent in Year 6 with some excellent features in Year 4. There has been a very good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Teachers and teaching assistants work very hard to successfully build on the good standards that most pupils start the school with so that pupils achieve very well in their time in the school. Lessons are very well planned. There are very clear aims for all that is taught and pupils have a very clear understanding of what is expected of them. In most classes, teachers accept only the pupils' best efforts and, as a result, pupils work very hard. Throughout the school, teachers demand that great care is taken with the way that pupils present their work. Behaviour is very well managed and is rarely a concern because work is usually very exciting and stimulating and captures the attention of all pupils. Throughout the school, teaching and support staff work hard to build up pupils' self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities. Excellent teaching is typified by exceptional pace and very high expectations that ensure that all pupils are totally involved in their lessons and totally committed to doing as well as they can. Excellent use is made of ICT in Years 4 and 6 to bring learning alive and to focus pupils' attention very closely on the aims and objectives of many lessons. During an excellent English lesson in Year 6, pupils were captivated when the teacher showed a snippet of the DVD of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* to support very challenging work involving writing a quest. Such creative use of ICT is typical of teaching in Year 6 and also in Year 4, and adds an extra dimension to the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. The satisfactory lessons, mostly in Year 3, although well planned and effectively managed, often lack sufficient pace to keep everyone working and at times, higher-attaining pupils are not given enough challenge. As a result, the very good standards found in other classes are not matched and the rate of learning is not as good as it could be.

- 8 In English, teachers very successfully build on the pupils' very good standards of reading and love of books, in order to encourage pupils to write. Both boys and girls write very well and they present their work beautifully in all subjects. In mathematics, most teachers very effectively teach mental arithmetic and enable pupils to apply their very good knowledge and understanding of numeracy to solve problems. Science is taught very effectively. Very good attention is given to promoting pupils' skills of independently planning, performing and recording investigations. Teachers are very keen to ensure that pupils make correct use of scientific vocabulary and this helps pupils to develop a very good understanding of scientific ideas and concepts. The quality of teaching of ICT is very good in Years 4 and 6 where the use of the interactive whiteboard benefits both teaching and learning. There are variations, however, in the quality of teaching across the school with a relative lack of subject knowledge in ICT, with a particular weakness in Year 3.
- 9 The teaching of creative and aesthetic subjects and of humanities is very good overall. The very effective use of time ensures that subjects are meticulously planned so that the pupils' needs are usually met. Some very creative and imaginative teaching in art and design inspires pupils' thinking. For example, pupils were asked to criticise the work of Jackson Pollack after challenging them to explore his techniques by creating their own versions of his pictures. Very good use of educational visits adds to the motivation of pupils, and teachers make very good use of such visits to enliven some potentially dull but essential topics. The visit to Bede's world, for example, enabled pupils to dress up as monks and act out events of a monk's life, therefore developing amongst the pupils an understanding of life in the Middle Ages. The teaching of design and technology has improved significantly since the last inspection. Teachers have worked hard to improve their own knowledge of the subject and the subject is now taught well.
- 10 Pupils with special educational needs are taught very well. Class teachers, the teaching assistants and the special educational needs support teacher ensure that pupils are effectively supported. All systems for setting targets for pupils and evaluating their progress towards them are very effective. The needs of higher-attaining pupils are very well catered for. Homework is well thought through and is an integral part of learning. It usually supplements pupils' class work, but at times, projects are provided for completion at home. Just prior to the national tests at the end of Year 6, some very well prepared revision material contributes to the very good preparation of pupils for the tests.
- 11 There are very effective systems for keeping an eye on the attainment and progress of pupils across the school. Regular assessments are made of pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science as they move through the school. In other subjects, teachers know pupils very well and keep manageable records of the pupils' achievement. The end of key stage National Curriculum test data is effectively analysed in order to find ways of improving teaching further. The school makes very effective use of all data to set targets for groups of pupils and to plot the progress of pupils over time. In Years 4, 5 and 6, very good use of marking involves pupils in setting their own targets for improvement in English and mathematics, thereby developing pupils' own awareness of how well they are doing. Effective use is made of computerised records to ease the handling of recorded data.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **very good** with very good enrichment. The accommodation is **satisfactory** and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Subjects are very well planned so that links between them increase the relevance of learning for pupils.
- A very good range of educational visits and visitors adds interest to lessons and inspires pupils to learn.
- The curriculum is tailored to make it very accessible for pupils with special educational needs and to challenge the needs of higher-attaining pupils.
- Pupils benefit from access to a very good range of sports and arts activities.
- The accommodation is cramped and lacks a suitable space for a library, information and communication technology suite or for teaching pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

- 12 Pupils benefit from a lively and diverse curriculum that inspires them to learn. The headteacher and deputy keep a close eye on what is taught and how to make learning interesting and relevant for the pupils. Although the provision for English and literacy and mathematics and numeracy follows the national guidance for these subjects, the programme for both is very effectively adapted to fit the needs of the school's pupils. The provision in each subject is carefully planned so that as pupils move through the school, they make very good progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills. This contributes to the very good achievement overall of pupils in the school. Strong links are planned between different subjects so that pupils have the chance to use their knowledge and skills in a variety of situations. This is particularly effective in enabling pupils to apply their very good skills of literacy and numeracy to learning on other subjects. The use of information and communication technology is good overall, but varies between classes depending upon the teacher's knowledge. Across the school, pupils benefit from learning French as a modern foreign language. This extends their already very good knowledge and understanding of language and literacy, as well as of features of another European culture.
- 13 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and enables these pupils to be involved in all aspects of school life. Each pupil has a detailed individual education plan that is used to guide learning and used by staff to gauge the pupils' progress. Higher-attaining pupils are provided with suitably adapted activities so that they are challenged to extend their existing skills and knowledge.
- 14 The school makes very good provision for enriching the basic curriculum and this is a major factor in the high levels of enthusiasm that most pupils have for learning. Educational visits for example to *Bede's World*, add an extra dimension to lessons and visits to the school for example, from *Shakespeare4Kidz*, capture pupils' attention and provoke amongst pupils a desire to work hard and be creative. The residential visit for older pupils develops a wide range of academic and social skills. Very good enrichment in the arts enables pupils to explore their skills of performance and of expressing themselves creatively. Very good provision in sports provides pupils with very good opportunities to explore their own talents. Visits from a range of sports coaches widen pupils' knowledge and understanding of a range of sports. A good range of extracurricular activities contributes to pupils' achievement particularly in sport, but also in aspects of musical performance.
- 15 The accommodation is satisfactory overall but has weaknesses. A diligent caretaker maintains it very well. The headteacher makes sure that all available space is very

efficiently used, but the school is cramped and fails to provide a suitably confidential area for groups of pupils or individuals who need support, for example, those with special educational needs. The lack of space for a suitably designated library or information and communication technology area makes it difficult for pupils to make as effective use of such facilities as they would like. Outdoors, an award-winning nature area makes a very positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual and social development. The school's policy of only buying the best quality resources shows in the good range that is available for learning in most subjects. More investment in information and communication technology, however, would boost learning opportunities for pupils across the school. The number of teaching assistants is relatively low, although their use is very effective, particularly for pupils with special educational needs.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. The school provides **good** support, advice and guidance and has **very good** procedures for seeking the views of pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good relationships between all staff and pupils.
- The school does very good work to ensure a safe and secure school environment.
- Pupils are very well involved in the work of the school with an active and well-established pupil and school council.
- Good personal development and guidance is given to all pupils, albeit usually on the informal basis of teachers' good knowledge of pupils.

Commentary

- 16 Very good care is a hallmark of this school. Much effort is directed at ensuring the safety and security of the children. Very good attention is given to health and safety issues with the very good involvement of the governing body working closely with the headteacher and a very efficient caretaker. Child protection issues are treated very seriously, again led by the headteacher, but aided by the close team of staff. The school ensures that risk assessments are systematically carried out and recorded. Accidents, mishaps and other such events are very well and sympathetically handled. There is very efficient recording, where necessary, and particular attention is given to ensuring that parents are informed.
- 17 The very caring ethos of the school is greatly helped by the very good relationships that exist within the school between all adults working there and all pupils. This, together with good knowledge and understanding of individual children, results in good personal development and guidance to match pupils' needs, although there is no formal monitoring of this.
- 18 Pupils are very well involved in the running of the school and readily assume and enjoy the wide range of responsibilities they are given. A pupil and school council is well established, embracing representatives from all classes and making significant contributions to improving the way the school is run. It now sits at the head of a true 'mini-democracy' in the school, involving 'Class Councils' and other valuable work in personal, social, and health education and citizenship.

Partnerships with parents, other schools and the community

Very good partnerships exist with parents and there are good links with the community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents express very good views on the school and enjoy a very good partnership with it.
- Very good induction procedures have been created to help children become part of the school and make a smooth transition to their next school.
- Good links exist with the local community that go beyond the Church and benefit teaching and learning.
- Beneficial links have been created with local schools, including many sporting links.
- Although satisfactory, pupils' annual reports to parents could be more informative.

Commentary

- 19 Parents have a very good opinion of the school. They are particularly pleased with its friendly, caring atmosphere, the way children are taught, and the 'family ethos'. Parents and staff appear close, and informal communication is very good. Parents are also supportive of the school and help out in a number of ways. Some parents find time to help in class and one parent regularly manages the library. Parents regularly help by supporting the supervision visits or supporting social and fund-raising functions. Formal communications are satisfactory and inform parents of events, needs, dates, etc. E-mail is used to talk to parents and a good website exists. Reports to parents are satisfactory, but they tend to be descriptive rather than giving a clear picture of the standards in comparison to national expectations or in communicating targets for their children's improvement.
- 20 The school clearly enjoys a close and special relationship with its parish church and its congregation, and it also relates beneficially with the wider community. Educational and recreational visits are used frequently to enhance learning in lessons. For example, visits to local galleries, museums, theatres, parks and even the local newspaper extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of a range of subjects. A good range of visitors from the community also enriches the curriculum. For example, a community nurse, the community policeman, and representatives of the fire service complement the school's personal, social and health and citizenship programme by visiting school to talk with pupils.
- 21 There are good links with other schools. These ease the trauma amongst pupils when they move from the infant school and when they move on to secondary school. The Birtley Cluster of local schools contributes to pupils' education, for example, through sporting links as well as contributing to elements of staff development. Durham University values the school as a base for Initial Teacher Training students and a local further education college is planning to use the school as a base for the training of teaching assistants.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very good** overall. The headteacher provides **excellent** leadership along with key staff. Management is **very good** and the impact of the governance of the school is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher manages people exceptionally well and contributes to excellent teamwork created amongst staff, all of whom share the same vision, sense of purpose and commitment to high standards.
- There are outstandingly effective ways of ensuring that the school is constantly improving.
- The good governing body is very committed and supportive, but it could be more proactive in determining its own views of the school.
- Finances are very well managed so that the school gets the best from its income.

Commentary

- 22 The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the school. He has an outstandingly clear educational vision that keeps a very strong focus on developing pupils' academic potential whilst also valuing their personal development. Working with a very effective deputy headteacher, very high expectations are set for the standard of education provided for all pupils attending the school. Very high levels of equality of opportunity for everyone ensure that people feel valued and appreciated for what they do. All staff are aware of the aims and ethos of the school and the part they play in the school's success. There is a very strong culture of teamwork that includes all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, as well as governors, parents and, most particularly, pupils. Excellent teamwork between staff ensures that all subjects are very effectively led and managed, with some excellent features in the management of English and science. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well managed with very good support from the local education authority special needs support team.
- 23 The school has adopted simple but very effective systems for evaluating its strengths and weaknesses. Very good use is made of assessment data together with the outcomes of performance management of the teaching and support staff to identify strategies for improving the school. The targets for school improvement are recorded in a very well devised school development plan, which indicates ways of achieving success. The headteacher has very successfully developed a culture in which both staff and pupils are encouraged to improve their own performance. This contributes to very effective systems for staff development and for pupils to be involved in evaluating their own performance. The impact of leadership and management on the school has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- 24 The governing body is a very supportive and committed group that ensures that all statutory requirements are fully met. It keeps a close eye on the school's finances and ensures that the buildings are risk free and maintained to a good standard. The governors are fully aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, but they rely too much on the headteacher for information about the curriculum. The governing body makes very good use of assessment data and other information to gauge the effectiveness of the school on standards in English, mathematics and science, but it is less well informed about standards and the impact of provision in other curriculum areas.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	239 269	Balance from previous year	42 177
Total expenditure	251 529	Balance carried forward to the next	29 917
Expenditure per pupil	2 386		

- 25 Financial management is very good and has improved since the last inspection. A local education authority bursary provides very good support. This ensures that all budget figures are carefully monitored and strategic planning is realistic. A comfortable surplus has been accrued in order to safeguard staffing levels against predicted fluctuations in

pupil numbers. There are very effective systems for ensuring the school gets the best from its income and for making sure that its learning resources, quality of teaching staff and use of the accommodation are of the highest possible standard.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

- 26 The limitations of time made it impossible to make firm judgements about the provision in **French**.
- 27 By observing one **French** lesson and evaluating school documentation, however, inspection evidence shows that French is taught to each class for 45 minutes a week. The school has effective plans and makes effective use of suitable resources to help pupils and teachers during lessons. Pupils develop a good awareness of the basics of the French language and also of some features of French culture. There is an emphasis upon developing pupils' confidence to participate in conversations, although some written work is also developed. Pupils do well in what they learn, and comments from the secondary schools to which they transfer indicate that pupils from the school have a very good foundation when they start to learn modern foreign languages at that next stage of their education.

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are very high because of very good teaching overall and excellent leadership and management.
- Achievement is only satisfactory in Year 3.
- Pupils develop very good writing and reading skills and these benefit learning across the curriculum.
- Pupils are highly motivated to learn because of very well planned lessons that make very good use of a variety of resources, in particular ICT.

Commentary

- 28 Inspection evidence shows that pupils achieve very well. Standards are currently well above average with a high percentage of pupils in Year 6 exceeding the standards expected for their age. This judgment is consistent with the 2003 results at the end of Year 6 when results in the national tests were well above the national average for all schools. Excellent teaching in Year 6 results in pupils learning at an outstanding rate in all areas of the subject, but particularly in reading and writing. Standards have improved significantly since the time of the previous inspection. Over the last four years, standards gained in the Year 6 national tests have been consistently well above average. Assessment data indicates that pupils make very good progress overall in their time in the school. The inspection evidence confirms this. Over the past three years the performance of boys has been slightly ahead of girls. Inspection evidence is that the school very successfully ensures that both boys and girls receive equal entitlement and achieve equally well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because of the very good quality support provided by teachers and support staff.

- 29 Pupils make very good progress in developing their skills of speaking and listening. Pupils achieve very well in their time in the school but there are variations in achievement between classes. It is excellent in Year 6, good in Years 4 and 5 and satisfactory in Year 3. Much of the credit for the very good and good achievement goes to the efforts of most staff to plan and teach lessons that are exciting and stimulating. These capture the interest of all pupils so that they are keen to listen and contribute. Pupils offer well considered and mature opinions, and the vast majority can call on an extensive vocabulary. In lessons, pupils listen with respect to their teachers and to each other. Those who are sometimes reluctant to volunteer answers and opinions are sensitively cajoled into taking part by very good teaching.
- 30 Standards in reading are very high. The school promotes reading very well. Pupils are very enthusiastic readers and many cannot wait to read their current novel whenever it is permissible. Pupils benefit from a rigorously planned curriculum that allows regular opportunities for them to read quietly in class as well as regularly sharing whole-class readers. Effective strategies build links with parents who are mostly very supportive in encouraging their children to read at home. Good encouragement is made for pupils to borrow books from the school library and very good links with the town library extend opportunities for pupils to get to know a wider range of books. Class teachers provide very good role models for pupils by sharing their own books with pupils and by developing pupils' views of books and authors. Discussions with pupils show that they have an extensive knowledge of recent popular fiction, but they are not as well versed in the classics of children's literature. By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed the very good skills of using books for research in order to support learning in a range of subjects.
- 31 The quality of pupils' writing is very high. Across the school, but especially in Years 4 and 6, the pupils' handwriting and presentation of work are immaculate. Pupils develop an excellent grasp of the features of a very wide range of writing. The pupils' very good vocabulary is skilfully woven into their writing. They use punctuation and spelling very well and effectively structure different forms of writing. A good knowledge of a wide range of styles of writing enables pupils to select the most effective way of writing for different purposes. For example, they are aware of the difference in writing when creating a story of suspense as opposed to writing a set of instructions or of writing a letter to persuade another to give them more pocket money.
- 32 Teaching and learning are very good overall with excellent teaching in Year 6 and some excellent features of teaching in Year 4. Teachers work very hard to motivate their pupils. This results in the very high quality of pupils' work and in very high levels of output. Lessons are very well planned, extremely well explained to pupils and in most lessons the pace is exceptional. Resources are used very well and in Years 4 and 6, the use of information and communication technology is outstanding. Interactive whiteboards are very effectively used to focus pupils' attention. During a Year 6 lesson during which pupils were exploring the writing techniques required to create a quest, the judicious inclusion of a snippet of the DVD of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* inspired pupils' to generate their own ideas and rapidly produce some excellent work. The pace of most lessons is exceptional and pupils work very hard as a result. The needs of all pupils are usually very well met with very high expectations made of pupils. In Year 3, however, pace is occasionally rather pedestrian and expectations are lower than in other classes. Across the school, marking is very good overall with pupils receiving advice about how they can improve by responding to set targets. Pupils in all year groups are using the computer as a tool for improving the quality of their work and much of the work on display benefits from the creative use of word-processing applications. Throughout the school, teachers and pupils are ably supported by the

dedicated work of the teaching assistant and an effective special needs support teacher.

- 33 Leadership and management are excellent. The co-ordinator leads by example. She constantly supports and guides staff and is always seeking ways of improving provision. An ethos is embedded in the school that only the best is good enough. Very high quality wall displays are an excellent feature of classrooms and act to not only value the quality of pupils' work, but also to present relevant teaching points. Very good use is made of visiting theatre groups, authors and poets to enrich the curriculum. The National Literacy Strategy is very effectively adapted to meet the needs of the pupils in the school. Assessment data is very effectively used to analyse standards, and regular reviews of pupils' work adds to the high quality of the subject evaluation. Resources of a high quality and very good links with the local library supplement the range of books. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good, primarily because of the high quality leadership by the co-ordinator.

Language and literacy across the curriculum:

- 34 Very good use is made of language and literacy to support learning in all areas of the curriculum. The very high expectations by teachers for pupils to present their work neatly means that pupils' writing in books in all subjects is of a very high standard. Many opportunities are planned for pupils to write in other subjects in a particular style, for example, instructional writing as part of design and technology, biographical style in writing about the life of Henry VIII in history and in recounting the sequence of events of a science investigation. Expectations are very high for pupils to use books to research information into topics such as the Tropical rainforests as part of geography and the life of a great artist such as Jackson Pollack. In most lessons, teachers make very effective use of technical words and demand that pupils make use of it too, thereby extending pupils' vocabulary.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high as a result of very good teaching overall, although standards and expectations in Year 3 are not as high as in other classes.
- Pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of all areas of mathematics and the ability to apply these to solve problems.
- There are very effective systems for self-evaluation that identify where the school can do even better.

Commentary

- 34 Inspection evidence shows that pupils achieve very well overall. Standards in Year 6 are currently very high with a very high percentage of pupils exceeding the standards expected for their age. This judgment is consistent with the 2003 results at the end of Year 6 when results in the national tests were in the top 5 per cent of all schools nationally. Very good teaching in Year 6 results in pupils learning at an outstanding rate in all areas of the subject. Standards have improved dramatically since the time of the previous inspection. Over the last five years, standards in the Year 6 national tests

have been consistently well above average. Assessment data indicates that pupils make excellent progress overall in their time in the school. The inspection evidence confirms this. There is no evidence of any difference between the performance of boys or girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because of the very good quality support provided by teachers and support staff.

- 35 By Year 6, regular practice and very good, systematic teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6 in particular result in pupils acquiring a very good knowledge of basic numeracy. Discussion with pupils shows that they have very quick recall of multiplication and division facts and use these to calculate accurately challenging long multiplication and division sums. Analysis of pupils' work shows that pupils also develop a very good knowledge and understanding of other aspects of mathematics, for example, shape, space and measure. The effectively planned curriculum successfully encourages pupils to apply their good numeracy and mathematical skills to solve a wide range of mathematical problems. This is a significant reason why a very high percentage of pupils gain standards in the national tests that exceed the expectations for their age.
- 36 The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall, although it is only satisfactory in Year 3. Rapid pace and high levels of challenge are the strong features of teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6. In Year 3, whilst planning is good, it is not consistently transferred to meet pupils' needs, and this means that learning is not as fast as in other classes and is only satisfactory. Very good teaching in Years 4 to 6 is characterised by very high expectations of pupils who respond well to very challenging tasks that demand that they use their mental arithmetic skills to think and answer quickly to improve their arithmetic skills well. In a very good mental arithmetic lesson in Year 5, the teacher employed an extensive range of strategies to improve arithmetic skills, including very good use of mathematical vocabulary. The teacher targeted questions sensitively so that all pupils were involved and helped pupils to gain in confidence and achieve very well in the lesson. Good use is made of information and communication technology to support learning in mathematics in Year 6, and there is satisfactory use elsewhere. Very effective marking not only corrects work but also involves the pupils in setting targets for improvement and developing their capacity for evaluating how well they are doing. Homework is very well used to supplement learning.
- 37 Leadership and management are very good. Very clear assessment procedures are used well to identify individuals who need a boost to their attainment and to set targets for improvement. The monitoring of teaching and learning is very good and enables the school to develop a clear picture of where its strengths are and the areas that need to be improved further for example, the quality of some aspects of teaching in Year 3. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 38 The use of mathematics in other subjects is good. Pupils throughout the school use a good range of graphs to display information and to gather data, for example when making measurement in science. In ICT, pupils develop a secure knowledge and understanding of how to use spreadsheets, to represent in a variety of ways data gathered from class surveys.

SCIENCE

The provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high because pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are very effectively challenged to apply their skills to solve scientific investigations, although standards and expectations in Year 3 are not as high.
- Lessons are meticulously planned, and at times exceptional use is made of information and communication technology by teachers to successfully stimulate and motivate pupils.
- Very effective leadership and management constantly seeks ways of improving provision even further.

Commentary

- 39 Inspection evidence shows that pupils achieve very well overall. Standards in Year 6 are currently very high, with an exceptionally high percentage of pupils exceeding the standards expected for their age. This judgment is consistent with the 2003 results at the end of Year 6 when results in the national tests were in the top 5 per cent of all schools nationally. Very good teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6 results in pupils learning at an outstanding rate. Standards have improved dramatically since the time of the previous inspection. Over the last four years, standards in the Year 6 national tests have been consistently very high and in the top 5 per cent of all schools nationally. Assessment data indicates that pupils make excellent progress in their time in the school. The inspection evidence confirms this. There is no statistically significant difference between the performance of boys or girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because of the very good quality support provided by teachers and support staff.
- 40 Pupils develop a very good knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas and concepts. Because of the very high expectations of teachers for pupils to use correct terminology, pupils acquire a very good understanding of scientific vocabulary. From discussions with Year 6 pupils it is clear that they have a very mature knowledge and understanding of key ideas related to forces and their effects. They used this when presenting their own ideas to other pupils in their class. Pupils very effectively perform scientific investigations. They have an advanced understanding of the need for fair testing and make very good use of gathered evidence to make conclusions from this. During a lesson in Year 4 where pupils were exploring aspects of human growth, they showed very good co-operative skills to establish a pattern between the size of an adult's skeleton compared with that of a child's. The analysis of pupils' work indicates that pupils work extremely hard and take pride in their work. Discussion with Year 6 pupils shows that, very unusually, they know the difference between an experiment and an investigation and competently select which type of activity is most appropriate for which element of science.
- 41 The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall, but only satisfactory in Year 3 because of a slower pace and at times, the provision of work that is not as challenging as elsewhere in the school. Across the school, most lessons are meticulously planned so that pupils are suitably challenged and make very good progress. A good balance is struck between class teaching and group and individual activities. Teachers are very effective in explaining difficult ideas to pupils so that they have a good chance of understanding them. During a Year 5 lesson, pupils were taken outdoors to observe a

well-prepared activity to demonstrate the relative sizes and distances between the sun, the moon and the Earth. Pupils developed a good idea of the scale involved and returned to class invigorated and keen to learn more. Teachers make good use of ICT to support teaching and learning. Some excellent use is made of the interactive whiteboard to bring learning alive as well as to present information and record pupils' responses to discussions. In Year 4, a short snippet of a DVD showing parts of the human skeleton fired the imagination and enthusiasm of pupils.

- 42 In the lessons observed during the inspection, the teachers valued pupils' own ideas and very skilfully set up outstanding levels of debate. Pupils are very responsive and very keen to learn as a result. Teachers make very good use of praise and encouragement and this raises pupils' self esteem to such an extent that everyone has the confidence to have a go at solving the scientific problems provided for them. Good use is made of marking to improve what pupils do and homework is effectively employed to enhance what goes on in school.
- 43 The subject is very effectively led and managed. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and leads very well by setting very high standards for her class. The curriculum has been thoughtfully planned to best meet pupils' needs and regular staff training keeps everyone up to date with what is expected. Assessment systems are very effective and assist the monitoring of standards and of teaching and learning. The relative weakness in Year 3 is recognised, and support and guidance is provided where necessary. Resources are of a good quality and are well organised. The provision in the subject has improved significantly since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, pupils make good progress, but it is faster in some classes than others.
- Pupils are confident and competent in using the computer to communicate in a variety of ways, but they have limited experience of using E-mails.
- Most teachers provide a good role model for pupils by making good use of computers to support teaching across the curriculum.

Commentary

- 44 Pupils achieve well, and by the end of Year 6 standards are above average overall. Most pupils make independent, competent and efficient use of the computer to support learning in many areas of their education. Progress across the school, however, varies from being excellent in Year 6 and very good in Years 4 and 5 to being satisfactory in Year 3. The school has a clear action plan that is starting to improve the level of consistency by supporting and guiding less confident staff. Since the last inspection, there has been considerable investment in the subject and improvements in the curriculum and staff training. These improvements have helped to push up standards. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of good quality support provided by teachers and support staff.
- 45 By the end of Year 6, pupils willingly use the computer for a wide variety of purposes and are skilled at choosing the most appropriate form of ICT. They write and edit pieces of text very competently and have developed a good range of communication skills.

Pupils confidently prepare and show multimedia presentations that effectively combine text with imported images and photographs. Currently, pupils are in the process of designing and making their own web pages but pupils are less familiar with using the computer for sending and receiving E-mails. CD-ROMs and the Internet are very effectively used to research information and good use is made of spreadsheets to model numerical data. Pupils are developing a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of using ICT to control work, but are less familiar with using it to sense and record environmental changes.

- 46 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and excellent in Year 6. Good use is made of the interactive whiteboard in two classes and this adds to the knowledge and experience of ICT for pupils, as well adding an extra dimension to teaching. Teachers manage lessons very well so that pupils regularly use the computer during lessons. Tasks are carefully planned to fit in with lessons and are explained with clarity, using language that is understood by pupils. At times homework is set for pupils, for example pupils in Year 6 have worked at home to create their own multimedia presentation about Macbeth. In Year 3, ICT is satisfactorily taught, but additional support is often required to support and build up the teacher's confidence.
- 47 The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator provides a very good role model for other staff and for pupils through leading in ways of making best use of the interactive whiteboard and through establishing good strategies for training and supporting staff. Effective monitoring procedures ensure that the co-ordinator is well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. The outcomes of such evaluations contribute to a very well planned action plan for the subject and this ensures that the subject is given a suitably high profile throughout the school. Resources are satisfactory and the sensible decision to employ a part-time technician keeps the computer systems up and running most of the time. There has been a very good improvement in the provision in ICT since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 48 The provision for using information and communication technology across the curriculum is good. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge of using computers to support learning across the curriculum. Good use is made for research into topics to do in geography and history. Computers are used particularly effectively to support learning in English. For example, pupils in Year 6 perform challenging work involving the creation of multimedia presentations associated with retelling the events of Macbeth. Effective use is made of suitable mathematics and literacy programmes to support lower-attaining pupils and also those with special educational needs. The school is currently exploring ways of using information and communication technology to strengthen links with schools in Europe.

HUMANITIES

- 49 A judgement about the quality of the provision was not possible in **history** because insufficient evidence was available.
- 50 In **history**, pupils' work was sampled and discussions held with pupils from Years 4 and 6. Evidence shows that standards are well above national expectations. The quality of presentation of their recorded work is very high and the content shows considerable depth in the taught curriculum. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the main features of their areas of study and demonstrate good skills of locating

information in a variety of ways. Pupils develop not only a good knowledge of historical events surrounding key historical eras, ranging from the ancient world through to the 1970s, but also an appreciation of the conditions that everyday people lived in. The recorded work indicates that pupils frequently apply their literacy skills to history, for example, in writing biographies of key people such as Henry VIII as well as of the sad events of everyday people such as Anne Frank. A good understanding is developed of local history, with a particularly good contribution from educational visits within the locality. For example, older pupils learn about the industrial past of Gateshead by exploring the locality and in Year 3 they learn about aspects of monastic life in the Middle Ages by visiting a museum based on St Bede's.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers set high standards for pupils to develop their own skills of research.
- A well planned curriculum makes good links between geography and other subjects.
- Pupils develop a particularly good knowledge and understanding of issues concerning the global environment.

Commentary

- 51 Pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 6, standards are well above national expectations and have improved since the last inspection. By the end of Year 6, pupils are able to discuss geography with assurance and demonstrate good subject knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well because of the good quality support provided by teachers and support staff.
- 52 Good quality teaching and an exciting curriculum stimulate pupils to learn and results in pupils making good progress. Lessons are carefully planned to match the school's curriculum and also to link into current affairs. An example of this is the way that work concerning a study of Europe involved a link with Euro 2004. Discussions with pupils and an analysis of their work show that they develop a good knowledge and understanding of the main features of world geography. As well as learning about physical features such as mountains, oceans and continents, they develop a particularly good awareness of the fragility of the Earth and the impact of climate change on the habitats and survival of all living things. Great care is taken by staff in creating outstanding teaching boards to support geography. For example, a very high quality display linked to the environmental issues of protecting the rainforests both informs and inspires pupils in their learning. All geography work is taught to a good depth with a good focus on the skills of using research skills, field studies and understanding maps. Teachers often make good links between geography and other subjects. For example, computers are used to support research and scientific ideas related to change employed to explain the way the water cycle works. Literacy skills are effectively applied and this shows in the very high quality of recorded work in pupils' books.
- 53 Leadership and management are effective. Standards are regularly monitored and assessment procedures are useful in tracking the progress of individual pupils. The curriculum is well planned to ensure that pupils develop not only geographical knowledge but also field study skills. Very good use is made of educational visits to

extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of other locations. Resources are good overall. There has been a good improvement in provision since the last inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

- 54 The limitations of time made it impossible to make a secure judgement about provision in **music**.
- 55 Pupils receive a satisfactory curriculum for **music**. There is a satisfactory range of opportunities to learn to play instruments, such as keyboards and guitars. The school enriches the music curriculum by bringing in musicians and providing time for pupils to listen to and appreciate a satisfactory range of different types of music. Staff provide good role models by leading singing during assemblies. Very good singing during assemblies results from the very good leadership of the headteacher, who plays guitar to accompany pupils.

Art and design

The provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop a good appreciation of a range of famous artists and develop good skills of evaluating their styles.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

- 56 Pupils start school with good standards, and effective teaching successfully extends the pupils' knowledge and skills and this results in pupils achieving well. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards that are well above expectations. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good quality support provided by teachers.
- 57 Pupils develop a good understanding of the techniques and styles of a range of famous artists. They respond with great enthusiasm to a range of modern and classical art. Pupils in Year 6 talk enthusiastically about the work of Jackson Pollack and Pablo Picasso. Some excellent examples of work in the same style demonstrates not only the pupils' good knowledge and understanding of these artists, but also shows very good skills of using paint and crayons as a medium. Printing also features strongly, with pupils in Year 5 making very good replications of the work of the eminent Victorian designer, William Morris.
- 58 The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall, and particularly in Year 6. Teachers successfully demand that the quality of presentation of pupils' artwork is of a very high standard. This is reinforced by some excellent classroom displays prepared by staff. Pupils are encouraged to question art, and even though there is a good emphasis placed on developing pupils' basic skills of drawing, painting and printing, pupils' spontaneity is encouraged too. Provocative questions are asked of pupils. For example, during a study of the work of Pollack, pupils were asked to respond to the statement, *"That is not art. Anyone can throw paint at a canvas!"* In so doing and, after

creating excellent designs in the style of Pollack, pupils showed a very mature view about this and many showed an appreciation of the talent of this controversial artist.

- 59 The subject is well led and managed. There is a well organised and planned curriculum and pupils' attainment and progress is effectively tracked. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As part of studying some of Picasso's paintings associated with the Spanish Civil War, pupils were prompted to consider the moral impact of war and to evaluate the arguments for and against it. The provision in art and design has improved well since the last inspection.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching focuses pupils' learning effectively on the design process.
- The curriculum is made exciting and relevant to pupils by ensuring good links are made with other subjects.

Commentary

- 60 Pupils achieve well and reach standards at the end of Year 6 that are better than national expectations. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection, when they were judged to be unsatisfactory. The improvements are a direct result of the school improving the quality of the curriculum and of teaching. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils because of the good quality support provided by teachers and support staff.
- 61 Pupils benefit from a good curriculum and experience a good range of design techniques. Discussion with pupils shows that by the end of Year 6, they have a good understanding of the work of a designer. Each design project is fully researched and evaluated by pupils who consider any associated moral and social issues, for example, in designing an environmentally friendly bus shelter. All designs are considered in the contexts of aesthetics as well as function, fashion and style. Pupils are very familiar with the process of constructing prototypes. This was demonstrated in the pupils' high quality design of slippers and footwear. Pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of using a variety of materials including food, some fabrics, for example in making felt purses, and of using card and wood to design and make working models of fairground carousels
- 62 Teaching and learning is good overall with strengths in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the design process. High expectations are made of pupils to plan and record what they have done and the quality of the pupils' design and technology books is very high. Lessons are well planned and effectively managed so that all pupils have equal access to activities. Tasks are often linked to other curriculum areas, for example, using pupils' knowledge and understanding of electricity to design and create a working fairground ride. There are increasing efforts to link information and communication technology to design and technology through using controlling devices and developing the idea of using the computer for designing.
- 63 The subject benefits from good leadership and management. There is a strong commitment to make the subject relevant to the pupils' lives. Curriculum planning is

flexible and allows good links to be established with other subjects whilst also ensuring that all elements of the National Curriculum are taught. Resources are satisfactory and pupils' attainment and progress is known and tracked. There has been very good improvement in provision since the last inspection.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching encourages all pupils to do as well as they can, regardless of their natural ability.
- Pupils have good attitudes to winning and losing.
- The curriculum is enriched by the contribution of a wide range of sports coaches and the school's involvement in interschool sporting events.

Commentary

- 64 Pupils achieve well in physical education. By the end of Year 6, standards are above those expected nationally, with a significant number performing very well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the belief that staff engender amongst pupils that even if you have difficulties in physical education you can still succeed by doing as well as you can.
- 65 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Despite the limitations of the accommodation, teachers work hard to overcome this by providing a full range of physical education activities. Pupils develop their skills of swimming, gymnastics, dance, outdoor games and outdoor adventure activities. Lessons are carefully prepared so that care is taken to ensure pupils' health and safety. During a lesson aimed at developing pupils' athletic skills, good skill training by the class teacher resulted in pupils trying their very best and most achieving well in hurdling. Many pupils were surprised by their own ability and showed really good attitudes to each other. Throughout lessons, staff make good use of praise and encouragement for all pupils. The less talented are made to feel valued, which results in pupils of all abilities having self confidence, even if they are not as good as others. Discussion with boys and girls shows that they are all given equal opportunities to participate in events. Some teams are mixed whilst others are not, for example, the school has a successful girls' soccer team. Pupils have a good attitude to competitive sport. They clearly like success, but also are very sensitive to the feelings of those less skilled. For a small school, pupils have been very successful in interschool events but despite this success, the idea that losing teaches you more than winning is well established amongst pupils.
- 66 The school is working hard to successfully provide a broad physical education curriculum. The success of its efforts is recognised by the local education authority, which has awarded the school with the Gateshead Physical Education Award. Pupils benefit from a good range of curriculum enrichment, for example, they benefit from the contribution of coaches from Newcastle Eagles for basketball and from soccer coaches from Newcastle United FC. The school has gained the FA Charter for soccer development. Pupils are encouraged to participate in a number of extracurricular activities including soccer, netball and cross-country, and there are high levels of participation.

- 67 Physical education is very effectively led and managed. The quality of provision is constantly under review and initiatives are taken to develop and extend the quality of the curriculum. Resources are sufficient, and whilst the accommodation is cramped with regard to the indoor curriculum, all elements of the subject are taught. Staff know the pupils very well and use this knowledge to support, encourage and challenge pupils' existing abilities so that they do as well as they can. The provision has improved well since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

- 68 The school makes **very good** provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education. Through regular opportunities for pupils to talk with others and share ideas, feelings and emotions, pupils develop a sense of trust in others and in the confidentiality of staff. This has a significant impact on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and levels of personal development. Systems for promoting citizenship are good overall. The pupil and school councils are developing well and starting to have an influence in the amount of say pupils have in the management of the school. There is a well planned programme for raising issues related to sex and relationships and drugs education. The provision for pupils' health and safety and general well being are carefully planned for and action is taken to improve any perceived weaknesses. This is exemplified by the school's accreditation of being a healthy school. Good links with the community enhances the development of pupils' sense of citizenship, for example, by meeting and learning about the supportive work of the community policeman.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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