

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PATRICK'S RC VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stockton-on-Tees

LEA area: Stockton-on-Tees

Unique reference number: 111687

Headteacher: Mr D Murray

Lead inspector: Mrs M Fitzpatrick

Dates of inspection: 18 – 20 November 2003

Inspection number: 257911

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	295
School address:	Lingfield Road Fairfield Stockton Stockton-on-Tees
Postcode:	TS19 7PL
Telephone number:	01642 580850
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Wilson
Date of previous inspection:	2 March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Patrick's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic Primary school in the town of Stockton. The school is larger than most primary schools, with 295 pupils in the school between the ages of three and 11. The school has a stable community and pupil mobility is low. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school community is made up of children from a predominantly white European heritage. There are no pupils with English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average. Most pupils on the register of special educational needs have weaknesses in basic literacy or numeracy. There are six pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational needs; as a percentage of the school's population this is higher than the national average. The overall attainment of pupils when they enter the school is about what is expected in children who are three.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
24326	Mrs M Fitzpatrick	Lead inspector	English English as an additional language
19741	Mr T Smith	Lay inspector	
17877	Mrs C Ingham	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music Foundation stage
27591	Mrs M Campbell	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Physical education Special educational needs
7994	Mrs P Weston	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Patrick's is a good school where pupils achieve well. The headteacher provides very good leadership for the development of the school and very good leadership for the personal and spiritual development of pupils. Teaching and learning are good and the school has maintained high standards since the last inspection. The school makes very good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. Given the quality of provision and the standards achieved the school is judged to give good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are above average in most subjects by the time pupils are in Year 6, however some higher attaining pupils do not reach the standards they are capable of in mathematics.
- There is good leadership and management in the school overall; the management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Some teachers have a lack of subject knowledge and expertise in mathematics.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Children make a very good start to their education in the Nursery. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good.
- Pupils have very good opportunities for their personal development; by Year 6 they are mature and responsible members of the school community.
- The school has very good links with parents to support their children's learning, and with other schools and colleges, which increase pupils' opportunities for learning.

Improvements since the last inspection

The school has successfully tackled the issues raised at the last inspection. The provision for information and communication technology is very good and standards are rising as teachers become more familiar with the use of the new technology the school has introduced. Provision in design and technology is satisfactory and pupils' learning is based on a progressive scheme of work. The school makes good use of assessment data to track pupils' learning and identify areas for improvement. The weakness in mathematics was detected through this process and the school has already begun providing professional development for teachers.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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	B	A	B	D
science	A	A	C	D

*Key: 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.*

Pupils' achievement is good because they are well taught and enjoy learning. Overall, pupils who sat the national tests in Year 6 in 2003 made good progress from their test scores when they were seven, though higher attainers did not do as well in mathematics as they did in English. Results in English were much better than in mathematics and science, because far fewer pupils reached the higher level 5 in mathematics and science tests than did so in English. The school attributes this to some teachers' subject knowledge in English being much stronger than it is in the other two subjects, and the inspection team agrees. Pupils currently in Year 6, reach well above

average standards in English and above average standards in mathematics, science, art and design, geography and music; in other subjects they reach the expected standard. Pupils in Year 2 also achieve well and reach above average standards in reading and writing, mathematics and science. In the Foundation Stage, children make a very good start to their education in the Nursery and are well on course to achieve the early learning goals by the end of Reception and a significant minority are likely to attain beyond them.

Pupils' personal development, attitudes and behaviour are **very good** because of the school's **very good** provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is **well above** the national average and punctuality is **very good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good overall, with a high proportion of very good teaching seen in the Nursery, Years 1 and 2, and Years 5 and 6. Teaching in English is good overall and in the infants there is very good emphasis on reading skills. Because pupils are so well taught they quickly learn to read, and this is reinforced by the very good support parents give to reading at home. Teaching in mathematics ranges from very good to satisfactory. While some teachers have very good subject knowledge and expertise in mathematics, others need further professional development to maintain the pace in lessons and raise their expectations of what pupils can do. There is now very good provision for higher attaining pupils in mathematics lessons in Year 6 through the use of an additional teacher. Teaching in music is very good and pupils enjoy the subject because of the lively lessons and high demands made upon them. Teaching in ICT is also very good. In the Foundation Stage, children learn well because the teachers plan a wide variety of activities which interest and motivate them. The quality of support given by learning support assistants is good and they make a significant contribution to the learning of children in all classes where they work.

The school curriculum is good because most teachers make good links between subjects. The school makes good provision for pupils to extend their learning through school clubs. The seventy five minute lesson after morning break is too long for effective teaching and learning in one subject. The well planned curriculum in the Foundation Stage covers all areas of learning for young children.

The school provides good quality care and guidance for its pupils, who feel secure in the very good relationships they have with teachers and other adults in the school. The school's good partnership with parents makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning and creates a very strong and supportive school community. The school has very good links with other local schools, colleges and universities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management in the school are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the school and is aware of its strengths and weaknesses because of the thorough monitoring procedures he has put in place. Leadership and management of the provision for special educational needs and for the Foundation Stage are very good. All teachers take part in assessing each other's teaching as part of the performance management programme, but do not observe teaching in the subjects which they co-ordinate. This is a weakness. The governors give good support and challenge for the school and they have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents hold the school and staff in high esteem. They are particularly pleased that their children like school, work hard and make good progress. Some parents were concerned about the amount of information they receive about their child's progress and others had concerns about how well their children learned in mixed age classes. Inspectors found that information to parents is good and that

pupils in mixed age classes make the same progress in their learning as their peers in single age classes.

Pupils have positive views about their school and think they are treated fairly by teachers. A few pupils felt they were not always supported in their work and that other pupils do not behave well. Inspectors found that overall, pupils have very good relationships with their teachers and that they are well supported in their learning. There are a few pupils whose behaviour can be distracting but these are well managed by teachers whose expectations for behaviour are very high.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in mathematics for higher attaining pupils.
- Monitor teaching in mathematics to discover strengths and weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge and expertise and take action to share good practice and improve weak teaching.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is good. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils reach standards that are above the expectation for their age in English, mathematics and science. Pupils who have special educational needs make the same progress as other pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 6 pupils achieve above the expected levels in English, mathematics, science, art and design, geography and music.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development.
- Higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged in mathematics.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning and achieve well throughout the school.

Commentary

1. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and by the end of the Reception year are likely to exceed the expected levels in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. In creative development they are likely to reach the expected levels. It was not possible to make a judgement about standards at end of Reception year in physical development, because not enough teaching was observed. Children are very well taught and the planning for their learning is based on a thorough knowledge of what they need to learn next. The good achievement of pupils and their enthusiasm for learning owes much to the very good leadership of the Foundation Stage co-ordinator. She places very good emphasis on good teamwork so that all adults know how to achieve the high standards she seeks for the children.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.5 (17.3)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	17.0 (15.3)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	18.6 (17.7)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Results in the national tests in 2003 show an improvement in all subjects and represent good achievement for the pupils who sat the tests. In reading, writing and mathematics the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 3, was twice the national average. In mathematics, every pupil reached at least the minimum expected level, and in reading and writing all but one pupil did. Results of teacher assessment in science were well above the national average. Results in national tests for pupils in Year 2 have risen faster than the national trend of improvement in the last three years because of the high quality of teaching and the enthusiasm that pupils have for learning. Girls' performance in reading and writing has been better than boys' during that time; in mathematics the performance of girls and boys is similar.
3. Pupils currently in Year 2 are reaching standards above those expected for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is because they have made good progress in their learning in the Nursery, Reception and Year 1 classes and they benefit from very good

teaching in Year 2. Pupils are well supported in their learning by the very effective home-school partnership, with parents making a good contribution to learning at home and building on the very good teaching their children receive in school. Teachers ensure that the work set for pupils is well matched to their needs and that they have plenty of opportunity to make use of their basic skills for learning in other subjects.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.5 (29.8)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	27.7 (28.7)	26.7 (26.6)
science	29.3 (30.9)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. While results for Year 6 pupils in the national tests in 2003 were slightly below the previous year's, they represent good progress since Year 2 for the pupils who sat the tests. Over the last three years results have improved at the same rate as the national trend of improvement and have exceeded the national average in all subjects during that time. Over the same period boys have performed better than girls in mathematics and science tests and about the same as girls in English.
5. Pupils, who are now in Year 6 reach very high standards in English; in mathematics and science their standards are above average. Their achievement is good overall in these subjects, and in reading it is very good because of the way they are encouraged to read independently for research and for pleasure. Higher attaining pupils in mathematics are making better progress this year because of the school's improved provision for their learning. In all junior classes there are two lessons when higher attaining pupils are withdrawn for teaching at a higher level than that of other pupils. This is improving the achievement and standards of these pupils this term.
6. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reach higher than expected standards in art and design and music, because of the high quality teaching and the teachers' and their own enthusiasm for the subjects. The necessary skills are well taught and pupils have good opportunities to apply these in lively and demanding lessons. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology and physical education are at the expected level for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement in standards for the first two subjects since the previous inspection, which has been brought about by better planning, much improved resources and good leadership in the subjects. In Year 2, standards are above average in history. Pupils are well taught, enjoy the subject and have good opportunities to use their writing skills to record their learning. In Year 6, pupils achieve above average standards in geography because teaching is lively and enthusiastic and pupils have good opportunities to record and present their learning in different ways. There is good provision in all subjects for pupils' learning, which helps them reach good standards overall. This is because co-ordinators are keen to promote and develop their subjects and to ensure that colleagues are well-equipped to teach them.
7. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress. Their particular needs are well-assessed at an early stage because of the vigilance of teachers, who are then very well supported by the special educational needs co-ordinator in drawing up individual education plans. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school because they are given work which matches their needs and have specific targets on their individual education plans. Learning support assistants give good support to pupils' learning by establishing very good relationships with them and by achieving a balance of support with encouragement for pupils to be independent.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are **very good**. Their attendance and punctuality are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy school, they work hard and are seldom absent.
- Behaviour is very good and so are pupils' attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' personal development and relationships are very good.

Commentary

8. Pupils display positive attitudes to school from the earliest age. They enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their very good attendance. They enjoy the opportunities for learning and rise well to the challenges that are set. All pupils take their work seriously and try hard in lessons. Pupils show their high regard for learning through their very good behaviour in lessons. They listen very closely to teachers and each other and show high interest in new topics and ideas. In all lessons pupils respond quickly to changes in activity because they are so focused on what is happening. They lose no time in settling to tasks when asked to do so and work with very good concentration for extended periods. Pupils in Year 1 were delighted with their very good pictures in the style of Kandinsky, which they produced in a short time because they worked so hard. Pupils who have special educational needs are developing confidence and positive self-esteem. They relate well to the teachers and support assistants, developing an enthusiasm for their work and an increasing ability to concentrate. The pupils with the most severe difficulties appreciate what is done for them and they are provided, where appropriate, with equipment which enables them to make progress and have full access to the curriculum. Other pupils benefit from the positive attitude towards learning that these pupils demonstrate.
9. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. They are thoughtful and courteous to each other and towards adults. They understand the role good behaviour plays in their learning because teachers are careful to explain the impact of misbehaviour. In the playground pupils play and mix harmoniously. They show a good respect for rules and are aware of those who have no playmate and many children are seen befriending others who appear lonely. The example set by Year 6 pupils who act as *Pat's Pals* in the playground is very effective in showing younger pupils how they should support and care for each other through their behaviour towards one another. There is an absence of any form of oppressive behaviour such as bullying because of the clear and high expectations of the headteacher and other staff in the school.

Attendance

The overall attendance in the school is very good. It is well above the national average and there is no unauthorised absence. Punctuality is also very good, ensuring that time in school is used well for learning.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	95.9	School data	0
National data	94.2	National data	0.4

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

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The overall provision for pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**.

10. The school has developed a climate where children can grow, flourish, respect others and be respected. Christian values are very well nurtured, reflecting the school's mission statement and the Catholic faith. The carefully planned times for prayer throughout the school day and the implementation of the agreed religious education syllabus are very effective in developing pupils' awareness and understanding of their own and other's beliefs. Assemblies provide pupils with good opportunities to reflect on issues that affect them and their families. They consider ways to make life better for the people they know and to be wholehearted in their celebration of their own and other's achievements.
11. There is a strong moral framework in the school, with high expectations of behaviour and self-discipline, and very good relationships are fostered. All staff set a good example through the high quality of their relationships with one another and with pupils. School rules are well known and understood and teachers are careful to take time to discuss with pupils the impact of their actions on others. The new arrangements for *Circle Time*, a lesson where pupils discuss issues that concern them, allow Year 6 pupils to help younger ones discuss such issues as behaviour and feelings and this helps all to a better understanding of right and wrong.
12. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. From the time they join the school pupils are expected to develop independence. They are encouraged to relate positively to each other and teachers take care to plan activities so that pupils learn to support each other by working together. Older pupils take on wide ranging responsibilities and are seen in many roles during the school day, looking after younger pupils, running the library, looking after and playing with younger pupils in the playground, as well as leading a weekly *Circle Time* with a class of younger pupils. These opportunities ensure that the personal development of pupils is very good. By Year 6 they show high levels of maturity.
13. Pupils have a good range of experiences which allow them to learn about their own and others' cultures and beliefs. Much of this work takes place in the good music and art lessons they enjoy, as well as in religious education lessons, history and geography. The school also has a link with a school in India and correspondence helps pupils see how different life is in another part of the world. Visits from theatre companies and the school's own regular productions are other feature of the school's provision for pupils' cultural development. Year 6 pupils are already looking forward to their role in the annual production of *The Passion of Christ* at Easter.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. The quality of the curriculum is **good** overall. The quality of care for pupils is **good** and links with parents are **good**. The school has **very good** links with other schools and the community which benefit pupils' learning.

Teaching and learning

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in English and mathematics is good overall.
- There is very good provision for higher attaining pupils in mathematics.
- Music is well taught; pupils enjoy the subject because of the high challenge and pace of lessons.
- Planning and teaching in the Foundation Stage are good.
- There are weaknesses in teaching and the assessment of mathematics in some classes.

- Learning support assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning.

Commentary

14. The quality of teaching is good. There has been an increase in the proportion of good and very good teaching since the previous inspection which is due in part to changes in staffing as well as the professional development that staff have undergone.
15. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from very good teaching in the Nursery and good teaching in the Reception class. In both classes teachers plan very carefully using their knowledge of children's needs. There is a very strong emphasis on learning through activity, and children quickly develop independence because they are given good opportunities to make choices and organise their learning materials. Nursery nurses make a good contribution by engaging in play with children and developing their understanding through skilful questions and discussion. Children learn well and make good progress in both classes because they have very good relationships with their teachers and other adults and because they are well motivated by the activities that are offered.
16. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is very good overall. A strength in the learning is the very high expectations that teachers have of pupils. Because all pupils are expected to listen well during whole class teaching they have good recall of learning and know what is expected when they begin to work independently. A good example was in a Year 1 art and design lesson, where very good explanation and questioning by the teacher had prepared pupils well for their paintings in the style of Kandinsky. They worked at a very good rate to complete their pictures, making good use of all they had been told about how to look closely at the artist's work as well as how to achieve different effects with their paint.
17. The teaching in Years 3 to 6 ranges from satisfactory to very good. In Years 5 and 6 it is consistently very good, because teachers plan well together and share good levels of subject expertise. They have high expectations of pupils, expecting them to work hard and at a good pace. Pupils enjoy the challenges set and give of their best in all lessons seen. They also enjoy very good relationships with their teachers and this inspires them to work hard to please them. Teaching in Years 3 to 4 is good overall, though no very good teaching was seen. Teachers give clear explanations in most subjects and in many lessons seen make good use of questions to develop pupils' thinking.
18. Teaching in English is very good in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 5 and 6. In Years 3 and 4 it is satisfactory overall. Teachers of pupils in the infants ensure that the skills of reading and writing are well taught. They ensure that pupils have a good knowledge of letter sounds and that they have plenty of opportunity to refine their reading skills during English lessons and in other subjects. In a lesson in Year 2 where teaching and learning were very good, the teacher brought the topic of writing instructions to life by demonstrating how to make a cheese sandwich so that pupils could note the sequence of actions in order to write an accurate set of instructions independently. Teachers of older pupils develop their writing skills well through the effective use of good resources and demonstrating good writing technique to their pupils. Although teachers generally follow the national guidance for teaching literacy, they do not make time in lessons to give support to a specific group to help improve their writing skills. This is a weakness since it misses the opportunity to give particular guidance to pupils as well as assess what they need to do to improve with their writing skills.
19. Teaching in mathematics is very good in the infants and in Years 5 and 6. In Years 3 and 4 it is satisfactory. Teachers make good use of the National Numeracy Strategy to actively involve pupils during whole class teaching. They invite pupils to share their strategies for solving problems and ask challenging questions to make pupils think hard. They keep the pace brisk and have high expectations that pupils will work at a good rate. In Years 3 and 4, teachers work at a slower rate in lessons and the level of challenge is not as high as it could be for some pupils. Teachers in these classes do plan different activities for different groups but

sometimes work in books shows they spend too much time on topics they already understand. A lack of practical activity for pupils in Years 3 and 4 reduces the quality of learning for some who still need to learn from first hand experience. Teaching for higher attaining junior pupils is now organised for two sessions each week and is of high quality. This response by the school to lower standards in mathematics than in English reflects how seriously the school takes differences in standards.

20. Teaching and learning in information and communication technology are very good. Most lessons are taught by a subject specialist who has very good subject knowledge and high expectations of what pupils can do. Lessons are focused on teaching specific skills which are incorporated into other subjects so that pupils can practice and consolidate their learning. Teachers make good use of interactive electronic boards for their teaching. Their use adds much to pupils' learning, especially when they use the boards during whole class teaching to demonstrate an idea. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, where teaching was very good, pupils were invited to show how they would create a fraction from a whole shape. Other pupils were able to see immediately the relationship between one whole and two halves and then count squares to check that the size of two halves added up to one whole. The speed with which pupils grasped the idea was a direct result of the effective use of the technology and allowed the teacher to conduct the lesson at a very brisk pace.
21. Teaching in music is consistently good and sometimes very good. This is because the school has invested in a programme of music tuition which involves teachers working alongside a subject specialist. Through this teachers' expertise and confidence to teach the subject have improved very well. Teachers use their own voices to very good effect to improve pupils' singing and teach them the technicalities of music. They place good emphasis on music terminology so that pupils are able to talk about the subject with accurate description and explanations.
22. The work of learning support assistants makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. They are well trained and able to develop pupils' basic skills through carefully planned activities that are provided by the teachers. They form very good relationships with pupils, and, as a result of their support, pupils who have special educational needs make good progress against the targets that are set for them. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Most teachers are careful to ensure that these pupils experience success in front of their peers. Class teaching is good when teachers try to draw in the weaker pupils by including them in the questioning such as instructing the teacher how to make a cheese sandwich in Year 2. Teachers also provide pupils with challenging tasks that develop the specific skills and attitudes that are written in their individual plans. The impact of the range of support by the co-ordinator and support assistants is good.
23. Teachers' use of daily assessment is good overall. In some classes, teachers make thorough evaluations of the teaching and learning, especially in English and mathematics, and they make very good use of this to plan new learning for their pupils. In a Year 5 English lesson, the teacher's sharp assessment of pupils' learning needs meant that all were able to tackle demanding work because the teacher had planned varying levels of support to ensure that every pupil would succeed with the tasks. All teachers set targets for pupils in English and mathematics and these help pupils have an understanding of what they need to do to improve. Assessment within special educational needs is very good. The school policy of early intervention works well and children are monitored as early as the nursery class. The special educational needs co-ordinator charts the very small learning steps of certain pupils with rigour.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	18 (42%)	18 (42%)	7 (16%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

The curriculum

The school provides a **good** quality curriculum which caters for the needs of all pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An enrichment of the curriculum is provided by visits, visitors and curriculum innovations.
- Planning for mixed age classes is thorough.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- There is equality of access and opportunity provided to all groups of pupils.
- The provision for the development of personal, social and health education in the infants and juniors is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive a good quality education.
- The long morning session after playtime needs to be used more effectively.

Commentary

24. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum in all respects. The school environment is well maintained and attractive displays bear evidence of a wide range of enrichment activities. The computer suite is used well. An appropriate proportion of time is allocated to each subject although there needs to be a more effective use of time in the long session after morning break. The curriculum is judged to be well balanced and relevant in infants and juniors. The curriculum for juniors is enhanced by weekly lessons in French.
25. The Foundation Stage children enjoy a good start to their early schooling. The curriculum provides a wide range of planned and structured activities which gives the youngest children, especially those in the nursery, a sound start to school across all the recommended areas of learning.
26. Personal, health and social education is good. Drugs, health and sex education policies are in place and lessons help to develop citizenship and care of the environment. *Pat's Pals*, a group of Year 6 pupils, provide support for the youngest children in the playground and they act as support for all pupils.
27. Visitors, theatre groups, musicians and the local services, add to the richness of curriculum. Pupils are involved in a range of educational visits which make their learning more meaningful. These include Eden Camp and Beamish Museum, while older pupils participate in a residential experience where they learn to live together and share.
28. Provision for special needs is good. The curriculum for pupils who have special educational needs is adapted by class work and equipment specially matched to their needs. They have good individual education plans, and the targets contained in them are precise. In the classes where these are used well, pupils are helped with some form of booster work by their support assistants. As a result they achieve good progress through targets in the basic skills.
29. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. These include sporting activities such as football, orienteering and table tennis, as well as many musical opportunities such as violin, cello, recorders, keyboards and drums. The breadth and range of activities on offer are strengths of the school. These allow all pupils access to a wide range of studies and help to develop positive attitudes to learning.

30. The number, use and quality of learning support assistants enable all groups of pupils good access to the curriculum. They are well briefed, support pupils' progress throughout lessons and contribute well to the overall assessment of pupils. The support assistants are well deployed and make a significant contribution to the progress of pupils who have special educational needs.
31. School accommodation is good. Most of the building is spacious and attractive and gives pupils a safe and secure environment in which to learn. There are extensive grounds and, although these are bland at the moment, there are plans for their development.
32. Overall, resource provision for most subjects is good. The attractive library, which is used also for music lessons and small group work, and the computer suite, add to the quality of teaching provision. All junior classrooms have electronic whiteboards which are used well and these will be added in infant classrooms in the near future.
33. Although all aspects of the National Curriculum are taught, there are concerns about the imbalance of the timetable. Most mornings are spent on literacy and numeracy lessons and the session after morning break is too long to be spent on one subject. There is need to consider a more effective use of time in the morning in order to improve provision for learning.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **good**. The guidance and support for pupils is **good**. The school makes **satisfactory** arrangements for involving pupils in the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good attention to health and safety and child protection.
 - Maintenance of formal logs of risk assessments.
 - Relationships are very good and teachers are approachable.
 - Induction arrangements are very good.
 - Assessment procedures are very good
 - Behaviour management is very good.
 - Arrangements for seeking pupils' views and acting upon them are good.
34. The school continues to take good care of its pupils. Child protection arrangements remain secure. The headteacher has designated responsibility for liaising with outside agencies and is properly trained to carry out the duties associated with this role. Suitable health and safety measures are in place and followed closely. However, although the school undertakes all necessary risk assessments, it does not maintain a formal log of them, as would normally be expected. Internet security is also fully addressed and linked into the local authority's system for preventing access to unsuitable websites.
 35. The school continues to provide good support and guidance for its pupils. Pupils find staff approachable, have very good relationships with them, and are confident to discuss any problems or concerns they may have with them. Arrangements for induction of new pupils are very good and operate effectively. High standards of behaviour are promoted successfully and, as a result, the school has a calm and orderly atmosphere where effective learning can take place. Suitable measures are in place to deal with incidents of bullying, but are rarely needed. The school's system for checking pupils' academic progress and achievements is good. Praise and rewards are also used well to encourage effort, and significant achievements are celebrated in assembly. Pupils' awareness of the needs of others is encouraged through support for charity, and suitable opportunities are provided for them to take on responsibility, such as through the prefect system and *Pat's Pals*. The school's arrangements for taking

pupils' views into account and acting upon their suggestions are good. Pupils are able to make suggestions during *Circle time* and informally to their teachers because of the very good relationships they have with them.

36. The staff supporting pupils with special educational needs encourage them to grow in maturity, independence and self-awareness. The lessons always have a strong component of social training such as sharing work together. This contributes well to their social development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has maintained **good** links with parents, **good** links with the community and **very good** links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very positive views of the school.
 - Parental support for learning and school events is very good.
 - Links with the Church are very good.
 - Involvement in local initiatives is very good.
 - Links with other schools and colleges are very good.
 - Targets for improvement on pupils' reports are good.
37. Parents continue to hold the school in high regard and good links have been maintained with them. Nevertheless, some concerns were raised through the questionnaire, particularly about how well they are informed about their children's progress. Inspectors, however, consider this information, and other details parents are regularly provided with, is good overall. Two parents' evenings are held each year; the second in direct response to suggestions made by parents in a recent survey carried out by the school to seek their views about its work. Pupils' annual reports are also sufficiently detailed, although targets for improvement are often not specific enough.
38. The parents of pupils who have special educational needs value the commitment of the staff to care for their children. Parents are invited to important review meetings and the school has close links with specialist support agencies. These work to the benefit of the pupils by giving staff access to good guidance to support these pupils, whatever their special need.
39. A large number of parents regularly volunteer to help out in school and good opportunities are provided for them to do so. Events such as drama productions are also very well supported. Homework is used well and reading diaries are used effectively to maintain home-school communications, particularly for the younger pupils. The Parent Teachers Association remains very active and continues to develop a good community spirit in school as well as providing generous support through organised fund-raising events. It also produces a monthly newsletter detailing forthcoming events.
40. Good links have been maintained with the local community, and very close links exist with the church. Out of school visits are used well to support the curriculum, and effective involvement in the Deanery Action Zone is helping to raise standards amongst the gifted and talented pupils. The school has several links with local business, which bring funds into the school as well as enriching the curriculum. Regular support for charity raises pupils' awareness of the needs of others, and various fund-raising schemes are organised by pupils to provide uniforms for pupils at the school's twin school in India.
41. Links with other schools and colleges are very good and enhance the quality of education provided. Notable examples of this occur through art and PE and through the school's participation in the Excellence in Cities initiative. Transfer arrangements operate effectively and ensure the smooth passage of Year 6 pupils to secondary education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides **very good** leadership for the development of the school. The leadership and management of the school are **good** overall. Financial planning and management are **very good**. The governing body makes a **good** contribution to the strategic development of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership for the development of the school.
- The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning in mathematics is not regular enough.
- The management for provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- There is good teamwork and a high level of commitment from all who work in the school.

Commentary

42. The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school. He has ensured that the high standards he seeks for pupils have been sustained since the last inspection and by careful tracking of pupils' performance has detected and begun to remedy a weakness in the teaching of mathematics. His development of the curriculum since the last inspection has been very good. The quality of provision has improved in information and communication technology, design and technology, music and art and design since the last inspection and so too have standards in these subjects. The headteacher has ensured improvements in the quality of teaching through targeted professional development for colleagues and through the school's very good involvement with further and higher education training institutions.
43. The headteacher manages the school very well through the effective delegation of responsibilities to subject leaders. He is clear in what he expects of their role and gives support, advice and training which ensures that colleagues are able to rise to his high expectations. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage and the provision for pupils with special educational needs are very good. The subject leadership of English, science, information and communication technology, art and design, and music are good and the development of these areas is well managed through careful monitoring procedures. This results in action plans for improvement that are well-founded in good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses, so that the school's agenda for improvement accurately identifies the correct priorities. By establishing strong teamwork among all who work in the school and by making clear his high expectations of colleagues, the headteacher has brought the school to a very strong position from which to make further improvement. The monitoring of staff performance is very well established. It is based on peer monitoring so that all teachers are involved and thereby develop a good understanding of the school's strengths, weaknesses, and priorities for improvement. It has been very effective in identifying areas for individual development as well as variations in standards in subjects. In all of his work the headteacher is well-supported by the senior management team, who share his vision for high standards in all of the school's work.
44. The management of special educational needs is very good. Since her appointment, the co-ordinator has rapidly immersed herself in getting to know and understand the needs of the pupils already identified. Support staff are well informed and their expertise is growing. The communication between the co-ordinator, special needs assistants and class teachers is good and an already existing ethos of teamwork is being built upon. The governors are committed to spending more than the budget allocation on support staff because of their belief in care for all members of the school community. Liaison with regard to pupils' next phase of education commences early so that transition arrangements are clear and understood by

pupils, parents and teachers. The co-ordinator monitors the outcomes carefully. Her administration and co-ordination of this aspect of school life are very strong.

45. The governors have a good knowledge of the school through the headteacher's reports, their own visits and their involvement in committees to monitor developments and standards in the school. They are well aware of the weakness in mathematics that is now beginning to be tackled by the school and have endorsed the use of extra staffing in the juniors being used to provide specific support for higher attaining pupils. They are highly supportive of the school and are zealous in pursuing good value for money in what the school does and in how it uses staff. They ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements and that the school has adopted a race equality policy which is monitored for effectiveness. Financial planning and management are very good, ensuring that the school budget is used well for designated purposes and to support the school's priorities for development. Spending on the music provision on the school is a very good example of how well the school plans its spending to maximise benefits for teachers and pupils. The school secretary has established excellent systems for financial control and provides outstanding service in this aspect of the school's work. Taking into account the good achievement of pupils and the good quality of educational provision, together with the low costs, the school is judged to give good value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	663,965
Total expenditure	615,651
Expenditure per pupil	1,866

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	38,486
Balance carried forward to the next	48,314

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning.
- The very good start made in the Nursery.
- Assessment procedures and strategies.
- The leadership of the co-ordinator.

Commentary

46. Children start their Nursery experience immediately following their third birthday, when they attend for half days. They enter the Reception class at the start of the term in which they become five. When children start in the Nursery, their attainment is generally in line with that expected for their age. By the end of the Reception year, the majority of children achieve well and are likely to attain beyond the expected levels in each of the areas of learning by the end of Reception, with the exception of creative development, when attainment is in line with the expected level. This is a significant achievement and reflects the high quality of teaching and support the children receive. They are well prepared for work within the National Curriculum when they transfer to Year 1. Teaching in the Nursery is very good and in the Reception class it is good. The Nursery nurses have a significant teaching commitment and make a very effective contribution to the children's learning. The learning programme is well organised and based on imaginative practical experiences. This has improved in the Reception class since the last inspection, when the curriculum was considered to be too formal for these young children. Daily planning is thorough, clearly stating what the children are to learn. The staff make effective use of the good quality resources and facilities. The gathering of information through the tracking of children's progress is used very effectively to guide the children's future learning. This good practice has been sustained since the previous inspection. Leadership and management are very good creating good teamwork and an attractive, caring and positive learning environment that serves the needs of these young children well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because they receive patient, caring and appropriate teaching.
- The good behaviour and positive attitudes of the children.
- Relationships are very positive and play a significant part in children's learning.
- The high levels of confidence and self-esteem.

Commentary

47. The children's personal, social and emotional development is well above the levels expected for their age in by the end of the Reception class. The children achieve very well because the routines, organisation and management of the classrooms help the children to learn to do things for themselves. Teaching in this area is very good. A strong sense of community typifies the Nursery and Reception classes where each child is treated as an individual. The staff share the same expectations of the children's behaviour and emphasise praise and

positive encouragement. As a result the children soon recognise that good behaviour is expected and they respond very well. The children show good levels of self-discipline at this young age. Relationships are very positive in the warm and friendly classrooms and help to play a significant part in the children's learning. Children talk to one another as they work and form friendships. Among the many worthwhile activities to develop the children's confidence, independence and positive self-image, are sessions when they work together such as in outdoor activities when they build a wall for Humpty Dumpty. The younger children develop confidence to share their ideas with other group members because staff are skilful in providing support when required.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The development of language and literacy skills is integral in all activities.
- The children's listening skills are very good.
- Children have an interest and enthusiasm for reading and books.
- The systematic learning of letter sounds.

Commentary

48. The children achieve well in each element of this area of learning and most children are likely to exceed the levels expected by the end of the Reception year. A significant number are likely to be working within the National Curriculum. This is the result of good teaching and the use of assessment data to systematically plan the children's learning. The children listen attentively to adults and each other when they enjoy sharing experiences. This is effective at the end of lessons in the Reception class, for example, when they talk about the rhyming words they have found. Nursery children listened very carefully to instructions for making a picture using fruit and vegetables and as a result they knew how to proceed. The children develop an interest in books and reading, as opportunities to read are a part of daily classroom life. The staff are skilled at making stories 'come alive' as they read with humour and expression. The use of real fruit to illustrate the story *Handa's Surprise* generated much interest in the Nursery. The children quickly learn initial letter sounds because they are introduced and reinforced through imaginative practical activities. Nursery children, with great enthusiasm, made 'Happy Hats' as they were introduced to the letter 'h'.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Mathematical learning is based on practical, linked activities.
- There is effective use of ongoing routines and spontaneous learning opportunities.

Commentary

49. The children achieve well because they receive good, practically based teaching; most are likely to exceed the expected levels by the end of the Reception year. The children experience a range of opportunities to use mathematics in practical ways and across other areas of learning. They show delight in using blocks, counting and sorting toys to develop their understanding of number. A strength in mathematics in the Reception class is in the clear focus for each lesson where all the activities have a common link, for example, the properties of shapes. These included a shape hunt, shape paintings, making playdough shapes and

playing shape snap. As a result, the children could readily describe the properties of shapes at the end of the lesson. In addition to the very well planned teaching of groups of children, the staff make very good use of opportunities to develop the children's mathematical understanding, for example, using positional language in outdoor activities. The children's recorded work in the Reception class shows good attention to the development of number skills and work matched to individual abilities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide a varied and interesting range of activities.
- Frequent opportunities to use computers and other technological resources.

Commentary

50. Displays of work, assessment records and photographic evidence indicate that most children are likely to exceed the expected levels by the end of the Reception year. Achievement is good overall because the children experience a practical programme of activities, especially in the nursery, where effective use is made of outdoors. Teaching in this area is very good overall. There are many well-planned opportunities for the children to use all their senses to investigate a wide range of materials. For example, in the Nursery there was great enthusiasm to use 'taste' and 'smell' to identify the fruits and vegetables hidden from their sight. The staff provide well chosen ICT programs that reinforce the children's learning of basic skills such as counting, matching, numbers and letters. As part of their work, the children use the computer to draw pictures to illustrate stories. They use the mouse to open the graphics and use the tools to select the pictures. The children make good use of listening centres when they use earphones and operate the tape recorder for themselves.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

It was not possible to make an overall judgement because physical activities were not observed in the Reception class. However, in the nursery, provision for a physical activity is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Nursery children achieve very well through daily outdoor and indoor physical activity.
- The children handle tools and equipment with good control and dexterity.
- The Reception children do not use the good outdoor facilities to develop their physical skills.

Commentary

51. In all aspects of physical development most children in the Nursery will attain the expected levels prior to entry to the Reception year. The presence of adults, their comments and demonstrations heighten children's involvement and willingness to improve what they do. For example, Nursery children improved their balancing skills when the teacher demonstrated how to use their arms to aid balance. The children are trustworthy, use equipment sensibly, jump, balance, crawl and climb with high levels of confidence. The wide range of small tools and equipment and regular use results in the children's increasing levels of dexterity. The use of the Nursery outdoor area and resources is not planned for the Reception children. Consequently there are missed opportunities to fully develop the children's skills by using this good, secure and well-resourced facility.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good range of activities in the nursery.
- The high focus given to imaginative play.

Commentary

52. In the Nursery, children's achievement is good because the teaching is good. In Reception, where teaching is satisfactory children's achievement is also satisfactory. By the end of Reception, most children will reach the expected level. The children enjoy opportunities to investigate different textures through making collage pictures using a variety of paper and materials. Creative skills are enriched through imaginative role-play areas when children pretend to be who they want and use resources imaginatively. They become totally engaged in their roles such as the mechanic in Pat's Garage. Good use is also made of puppets to stimulate imaginative ideas and confidence when performing. Although limited space in the Reception class in the 'wet area' is a constraint, access to painting and art activities are planned daily and they are readily available as a choice activity.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching in the infants and Years 5 and 6.
- Very high standards in reading.
- Standards are well above average by the Year 6.

Commentary

53. The school has maintained high standards in the subject since the last inspection. The progress and achievement of pupils is good overall. Reading is very well promoted and the high standards achieved are the result of the very good partnership with parents, who give very good support to reading at home. While the National Literacy Strategy has been adopted by the school, it is not used fully or to the best advantage in all classes. For example, while all teachers give time to guided reading sessions, they do not give specific time to support different groups for guided writing in lessons and so miss the opportunity to target support at groups of pupils and to recognise what the weaknesses are for different groups. In national tests, the school has sustained its above average performance over the last three years. During that time girl's performance was above that of boys, but no significant differences in attainment were noted during inspection

54. Standards in speaking are at the expected level for pupils in Year 2. They answer questions clearly and confidently, but seldom take the opportunity to develop their own or others' ideas. Their listening is above average. Pupils follow teachers' instructions and explanations very closely, they listen to each other and show a very good recall of learning. Standards in reading are above average because the skills are well taught and pupils have plenty of opportunity to reinforce these through reading at home and to adults in school. The provision of good reading

material in the classroom is another factor which helps promote high standards and a love of reading. Standards in writing are above average in Year 2. Pupils write legibly and are very careful with the presentation of their work. Most are learning to use capital letters and full stops correctly, while higher attainers use a range of punctuation such as question marks and exclamation marks to give clearer meaning to their writing. They are beginning to understand the different purposes of writing and how this connects with the different ways of writing, for example when they write instructions.

55. Standards in speaking in Year 6 are at the expected level. Pupils volunteer to answer questions and will give their opinion on a character whose picture they see. Only the highest attainers give explanations for their ideas without being prompted by the teacher. Their listening is above average and they have very good recall of what they hear, so they are able to apply their learning well when it is time to work independently. Standards in reading are above average, with most pupils reading at the expected level and a good proportion reading at higher than expected levels. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils tackled a very demanding text about plants and were able to make sharp notes of key facts very quickly because of their very good reading skills. Standards in reading are well promoted through high quality literature, the school's high expectations and the provision of a thirty minute slot each day for silent reading. Writing in Year 6 is above average. Pupils write well for different purposes in their different subjects as well as writing stories in different styles. Because writing skills are very well taught in the current Year 6 class, pupils are skilled at descriptive writing, know the devices to use such as simile and metaphor and produce convincing stories which develop well from the character they draw.
56. Learning is good and pupils achieve well because teachers have good subject knowledge and make use of this to assess pupils' needs well. Where teaching is very good, teachers plan activities that closely match the learning objectives so that pupils learn at a good rate and maintain a high level of interest. In Year 2, where pupils were learning to write instructions, they were completely absorbed by the teacher's demonstration of making a cheese sandwich and were all well prepared for ordering the process correctly to write clear instructions. Where teaching is only satisfactory, the detail of teachers' planning is not so sharp, so that the quality of explanations is not as high as in good and very good lessons. In one satisfactory lesson, the pace of learning was slow and pupils' interest waned because too much time was given to activities which lacked challenge for many of them. Where teachers' subject knowledge and expertise are very good, their expectations are high and they set challenging tasks which motivate pupils to work hard to complete them. In a Year 5 lesson where pupils were learning to make notes from non-fiction texts, the teacher had prepared them very well through clear demonstration and discussion. Despite the text being very challenging, the pupils were able to work through it successfully and at speed because they were so well prepared and because they were accustomed to working in pairs and sharing ideas. The teaching of writing in Year 6 is very good because the teacher sets interesting tasks and prepares good resources to stimulate pupils' thinking. The teacher is highly skilled in questioning pupils so that through their answers and his suggestions they are able to build a secure understanding of how to write for a particular purpose.
57. Teachers make good provision for the learning of pupils who have special educational needs. They plan activities which will support the targets set in their individual education plans and ensure that learning support assistants are well briefed for each lesson. The quality of learning support is always at least good and is often very good, because of the high levels of expertise that support assistants have and the very good relationships they have with pupils they work with. The result is pupils who have special educational needs feel secure and gain in confidence so that they are able to work independently with occasional guidance from the support assistant. Learning support assistants were all seen to give very good support during whole class teaching, where they explained ideas to pupils or encouraged them to volunteer answers.

58. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and high levels of expertise; he also has good experience of teaching different age groups. He uses a number of procedures to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, but does not regularly observe lessons, which reduces his ability to have a complete picture of the quality of provision. He has a good knowledge of standards in classes from his scrutiny of pupils' work and the twice termly assessments that they do. He is aware that there are some issues relating to time allocated to the subject in some classes in the mornings and that the teaching of writing is not consistent across the school. The quality of leadership and management in the subject could be improved even further by:

- Monitoring teaching and learning to capture and share good practice.
- Monitoring planning to ensure that pupils are given specific support with their writing.
- Developing a programme for speaking which has clear learning objectives.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

Teachers make good use of literacy skills to support pupils' learning in other subjects and to consolidate their skills. In history and geography pupils are expected to research information in books and on computers and as they grow older are expected to use this information to write independently. In science, pupils write their own accounts of investigations and this both reinforces their understanding as well as developing their writing skills. Speaking is not as widely used for learning as the other skills and this is an area the school has designated for development.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Numeracy strategy is well developed.
- There is very good provision for higher attaining pupils in the juniors.
- There are good procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs, including those who are gifted and talented.
- Some lessons are too long and there are not enough opportunities for pupils to make decisions in problem solving situations.
- The marking of pupils' work usually gives information about how they can improve, however some pupils say that they are not clear what they have to do to improve.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently developed.

Commentary

59. Standards across the school are above average and most pupils' achieve well. In 2003 national tests, all seven year olds and almost all 11 year olds reached the expected standard. Over half of seven year olds and just about a quarter of eleven year olds achieved higher levels. However, when these results are compared with the results from schools similar to St Patrick's, standards achieved at the higher level by eleven year olds are only satisfactory. Similarly, comparison with the school's English results shows a much higher percentage of pupils achieving at the higher level in English than mathematics. The school has taken steps to address this problem. This year, higher attaining pupils are being deliberately targeted in an effort to raise standards and this is beginning to have an effect on raising standards for these pupils. All pupils' benefit from some smaller class teaching, and in Years 5 and 6, gifted and talented pupils are taught separately twice a week and are suitably challenged. All staff have received training from the LEA advisor for mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs, who are well supported by teachers and support staff, achieve as well as their classmates. Boys and girls are currently making similar progress.

60. By the age of seven, pupils have good number skills and a significant number are working well above the expected range for their age, developing a knowledge and understanding of place value and using fraction notation. Teaching in Year 2 is of a very high quality and because of this, most pupils very quickly understand for example that $\frac{2}{4}$ is equivalent to $\frac{1}{2}$. Higher achieving pupils are able to extend this further, for instance to suggest that $\frac{8}{16}$ is also the same as $\frac{1}{2}$. As pupils move up the school there is a greater emphasis on teaching strategies to solve word problems. By the age of nine for example, all pupils are challenged and show good understanding of written problems with a good number able to write their own problem involving various mathematical operations. Higher achieving pupils are very conversant with rounding figures up or down when adding or subtracting. They fully understand that multiplication is repeated addition. For example they are able to calculate in their heads that if it were 30 pence per word, the cost of an 18-word advertisement would be £5.40. Warm up sessions are used to good advantage, often to practice the use of appropriate number operations. By the age of eleven, pupils are using protractors to measure and calculate angles. They are fully engaged in their work showing application and concentration. All have confidence to participate in feedback sessions and the teacher uses these to evaluate and assess the pupils' progress. Higher achieving pupils are taught separately twice a week. This is a very good provision with pupils working on a similar topic as their classmates but at a higher level. They are able to calculate the exterior angle of a triangle and know that opposite angles total the same. The teacher keeps a very fast pace, correct terminology is used constantly by both the teacher and the pupils and there are very good relationships.
61. The subject leader provides satisfactory leadership, but monitoring of teaching, learning and planning is not rigorous enough. Following the annual tests, areas identified as weakness in the teaching and learning of mathematical concepts have not been systematically targeted. Nor have weaknesses in teaching been identified so that staff can improve their skills. Lessons which are held after morning break are too long, especially for younger pupils and on occasions they sit for too long on the carpet. Teachers make very good use of communication technology but there was little evidence that pupils used information technology independently to present their work, for example in graphs or tables of information.

Mathematics across the curriculum.

Pupils often use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects and consequently develop an appreciation of the practical uses of these skills. For example, they use graphs and tables to record data in geography when investigating the locality. Older pupils work competently in degrees when forecasting the weather for the United Kingdom. In history, they show an understanding of chronology when they talk quite confidently about 1666 being the time of the Great Fire of London. Older pupils set very good mathematical challenges for younger junior pupils. These involve a variety of activities that touch on other subjects, and require the pupils to use their skills of measurement, time, addition, doubling and money.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are good at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The quality of pupils' recorded work in Year 6 is very good.
- Higher attaining pupils are appropriately challenged.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.

Commentary

62. By the end of Year 2 and 6, most pupils achieve above the expected standard and they achieve well in lessons. Since the previous inspection standards have improved, with the exception of 2003, when compared with similar schools, standards were below average. This decline in 2003 does not indicate any significant weaknesses in the provision, but a Year 6 group with a lower ability profile. To continue to improve standards a higher emphasis is now given to the development of pupils' skills in scientific enquiry. Pupils' recorded work in Year 2 shows their sound knowledge of scientific facts and an understanding of different aspects of science, such as 'light' and the range of light sources. By Year 6, pupils have confidence to carry out a scientific enquiry, for example to find sources of 'air resistance'. They work together in small groups to explore ideas, decide on how to control the variables in the investigation and make their own decisions on how best to record the data collected. Pupils in Year 6 achieve well because teachers give them increasing levels of responsibility and expect high standards. The pupils make good use of their literacy skills in their recordings. Pupils' written work shows their ability to use scientific language accurately to describe their investigations. In some very good investigations related to 'evaporation', pupils' recorded work also reflects their abilities to constructively evaluate their methods of investigation.
63. Teachers ask pupils searching questions and plan tasks to match the abilities of the pupils. Pupils are encouraged to use an enquiring, critical approach to problems and develop skills mainly in an atmosphere of enjoyment. In a challenging Year 2 lesson, pupils were tasked to find out whether the strength of a torch light affected how clearly an object could be seen. Pupils improved their skills to plan an investigation because good attention was given to making sure that pupils were clear about what they were expected to do and what this would help them to learn at the beginning of the lesson. These pupils enjoy investigative explorations. Learning is less effective in lessons at the end of the day when pupils are required to record their ideas when they are tired and the lesson lacks pace.
64. Since the previous inspection the provision for higher attaining pupils has improved and they are particularly well challenged now in Year 6. A weekly lesson for 'gifted and talented' pupils provides a high level of responsibility for planning their own investigative strategies. In an investigation to find out which materials reflected light best, the pupils gathered their own data and used ICT to produce a table to record their results. The pupils worked methodically and were keen to succeed.
65. The science co-ordinator has a good knowledge of the subject and knows what is needed to develop the subject and improve standards. These include a continuing emphasis on learning through scientific enquiry and more effective use of ICT as a learning resource. The good practice identified in the previous inspection has been sustained. Improved accommodation for upper junior pupils has provided more space for science activities.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have improved their subject knowledge since the last inspection and some are making use of ICT in other subjects.
- The computer suite allows specific skills to be taught in whole class setting, and classroom resources, especially in the juniors, have recently improved.

Commentary

66. Standards of pupils' work are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, which is a good improvement since the last inspection. By the age of seven, pupils are word-processing and inserting pictures into text. They are developing their keyboard and mouse skills well. They use 'Colour Magic' to create pictures using its paintbrush, spray and fill tools.

67. By the age of 11, pupils use spread-sheets to calculate holidays, games equipment expenditure and conduct a newspaper survey. Older pupils use data-handling programs to graph weather and water usage and they use the Internet to research information.
68. Since the last inspection national funding has meant that the resources for the subject have been improved and, with parish donations, the new suite completed. Also, staff expertise and confidence have developed through training. The enthusiastic and confident co-ordinator also supports colleagues well, whether in the suite or when using the interactive whiteboards in junior classrooms.
69. Most of the teaching is done by the subject specialist, who has high expectations of work and behaviour of all pupils, including those with special educational needs who are well supported by parent helpers or teaching assistants. As all teachers appear enthusiastic about the tasks they set for pupils, so the pupils respond with enjoyment, taking pleasure in their learning. They work independently or in pairs when they can and older pupils are able to work without over dependence on adult supervision. Pupils are taught the necessary skills and, as a result, pupils are beginning to develop these skills in a logical and systematic order. Higher attaining pupils are encouraged to work with independence in the lessons and the next challenge is always planned for them. Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported to make good progress in lessons. Teachers are making good use of the interactive whiteboards that the school has recently purchased. These make a valuable contribution to lessons as they allow pupils to be directly involved in demonstrating and explaining their ideas.
70. The management and leadership of the subject are good. The co-ordinator's specialist subject knowledge allows all aspects of the subject to be well covered and continue to develop. A subject portfolio is assembled and indicates evidence of the range of skills all pupils are taught.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

Information and communication technology is used well, but not consistently, to support learning across the curriculum. Year 2 pupils integrate ICT and art and design, drawing birds with the 'Colour Magic' program. Years 3 and 4 use data-logging to monitor temperature in science, whilst older pupils create Power Point presentations on 'Rivers' in geography. However, this is an area which the co-ordinator wants to develop more fully.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was not inspected, as it is the subject of a separate inspection at a later date. In humanities, work was sampled in history with lessons seen in Years 1 and 2 in history. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgment about provision in this subject. Evidence from pupils' work shows that standards are **good** overall and this is similar to the last inspection.

71. In the **history** lessons seen, teaching was good and pupils were gaining a good understanding of life during the reign of Charles II. They came to a good understanding of why the Fire of London spread so quickly. Opportunities are taken to link learning to other subjects. A very good example of this was in a Year 2 history lesson, where pupils used the writing framework to aid the structure of their story about the Fire of London.

Geography

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Use of interactive board adds interest to the lessons.
- There are good links with other subjects.
- Pupils enjoy the subject.

- In some lessons pupils spend too much time passively listening.

Commentary

72. In a very good **geography** lesson older pupils become television weather forecasters. They enjoy writing their own weather forecast for the United Kingdom, gaining a good understanding of the position of places such as Wick and Belfast on the United Kingdom map, and the symbols used to describe weather patterns. Work is interesting and relevant, enabling all to achieve, whatever their level of ability.
73. Lessons are well planned with lesson objectives usually shared with the pupils. There is very good use of interactive whiteboards in the lessons. During a Year 4 geography lesson this was used very effectively to create a class graph showing the number of hours spent by the pupils on various activities related to work, recreation and leisure. Year 6 pupils use this technology to illustrate the weather forecast for the United Kingdom. Although pupils are very well behaved and work diligently, at times they become fidgety and lose interest in some lessons. On the odd occasions when this occurs, it is usually because they have been sitting listening for too long.
74. The curriculum is planned on a two-year cycle to accommodate the mixed age classes. The co-ordinators keep a watchful eye on teachers' planning to ensure the correct coverage of topics, and pupils' attainment is assessed at the end of each topic in order to track standards and progress.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

An overall judgement for **design and technology** cannot be made because teaching was not observed during the inspection.

75. Pupils are likely to attain the standards expected by the end of Year 2 and 6 in **design and technology**. This represents good improvement in Year 6 since the last inspection when they were deemed to be below average. Standards have risen because a higher focus is given to the subject, a scheme of work is in place to provide an effective structure to the programme and there is guidance for teachers on skill development. Curriculum plans, work on display and digital photographic evidence show an interesting range of opportunities for pupils to design and make models. For example, a scarecrow using pneumatic systems to make parts move such as hats and arms. A good example of work in Year 1 and 2 is where pupils have made houses. This work clearly shows their skills in joining, measuring and making doors which will open. Teachers encourage the pupils to evaluate their designs and products and this has resulted in improved standards.

Art and design

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective use is made of the work of famous artists to develop pupils' artistic skills.

Commentary

76. It is evident from work seen in lessons and on display that pupils by the end of Year 2 and 6 are likely to attain standards above those expected and their achievement is good. Teaching is good overall in the subject. In a very good Year 1 lesson, pupils' work reflected a very good feel for the work of Kandinsky in their control and mixing of colours. Observational skills are also improving with practice. Year 5 pupils demonstrated their understanding of how to create a 'Mood Board' as an aid to plan and prepare for future work. This strategy successfully developed pupils' confidence to use their own ideas and forms of representation. Pupils have

many opportunities to contribute to large-scale activities, for example, a large Harvest Display in the hall. This included some good examples of using three-dimensional art to create perspective.

Music

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes very good use of specialist support and training to achieve good standards in music.
 - Pupils' enjoyment of the subject is high.
77. Teaching and learning were good in all the lessons seen. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and prepare, plan and deliver their lessons well. Teachers' skills, confidence and high levels of competence have been very successfully developed through the very good support from the 'Voices Foundation'. In the lessons seen, teachers used their own voices with tremendous effect to improve the quality of the pupils' singing. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is likely to be above the expected levels and this reflects an improvement from the previous inspection. Pupils have a good understanding of pitch, pulse and rhythm and can follow the guidance of the conductor. The quality of the pupils' singing is very good. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 can sing in 'canon' and they have confidence to set the pitch for singing by starting off the song. This is a high challenge for such young children. Pupils display a very high level of enjoyment in music lessons and all work harmoniously together. In a good Year 5 lesson the result of this enjoyment and co-operation was the excellent singing of a song in the forthcoming musical production, 'We're Celebrating'. This was a joy to listen to. The school also provides an extensive range of opportunities for pupils to learn to play tuned musical instruments and there is a lively enthusiasm for percussion instruments particularly the full drum set.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of after-school activities helps raise standards
77. By seven, most pupils are well co-ordinated and are able to use space well. They are able to create a sequence of movements to music, using their bodies reflect the different music rhythms. Older pupils also use dance for physical activity during this part of the school year. They are able to remember a far longer sequence than the younger pupils and the dance activities and music planned by the teacher appeal to the culture of the youngsters. Because of the time of the year, no outside activities were seen but they are represented in planning for the year.
78. Older pupils undertake Outdoor and Adventure activities during their residential experience in the summer when they participate in canoeing, climbing and other outdoor activities. Junior pupils attend weekly swimming lessons and by the end of their primary education, most pupils can swim twenty-five metres.
79. A good range of after school activities which feed back well into school lessons. The staff are committed to equality and inclusion so that all pupils, take part in lessons regardless of gender or any special need. If appropriate, these pupils are supported particularly well and are enabled to achieve a level of fun and success similar to their peers. In the best lessons, the teachers introduce pupils to the technical language of movement such as sequence, warming up and cooling down, but not all teachers do this sufficiently.

80. The co-ordinator carries out his role well and acts as a good role model which encourages good pupil participation.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils have a range of responsibilities which ensure they understand their role in the school community.
- Year 6 pupils assume considerable responsibility and show high levels of maturity.
- Pupils have a good understanding of their responsibilities for those less fortunate than themselves.

Commentary

81. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, when a group of Year 6 pupils led discussions with Year 2 pupils about their feelings. The school places a high value on pupils' knowledge of themselves and their responsibilities for the world in which they live. Discussions with Year 6 pupils confirmed how much emphasis the school places on their personal development through learning about themselves and others. They led the lesson seen very well, giving younger pupils the opportunity to talk about different feelings such as occurred when they felt left out or had a disagreement with their friends. They dealt very sensitively with the issues raised and gave a good lead as models for good speaking and listening.

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	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	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	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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