

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PATRICK'S ROMAN CATHOLIC VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dipton

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114246

Headteacher: Mrs M Clarke

Lead inspector: Mrs P A Simpson

Dates of inspection: 15 - 17 March 2004

Inspection number: 260689

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:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	134
School address:	North Road Flint Hill Dipton Stanley County Durham
Postcode:	DH9 9BB
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Rhind
Date of previous inspection:	October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Patrick's Primary School is smaller than most primary schools. The school caters for pupils between the ages of four and 11. There are 134 pupils on roll: 66 boys and 68 girls of whom 15 are in the Foundation Stage. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 1999 and 2003 and the School Achievement Award 1999 -2002. In 1999 it was invited to become a Beacon School and this status was awarded for a further three years from 2003. The percentage (8.9 per cent) of free school meals is below the national average. Pupils are all white British. The percentage (24 per cent) of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including those with Statements of Special Educational Needs, is above the national average. The nature of pupils' special educational need is generally for moderate learning difficulties and for those receiving support under school action plus it is mainly for specific learning needs. The socio- economic context of the school catchment is broadly average. Attainment on entry when children start in the reception class is broadly in line with the expected levels for their age in basic literacy and numeracy skills. Nearly a third of the pupils in 2002/3 Year 6 group were admitted other than at the usual time of admission. The school motto is 'Caring and Sharing'.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1515	P A Simpson	Lead inspector	Special educational needs Science Information and communication technology Art and design
19419	S Boyle	Lay inspector	
4350	C R Whittington	Team inspector	English Geography History
2759	D Sleightholme		Mathematics Design and technology Music Physical education
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	17
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective school. Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Leadership and management are very good, teaching is good overall. The school continues to provide very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards of achievement in Year 6 in the core subjects which have exceeded expected standards over the last four years.
- The climate for learning (ethos) is excellent.
- The leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff are very good.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- There is no designated outside play area for the Foundation Stage children.
- The school does not consult parents sufficiently.

Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection in 1998. The minor issues for improvement have largely been actioned. However, the lack of access to a secure outdoor area or large play equipment continues to limit the progress made by reception children in their physical and social development. The school was awarded Beacon status in 1999 for its curriculum delivery, monitoring and evaluation systems and the provision for pupils with special educational needs. This status was awarded for a further three years from 2003.

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	A*	A*	A	A
Science	A*	A	A	A

Key: A - top five per cent; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average*

Similar schools are those with similar percentages eligible for free school meals.

For pupils in the 2004 classes **achievement is good overall.** Children enter the school with average standards in their basic literacy and numeracy skills. In the Foundation Stage, reception children achieve well in relation to the Early Learning Goals and most reach the goals children are expected to achieve before entering Year 1. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests, standards at the end of Year 2 were well above average in reading and mathematics and they were average in writing. Teacher assessments in 2003 placed Year 2 pupils below average in science. Inspection evidence shows that standards of the current Year 2 pupils have improved in writing and science; pupils are in line to attain above average standards in writing and average standards in science. The current Year 6 pupils have maintained the well above average levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science as in previous years. In information and communication technology (ICT), Year 2, pupils attain the standard expected for their age and by the end of Year 6 they are reaching standards that are above average overall. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers due to the good quality of teaching and the focused, effective support given by teaching assistants and other adults.

The development of pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good** overall. Teachers, teaching assistants and voluntary helpers promote very good relationships and attitudes. As a result most pupils like coming to school, they behave very well and their attendance is higher than the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The quality of teaching is **good** overall with examples of excellent and very good teaching and as a result it makes a significant contribution to learning through out the school. Assessment is satisfactory overall. There are thorough arrangements for assessing pupils' progress in the core subjects and ICT. Although good class records are kept of work covered in the foundation subjects, regular assessments are not made of what individual pupils know, understand and can do in these subjects. Yearly foundation subject assessments inform the annual reporting stage to parents.

The breadth of curricular opportunities is good. The school provides some extra-curricular activities for older pupils including sport, music, and an art club for Year 6 and an ICT club for pupils in Years 3 and 4. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall given the lack of facilities and equipment for outside play and opportunities to extend pupils' physical development in the Foundation Stage. Links with parents are satisfactory overall. The school does not routinely consult parents by seeking, and acting on their views or about policy. Links with the community are good and those with other schools, including in the context of the Beacon status, are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very effective**. Leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is very good. The management of the school is very effective and the governance of the school is good. The governing body supports the school well and has a good knowledge of the high standards achieved and the excellent ethos. There are some minor omissions in the school prospectus, and the Race Relations policy which should have been in place in 2002 is in a draft form and has not been ratified by the governing body.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents are pleased with the work of the school. Parents are supportive and most of them think it is led and managed well and that the teaching is good. They are pleased with the good arrangements for settling children into school life and agree that the school encourages their children to become mature. Nearly a fifth of the parents who completed the Parents' Questionnaire, however, stated that they would like the school to seek their views more actively and in addition a small number stated they did not know about the school's arrangements for consulting parents. Overall, pupils are very satisfied with the school. Most reported that they are expected to work hard and that they learn new things in lessons and that the lessons are interesting and fun.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Provide a designated secure outside play area for the Foundation Stage children.
- Regularly consult parents by seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Include all the required information in the school prospectus (as in DfES guidance 2002).
- Agree a written policy on Race Equality and put in place arrangements to monitor its implementation and assess its impact on staff, pupils and parents as required.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement overall is **good** including for those pupils with special educational needs. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are **above average** by the end of Year 2 and they are **well above average** in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements in relation to their prior attainment are good overall.
- The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and they achieve well.
- Year 6 standards in the core subjects have been consistently well above average since 2000.
- Pupils of all ages with special educational needs achieve well and they are fully integrated.
- By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, their competence in ICT is higher than expected as a result of improved learning resources and the quality of teaching.
- Standards in writing in Year 2 have improved since 2003 and they are now above average.
- Standards of attainment are broadly average in science in the current Year 2; this is an improvement on the below average standards assessed in 2003.

Commentary

1. Although there is a wide range of attainment, when children enter compulsory schooling their attainment is broadly in line with the expected levels for their age. Their achievement through the Foundation Stage is good overall and by the end of the reception year the vast majority reach the *Early Learning Goals. Children are well prepared for the transition from the Foundation Stage curriculum to the National Curriculum.
2. The results of the 2003 national tests for pupils in Year 2, show that well above average standards have been maintained in reading and mathematics. Standards were not as high in 2003 as in previous years in writing which were average at the end of Year 2 when compared with the **average points scores (2003). When compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds standards were well above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. Teacher assessments placed pupils below average in science for this same year. As a result of the school priority to improve standards in writing in Years 1 and 2, inspection evidence shows that writing has improved and it is above average in the current Year 2. Standards in science in Year 2 are now broadly in line with the national average. All pupils are achieving well in English and mathematics; some achieve very well.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.5 (17.3)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.0 (15.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.5 (17.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 17 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

* Early Learning Goals are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the end of the reception year in six areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative; physical and personal, social and emotional development.

** All levels of the National Curriculum assessments are awarded a points score. The expected average points scores are given for Years 2 and 6.

3. In the 2003 national tests for pupils in Year 6, results were well above average in all three core subjects; English, mathematics and science. The school has maintained the very high standards reported in these subjects since its last inspection.
4. Taking the three subjects together over the period 2000 – 2002 the Year 6 results were in the top five per cent of schools nationally (A*). When the school's 2003 results are compared to those in similar schools (based on free school meals data) they are well above average in all three subjects. When comparing the progress made by the 2003 Year 6 pupils against their previous (1999) Year 2 tests, it was good overall. However, it must be borne in mind that almost a fifth of these pupils joined the school after Year 2 and nearly a third of this Year 6 group did not join the school in the first year. The performance of both boys and girls exceeded the national averages in all three subjects and there are no significant differences in their performance.
5. Inspection evidence shows that the overall standards for the current group of Year 6 pupils are well above average in the core subjects. Standards in writing for Years 1 and 2 are rising and remain an area for continued development.
6. Pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils achieve well overall with some achieving very well when compared with their prior attainments in basic literacy and numeracy skills. This is greatly due to the very good withdrawal sessions which pupils enjoy enormously that take place in the 'Fuzzbuzz' room, effective classroom support and available resources.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.7 (31.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.5 (30.4)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.5 (29.9)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

7. Pupils enter Year 1, with sound speaking and listening skills. These skills are promoted well in all classes and standards are constantly high. The overall standard in reading is well above average. Guided reading sessions are used purposefully to ensure standards remain high. There are numerous opportunities provided to develop pupils' literacy skills because of the links between English and the other subjects in the curriculum. Literacy displays reinforce and record the pupils' understanding and achievements. Standards in writing are now above average in Year 2, due to the effective strategy to concentrate on and raise the writing standards of younger pupils and maintain the well above average English standards achieved by the older pupils.
8. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is good throughout the school. Inspection evidence shows that standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to improve their numeracy skills through work in other subjects.
9. Younger pupils achieve well in science and inspection evidence indicates that Year 2 are in line to attain average standards by the end of the current year. This is an improvement on standards assessed in 2003. Achievement by older pupils is very good overall and standards attained continue to be well above average. Pupils' ability to carry out investigations is very secure.
10. Standards in ICT are in line with those expected in Years 1 and 2 and they are above the expectation by the end of Year 6. Some pupils do not have access to computers at home and therefore their ICT skills are not as far developed as others. A computer club has been established for some of these pupils to improve their rate of progress. Strengths are word processing and using ICT for research and presentation purposes. The school is aware of the

need to provide further teaching and learning resources for the monitoring component of the ICT curriculum in Key Stage 2. In order that pupils can learn, for example, that devices can monitor physical changes such as temperature, light or sound.

11. The other subjects of the National Curriculum were sampled. Insufficient evidence was seen to make secure judgements on the overall standards achieved by pupils in geography, history and music. In design and technology and art and design they are broadly average as was found in the 1998 inspection. In physical education standards are above that expected in those aspects observed by the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards of singing were above average during a school assembly and in a concert on St Patrick's day in which parents were invited and many attended. The pupils have learned a good repertoire of songs and they sung sweetly and tunefully.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Their personal development including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Attendance and punctuality are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are willing to work hard.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school.
- Relationships between pupils are very good.

Commentary

12. Pupils like school, respect their teachers, and feel well supported. This means that they are willing to work hard and try their very best. They have a very good sense of belonging and commitment to the school, to the extent that some pupils volunteered to clear up, following recent building work. The previous report noted the lack of opportunities for pupils to work independently. The school has since produced clear guidance for staff, and has successfully addressed this issue. Pupils feel that teachers trust them, and it was evident that when left to work by themselves they were very responsible. For example, Year 6 pupils used the computers outside the classroom to research a geography topic. In this, they were very sensible, and got on very well with their work.
13. Pupils are very well behaved, and always do as their teachers ask. This very good behaviour comes from the prevailing ethos in the school, in which there is an expectation that pupils will behave, and from pupils' own sense of wanting to do what is right. No pupil has ever been excluded from St Patrick's.
14. Pupils are well mannered, gentle and friendly. They are quietly confident because they know they achieve well. The school has successfully fostered notions of respect for others and, as a result pupils are sensitive to other people, and get on very well with each other. This means that bullying type incidents are extremely rare. If they should occur pupils know what to do, and have every confidence that the school will deal with them quickly and well. Some of the playground behaviour is fairly physical but not aggressive. This is because there is little for pupils to do in the playground which means they resort to chase type games. There is scope to give pupils equipment that would encourage co-operation, with less chasing around.
15. The school's excellent ethos supports pupils' spiritual development very effectively by giving pupils a very good sense of self worth and a positive way of relating to others. This combined with respect for others, supports not only pupils' spiritual development but also aspects of their moral, social and cultural development very effectively. Pupils are very clear about how they should behave towards others and they know the differences between right and wrong. This is evident in their behaviour and their relationships with others. Social development is similarly evident, with pupils showing how responsible they can be by doing jobs around the school.

Examples of these responsibilities include the Buddy System, whereby older children support the new entrants to the reception class. This is seen by both pupils and staff as very successful and very worthwhile. There is a strong focus on local heritage and local culture, and many opportunities to appreciate the richness and diversity of other cultures. These foci are developed well through school productions, in which, pupils have good opportunities to perform for others.

16. Attendance is consistently above average when compared to other schools nationally. Pupils are very punctual to school in the mornings.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.6	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education; the provision for special educational needs is **very good**. The overall quality of teaching and learning is **good**. Assessment is **satisfactory** overall.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are **very good**. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 teaching and learning are mostly **good** and occasionally **excellent**. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' knowledge of subjects and areas of learning is very good.
- Teachers often use very good methods.
- Pupils make very good gains in the acquisition of skills and knowledge in the core subjects.
- Teachers manage pupils very well and they insist on very high standards of behaviour.
- Although the school has an assessment policy it is not being applied consistently across all subjects.

Commentary

17. In the reception class teaching is lively. Planning is focused and there is good balance of teacher led and child selected activities. The teachers and teaching assistants are very enthusiastic about learning which the children find highly motivating.

18. Teachers are very secure in their knowledge of the primary curriculum and as a result pupils make good progress in acquiring subject specific skills. In a very good physical education lesson pupils learned to improve their skills in playing basketball because the teacher confidently demonstrated techniques that improved pupils' personal performance. The pupils learned how to improve their accuracy in passing movements by following the very good example set by the teacher. Similarly, in an ICT lesson the high quality input from a teacher, enabled older pupils to have good levels of confidence and competence to create instructions for zebra crossing warning lights.

19. Teaching methods are very well matched to the lesson objectives. When basic skills are being taught, such as in literacy, numeracy and ICT sessions, there are good opportunities for pupils to read together, to chant tables, to handle practical equipment and use software. Literacy sessions provide good opportunities for pupils to learn to pronounce words correctly and their oral skills develop well. They learn how to construct sentences and add punctuation. The good teaching motivates the pupils towards learning and they respond eagerly to lively engaging teaching, a feature of many lessons. As a result, pupils can talk confidently about their learning and the progress they have made. For example, a group of Year 2 pupils confidently discussed the place of capital letters and where speech marks are used when writing. There are many opportunities for pupils to practise their ICT skills through other subjects. Pupils have become confident in accessing files, using a toolbar, entering text and following instructions when they use a computer. Older pupils concentrate well as they work through practice questions in mathematics during numeracy sessions.
20. Most pupils are very well behaved; they concentrate well and listen attentively. During the group work in an excellent Year 3 science lesson, the pupils, who were highly motivated by the tasks, worked productively and by the end could present their findings collectively and confidently. Relationships were excellent. As a result lower attaining pupils were eager to contribute and felt sufficiently confident to do so.
21. Although the school has an assessment policy it is not being applied consistently across all subjects. There are thorough arrangements for assessing and tracking pupils' progress in core subjects and ICT. Teachers monitor test data, they mark work conscientiously and provide good direction to pupils on how to improve. They check each other's assessments against the standards expected for the pupils' age and they pass this information on as the pupils move through the school. In the foundation subjects, good class records are kept of the work covered. Assessments however, are not regularly made in the foundation subjects until the yearly assessment that informs the annual written report to parents; pupils achievements'.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2(6%)	12 (32%)	16 (43%)	7 (19%)	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

How well does the curriculum meet pupils' needs?

The overall quality of the curriculum throughout the school is **good**. Opportunities for curriculum enrichment through the range of extra-curricular activities, together with the number of visits for the pupils and visitors to the school to enrich the curriculum are **satisfactory**. Overall the range and quality of resources and accommodation are **satisfactory**, with some weaknesses.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision is made for the less able pupils and those with special educational needs.
- All pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.
- There is no secure outdoor area and no resources for outdoor learning for children in the Foundation Stage.
- Although many of the displays enhance the accommodation, some are not the work of pupils still at this school.
- There is a satisfactory range of opportunities for learning outside the school day, although there are insufficient extra-curricular activities for the younger pupils.

Commentary

22. The school's curriculum is generally broad and balanced and is based largely on nationally recommended schemes. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT. Some of the other subjects, however, such as art and design, design and technology, geography and history are insufficiently broad. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements, including the provision for alcohol and drugs education. A programme is in place for personal, social and health education. This includes sex and relationship education. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are used very effectively to teach English and mathematics. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Curriculum 'Newsletters' are sent home every half term, so that parents know what their children will be doing. French is taught to pupils in Year 6 and to children in the Foundation Stage, by a specialist teacher from St Bede's Secondary School, which has a Language College Status.
23. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The provision and support given to lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs was one of the three elements that led to the award of Beacon status. Pupils who attend the colourful and well resourced 'Fuzzbuzz' classroom for basic literacy and numeracy skills development follow the same curriculum as their peers. Targets in individual education plans are precise and measurable. Skilled additional teaching and learning support means that they progress at the same good rate as their peers. Analysis of pupils' work and lesson observations indicate that most teachers are providing work that is matched to the learning needs of the range of abilities with extension work for higher attaining pupils.
24. The school has not identified those who are gifted and talented, and so there is no way of knowing whether these pupils are achieving as well as they should.
25. Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education in the school is satisfactory. The school is highly inclusive in all aspects and various strategies are used to develop pupils' pride, initiative and responsibilities. Older pupils are given a wide range of increasing responsibilities and all take these seriously.
26. The curriculum is enriched by a satisfactory number of sporting, arts and other activities provided for the pupils. These include football, art and ICT clubs. However, there are no activities provided for the younger pupils. Some parents pointed out that the range of activities could be improved and several stated that they did not know about the extra-curricular provision. All pupils benefit from a sound range of visits and visitors which are used to enhance the curriculum and provide a suitable range of learning opportunities.
27. The teachers and learning support staff are generally experienced and they work very effectively together to support the pupils' learning and contribute to their good achievement over time. The length of the taught day is slightly shorter than that recommended for pupils in Years 3 to 6. This is being addressed.
28. The quantity and quality of resources are generally very good, and these are used appropriately. Good use is made of the accommodation, however, there is no outside area for children in the Foundation Stage, this was highlighted as a minor issue for improvement at the time of the previous inspection in 1998. There are no suitable resources for learning outside for these children. Many of the attractive and interesting displays around the school enhance learning; but they do not reward effort, as many show work produced by pupils who have left the school.

Care, guidance and support

Care, welfare, health and safety for pupils are **good**. Provision for support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is **good**. Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **good**, overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is very caring and pupils are very satisfied with the school as a whole.
- Pupils feel well supported.
- Pupils are consulted well about their work, but not about the school's work and developments.

Commentary

29. Staff are very committed to pupils' welfare and are very caring in their approach. The policy for health and safety is appropriate with all arrangements in place. Child protection procedures are well established, and staff are kept up to date through frequent training. Pupils have trusting relationships with adults in the school and the recently introduced 'worry box', gives pupils an alternative and effective avenue for sharing concerns.
30. The headteacher and some of the staff have been at the school a long time, and know the pupils and their families very well. Pupils say they can go to staff and that they are very confident that issues will be sorted out. All this helps pupils to feel well supported and happy at school. Induction arrangements have been carefully thought out, with visits prior to children starting school, and a flexible approach, designed to meet the different needs of children and their parents. The recent introduction of the Buddy System, has helped children to settle in well. Arrangements for pupils starting school at other times are appropriate.
31. There is very good involvement of pupils in their work, and in their targets for learning. Pupils have good knowledge of what they need to do to improve their work and feel well supported by staff in this. However, the school is not involving them, through regular consultation, in its overall work and future developments. There is no formal system in place for pupils to express their views, such as a school/pupil council and this is not seen as an immediate priority for school development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents is **satisfactory**. Links with the community are **good** and links with other schools and colleges are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works with many other schools sharing expertise.
 - Parents are involved well with learning at home.
 - Parents are not routinely consulted about their views and needs or about policy.
32. Through its Beacon status the school has worked with many other schools and the local education authority over several years, disseminating good practise. It has a very effective relationship with St Bede's Secondary School, sharing practice and by drawing on the specialist expertise of its teachers. These links, which include the teaching of French in the reception year and Year 6, support the curriculum very effectively. The very good relationship that the school has with St Bede's supports pupils who are transferring very well.
33. Most parents are positive in their views of the school. However, a number raised concerns about communication and consultation. The school feels it is approachable and has an 'open door policy', but although many parents do come into school to speak to the headteacher, this is mainly to discuss concerns rather than on a day-to-day informal basis. Parents are not consulted routinely about what they would like for the school and so do not have a stake in shaping the direction of developments. For example, the school formulated an Internet policy in January 2004, but parents were not asked to sign an agreement about the acceptable use of ICT in the school.

34. Parents support the work in classrooms by helping in school and supporting homework well. The pupil planners effectively keep parents well informed about the work pupils are doing and the work they will be doing. Pupils' annual reports are fairly detailed about what children can do, but there is little about how well pupils have attained and it is not always clear about the progress pupils have made particularly in the foundation subjects. The Friends Association barely functions, but there are plans for a re-launch. There is scope to develop the role of parent governors so that all parents are better informed about the elected parent governors and their responsibilities.
35. Links with the parish and the local community are well established and support pupils' personal development well. The curriculum is enhanced by visits to the local community, for example, to a residential home for senior citizens where children learned about their local culture through talking to the residents. A visitor from a local history society makes an effective contribution by talking to pupils about local culture. Links with the community have been enhanced by projects such as tree planting.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff are **very effective**. The governance of the school is **good**. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is very effective as is the leadership of the other key staff.
- The governors, who support the school well, have a good knowledge of its reputation for high standards and excellent ethos.
- There is a very good system of monitoring and evaluating core subjects.
- The *Beacon Schools* programme has been implemented well.
- There are very good arrangements for staff induction.
- Some aspects of statutory requirements are not met.

Commentary

36. The headteacher provides very effective leadership and the school aims to "*acquire knowledge and skills, develop lively enquiring minds and experience a sense of delight*" are met very well. The headteacher has a very clear vision for high standards and the school's very good reputation for this has been maintained throughout the period since the previous inspection. The school successfully bid for and was awarded an extension of *Beacon Status*.
37. Staff with key responsibilities for subject leadership and school management are very good role models for other staff. Some of the staff are at a relatively early stage in their teaching career and they have benefited from the training, support and encouragement of their more experienced colleagues. There is a high degree of consistency in the way pupils are managed, basic skills are taught and progress is assessed in the core subjects.
38. The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have identified a link governor for each subject. Their good monitoring programme includes visits to classrooms, supporting initiatives and providing feedback. This helps them to take decisions based on relevant information and effectively support the school improvement plan. Consequently governors are already strategically planning for the period when funding will reduce at the end of the Beacon programme. The planned use of the unallocated funding is designated for phase 2 refurbishment of the pupil cloakrooms, disabled access in front of the school and for the employment of learning support assistants. Five per cent of the funding is to be retained for contingencies.
39. Teaching, learning and pupils' progress in the core subjects are monitored very well through a planned cycle of lesson observations and very good assessment of pupils' work in these

subjects. For example, the mathematics co-ordinator observes two lessons in this subject in each class each year to monitor the quality of teaching. Samples of the work produced by pupils resulting from that teaching are assessed by staff working together to judge how well the pupils are making progress in terms of national standards. This information is used to help take decisions on teaching approaches when planning the next stage of the pupils' learning.

40. The *Beacon Schools* programme has been implemented well. The school has formed very good partnerships with other schools through the training provided and visits made. There is a strategic approach to this provision with a planned programme that ensures visiting teachers access the school's expertise for planning, monitoring and curriculum provision. The headteacher and staff have valued the advantages gained through the Beacon initiative. As a direct result of these partnerships, the sessions, led by learning support assistants, were introduced so as to help younger pupils develop their physical and manipulative skills.

41. There are very good arrangements for staff induction. Newly qualified teachers are regularly observed and supported very effectively by a named mentor. The very good induction programme includes access to training events. Staff, both teaching and non-teaching, new to the school are linked to a senior manager who helps support them in their new role. Performance management is embedded in the work of the school and some learning support assistants are involved in this process too.

42. Some aspects of statutory requirements are not met:

- The governing body did not have a Race Equality Policy in place by May 2002. This is still in draft form.
- The school prospectus does not include the address of the school, its telephone number or absence information.
- Although there is no ramped access at the front of the school, progress is being made towards improving accessibility to meet the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	426,880
Total expenditure	408,664
Expenditure per pupil	2,761

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	69,727
Balance carried forward to the next	87,943

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in reception is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff work very effectively as a team.
- Teaching towards the Early Learning Goals is very good and there is effective assessment.
- There is a good balance of activities.
- There is no provision for outdoor play.

Commentary

43. Reception children come from several different nurseries and there are also children who have had no nursery education at all. Induction is effective in easing transition and staff establish good relationships with parents. When children start in reception, although there is a range of attainment, standards are broadly in line with the expected levels for their age. By the end of reception most children will have reached the Early Learning Goals and will therefore be comfortably in line with levels expected nationally.
44. The ratio of staff to children is very good. Staff work well together and have good relationships with the children. They maximise on adult-child interactions throughout the day. Although an experienced teacher, the co-ordinator, is new to this age group. However, she has a natural rapport with reception children and they appreciate her lively teaching. Planning is very focused and there is a good balance of teacher led and child selected activities. Assessment is continuous and effective.
45. The teacher and teaching assistants are very enthusiastic about children's learning and create an air of excitement, which the children find infectious. This motivates the children and sustains their interest and concentration for long periods. As a result, all children achieve well and are proud and confident to demonstrate their achievements.
46. Although the classroom is well equipped and organised towards independent learning, it is small and together with a lack of outdoor provision limits children's physical and social development. Nevertheless, the curriculum on offer to all the children inside the classroom is rich and varied and the children experience some interesting and imaginative activities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a highly supportive ethos in the classroom and in the school generally.
- Classroom routines and procedures are well established.
- Positive behaviour is encouraged.

Commentary

47. After a welcoming prayer and registration children experience a brisk start to the day and are quickly involved in learning. Routines and procedures are established and the children adhere to them. They know how many can safely work in the various areas of learning, they know when overalls need to be worn and they handle equipment with care. When they move along the

corridor they do so quietly; when they change activity or equipment they adapt quickly with the minimum of fuss.

48. Staff are good role models and expect high standards of behaviour from the children. The children react well to the courtesy and fairness staff show and behave with consideration. They put up their hands to answer, take turns and listen without interruption when another child is speaking. They use the words 'please' and 'thank-you' regularly and are friendly and confident with visitors.
49. There is a caring, family ethos and this supports the children's development very well. They are not afraid to speak in front of others and to ask for help. They are not embarrassed when they make mistakes because staff encourage them to contribute and participate. This was very obvious in an oral French lesson where the children self corrected their words and repeated until they matched the pronunciation of the teacher.
50. Staff ensure that good behaviour is noted. They reward with praise, extra turns and give opportunities to choose from a range of options.
51. Teaching and learning are very good in this area and the children achieve very well. They are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Speaking and listening are given priority across the curriculum.
- Staff provide good role models in enunciating standard English.
- Children are competent when speaking and writing in sentences.
- Writing opportunities are utilised across the curriculum.
- Handwriting is taught in a structured way.

Commentary

52. Teaching and learning are very good in this area. Speaking and listening are given priority across the curriculum. They are developed very well through small group activities involving co-operation with other children, and because of the favourable adult-child ratio, through the increased opportunities for conversation with an adult. The teacher is a good role model in enunciating standard English and the children copy her and correct their pronunciation. She is particularly skilled orally at keeping the children motivated and on task. She uses a variety of questions so that children reply using language for different purposes. She sustains them as they give extended replies and by the commentaries she makes as children model work in front of their peers she reinforces vocabulary and sentence structure.
53. Handwriting is taught well and standards are high. The children practise regularly making the correct formation of their letters in familiar words using a variety of tools such as pencils and crayons. They are familiar with sentences and can read back those they have written. Many are beginning to use capitals and full stops. They write across the curriculum, recording their findings in 'science' about weatherproofing using ticks in a table and listing healthy and unhealthy food in a 'technology' lesson. For news-time, with the help of a word book, one child wrote, "My rabbit was poorly. I took him to the vets to make him better."
54. Achievement is very good in this area and children are expected to reach the Early Learning Goals.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main Strengths and Weaknesses

- Planning is very thorough.
- The teacher is very encouraging.
- Staff use a wide range of equipment to reinforce learning.
- Activities are differentiated.

Commentary

55. Teaching and learning are exceptionally good in this area. Planning is very thorough; it identifies the use of teaching assistants, equipment, and groupings and is detailed for every part of the lesson. As a result of this, time is very well used and hardly an opportunity is missed for learning. The teacher has very high expectations and is very encouraging. Children are given lots of praise. All children experience success because staff use interesting activities to correctly match children's needs. These activities involve a wide range of materials to develop, consolidate and reinforce learning. In one lesson, groups sequenced numbers on a washing line, counted small toys and bricks, selected shapes with the largest and smallest number of parts and wrote in the sand the bigger number when comparing two blocks of cubes.
56. In one particular number lesson the teaching and learning were excellent. The lesson began with all children sitting around the teacher using number fans to show two digit numbers. They were encouraged to cheer when their answer was correct. Sometimes, the instruction was a quiet cheer, sometimes a medium one etc. The teacher then asked the children to subtract, whilst she modelled with her fingers. Enough time was allowed so everyone completed the task. Relationships between teacher and children were excellent. The teacher encouraged children's development and so the children were very confident. Mathematical songs were sung and everyone participated. Everything was inclusive. The cheering, the clapping and the singing engendered great excitement. The teacher was most expressive when asking questions, when giving praise, when explaining how the number track could be used to 'add on'. Two thirds of the children then worked successfully through sums, which were written in their books, differentiated in difficulty and number. The other third worked practically through addition and subtraction with a teaching assistant. When tasks were completed children developed their mathematics in different areas of the classroom, on jigsaws, in sand, playing snakes and ladders and constructing walls. One child used the computer mouse to put blocks in a pile. When asked to name 13 he said, "I can't remember." "You must do," retorted his neighbour, "You're in reception!"
57. The children achieve exceptionally well in this area and should easily reach the expected level for their age.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children study a range of interesting topics.
- Children are confident working on the computer.
- Children enjoy learning French.
- On occasions practical activities are overly directed.

Commentary

58. Children study a range of interesting and relevant topics, which develop knowledge and understanding of the world. These topics include colours, celebrations, and weather, people who help us, homes and families. Topics are developed over a half-termly period and are taught across the curriculum using a variety of situations and equipment. Currently the class is studying the accommodation as the school has had some recent building alterations. They have also had a visit from the local fire brigade.
59. Teaching and learning in this area are good. Photographs of the children meeting the firefighters are used as inspiration for a general discussion and make the topic relevant. Skilled questioning by the teacher enables the children to explain their feelings and impressions when the photographs were taken. Narrowing the focus in this way enables the children to reflect on the moment. Good modeling of sentences by the teacher relating to such an experience motivates the children to use different and more expressive vocabulary when they undertake their own writing. One group builds a fire engine out of boxes, and although the children are proud of their efforts there is rather too much adult direction and decision making for the children to receive the maximum benefits of this experience.
60. Teaching using the computer is particularly effective because the teacher draws out the children's ideas and ensures they understand the icons so that they can communicate their ideas. She models additional features of a graphics package until the children are confident to experiment. Children are adept at using the mouse and can access software to draw their impression of a fire engine selecting its colours and using the fill-in button.
61. Children also have the opportunity to learn French and are taught very well on a weekly basis by an enthusiastic teacher from St Bede's Secondary School. The children love this lesson and learn basic vocabulary and expressions very quickly. The experience is building their general confidence. It also augments their understanding of language and of another country's culture.
62. The children achieve well in this area of learning and are in line to reach the Early Learning Goals.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The overall provision for physical education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is no outdoor provision.
- There is no outdoor equipment.
- Teachers provide lots of opportunities for children to refine their fine motor skills.
- Physical education lessons are very well planned and taught.

Commentary

63. Although this was mentioned in the previous inspection report there is still no provision for outdoor play and the school has no bikes, scooters and collaborative vehicles to develop co-ordination and control using robust and energetic play. However, teaching and learning are very good in the indoor lessons and because of the structure and detailed focus, children are developing their body movements and their hand-eye skills when using small apparatus such as balls. Children's fine motor skills are also developing well as opportunities to use scissors, pencils, brushes and other small equipment occur throughout the day. During practical activities teachers often sit close to the children to give individual instruction in the use of such tools.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

64. It is not possible to make an overall judgement of provision as little teaching was seen. The teacher does organise some very creative and imaginative activities across the curriculum to teach basic skills in the other areas of learning. The classroom is equipped with role-play facilities such as a post-office and a builders' yard, although there is no easy access to art and craft equipment. Little adult intervention to extend learning was seen when the children chose to use the role-play areas although children did complete the teacher-directed tasks in them. The children have explored the work of artists and depicted rain pictures effectively in the style of Ando Hiroshige. Observations of sandwich making and model making sessions reveal a preponderance of teacher-chosen and teacher-directed work. Such sessions limit the children's independence and creativity in making their own choices and developing their own ideas. Analysis of last year's profile and this year's current assessment suggests that most children will reach the expected level of attainment in this area of the Early Learning Goals.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall standards in English are above national expectations at the end of Year 2 and well above by the end of Year 6.
- There are high standards in speaking and listening and reading is well above national expectations at both key stages.
- All pupils achieve well, and many very well.
- The overall standard of teaching and learning is good, and often better.
- The very good relationships between adults and pupils boosts confidence and encourages interest and effort and pupils' have very positive attitudes to the subject.
- The quality of assessment is very good.
- Less able pupils are given very good support, which ensures their good achievement.
- The co-ordinator makes a very positive contribution to the subject.

Commentary

65. Standards are above the expected levels for in Year 2 and well above for those who are in Year 6. Given that the majority of pupils come to school with average levels in English, this represents achievement which is good, and in many cases very good. The national test results in 2003, showed Year 2 pupils to be above average in reading when compared with schools nationally, and in line in writing. Here few pupils reached the higher than expected levels and levels overall have fallen over the past few years. Test results for Year 6 pupils were well above the levels expected nationally in 2003. The school has concentrated on developing writing, and a wide variety of different forms and strategies are now in place, which are raising standards for the younger pupils, and maintaining them for the older ones. Those pupils with special educational needs are given work which is appropriate to their abilities, and they too make good progress. The school's concentration on the less able pupils is to be commended. They are withdrawn during some of the literacy sessions to be given work appropriate to their abilities. They feel highly valued, enjoy these sessions enormously and all achieve well.

66. Pupils enter Year 1 with sound speaking and listening skills. These skills are promoted well in all classes, and standards are constantly high. The use of 'talk partners' is developed well in Year 1, though not yet in other classes. As pupils move through the school, they show great confidence and in Year 6, for example, an impressive session was observed where the pupils gave individual presentations on space travel. All listened with great interest and many asked

relevant questions. This lesson was fully inclusive, with all pupils – including those with special educational needs – making a very positive contribution.

67. The overall standard of reading is well above average. Guided reading sessions are used purposefully to ensure that standards remain high. Pupils obviously enjoy reading. Pupils are encouraged to take books home and read to an adult, and most do this on a regular basis.
68. Standards in writing are improving well and remain an area for continued development. There are literacy displays around the school which reinforce and record the pupils' understanding and achievements, although some of these are by pupils who have left the school. Pupils' work is generally very well presented, and pupils have obvious pride in what they do. There is a good range of writing for different purposes, including a comparison of similarities and differences between two folk stories in Year 1, letters about the Crimean War in Year 2, mathematics poems in Year 4 and research on space in Year 6.
69. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, with some very good teaching seen. The best lessons were lively and imaginative. Most staff are very enthusiastic and have the highest expectations. This encourages most pupils to try hard during their lessons, and all are fully committed to their learning. Relationships throughout the school are very good and enhance the pupils' very positive attitudes to learning. All adults give praise to reward and encourage pupils and the vast majority of lessons make learning interesting and enjoyable, where all the pupils are fully involved.
70. Very good use is made of assessment, and individual targets for improvement are set in many (though not all) classes. Selected pieces of work involve 'conferencing', where the teacher and pupil concentrate on what has been achieved and what should be covered next. Day-to-day assessment is constructive and relevant, with teachers giving considerable time to marking their pupils' books, and in some cases pupils are encouraged to write a response to the teachers' comments. The work of a very effective co-ordinator helps to maintain the high standards. The overall quality of resources is very good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

71. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented very well and adapted appropriately to support effective learning. There are numerous opportunities provided to develop speaking and listening in many lessons. Opportunities for research and a variety of extended writing are evident in geography and history, and links are made with ICT through word-processing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school.
- The teaching of mathematics is mostly good and numeracy skills are developed well through other subjects.
- Leadership in mathematics is very good.

Commentary

72. Inspection evidence shows standards in all aspects of mathematics are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. This represents a slight decline from the very high standards at the end of Year 6 reported in the previous inspection and can be traced to three factors. First, the percentage of pupils who have special educational needs has

risen. Secondly, some pupils have left the school. Others have joined and have not had the benefit of good teaching across several years. Thirdly and more importantly, in the five years since the previous inspection, while high standards at the school have been maintained, national results have improved.

73. Given the average attainment of most pupils when they first enter the school most have achieved well in mathematics to reach the standards attained by the end of Years 2 and 6. This relates directly to the good teaching provided throughout the school. Consequently, by the end of Year 2, most pupils can add and subtract two digit numbers in a range to 50; select coins for simple shopping tasks; can tell the time on a clock face and measure accurately in centimetres. They progress well and by the end of Year 6 confidently use fractions and decimals. Most know how to work out a ten per cent saving in sale prices and they can now measure size of angles with a protractor. Lower attaining pupils and those who have special educational needs, achieve well because they benefit from focused but sensitive help provided by a learning support teacher. Eight lower attaining Year 4 pupils worked hard as they calculated the change from 20p in shopping sums and worked in pairs to sort mathematical terms such as total, minus and less than into categories representing addition and subtraction.
74. The most significant aspects of the good teaching are the teachers' good subject knowledge, the high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving, the proven methods they use and the way they make lessons interesting and engaging. In a lively lesson on fractions the teacher quickly captured the pupils' interest by unwrapping a bar of chocolate to show how it was divided into equal parts. The teacher then confidently used ICT to make the lesson visually appealing. The pupils quickly learned to recognise fractions. Lower attaining pupils consolidated their understanding of halves and quarters; higher attaining pupils could recognise fifths and tenths.

Numeracy across the curriculum

75. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to improve their numeracy skills through work in other subjects. Pupils have drawn line graphs of temperature when they compared the climate of Dipton with that of St Lucia, they have calculated distance when controlling an electronic turtle in ICT and they have learned to measure carefully to make models in design and technology activities.
76. Subject leadership is very good and better than at the time of the previous inspection. The coordinator confidently analyses pupil performance data and the evidence from a range of worthwhile monitoring tasks to help the school maintain the high standards typical of recent years. Information from a rigorous programme of lesson observations combined with joint assessment of pupils' work by the staff is used well to help plan the next stage of the pupils' learning.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are well above average.
- Pupils achieve very well as a result of generally very good teaching, particularly the older pupils.
- Pupils have very good attitudes and behaviour.
- Good use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning in science.

Commentary

77. At the time of the last inspection in 1998 most pupils in Year 2, attained standards that were above the national average and at the end of Year 6 they were reported as very high and for most pupils they were above the national average. Over the last four years in the Key Stage 2

National Curriculum tests standards have been well above average in comparison with all schools nationally and in 2000 and 2001 they were in the top five per cent of schools nationally. The current Year 6 pupils are in line to achieve better than expected standards by the end of the year. The Year 2 group in 2003 were assessed as being below average in science. The current Year 2 are attaining average standards, this is an improvement on 2003 and shows good progress given that a third are lower attainers or those with special educational needs. No difference was observed between the achievement of boys and girls, they all achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and very well in Years 3 to 6.

78. In the lessons seen during the inspection, the teaching ranged between satisfactory and excellent. Overall, teaching and learning are very good in Years 3 to 6 and they are good in Years 1 and 2. For example, in a Year 3 lesson very secure knowledge and understanding of the class and the subject led to productive learning outcomes with pupils working independently and collaboratively. Year 6 pupils have a very good command of technical vocabulary and their investigative skills are well developed. Almost all pupils who were observed understood the need to make a test fair and they were generally familiar with the need to make predictions in practical work. The use of science to support the development of ICT was integral to the teaching and learning in the Years 3 and 6 lessons seen. Teachers provide a range of opportunities for pupils to plan and carry out investigations and as a result scientific enquiry work is very secure. Numeracy and literacy skills are further developed in science lessons, for example, in the presentation of results in tables, charts and/or graphs and when writing results and conclusions.
79. The strengths reported in the 1998 inspection have been sustained. The one pointer for improvement has been addressed. Pupils' work is regularly marked and this now gives indicators as to what pupils need to do in order to improve their work.
80. The subject is led and managed well by an experienced subject co-ordinator who has produced a range of teaching and learning materials and guidance as a means of supporting staff, including those new to the school. A detailed analysis was conducted following the 2003 National Curriculum tests as to the implications for teaching and learning in future years. Class visits are undertaken with feedback given to teachers and suggestions given where needed for improvement. Pupil tracking and assessment strategies are firmly in place.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average.
- This subject remains a developmental priority for improvement.
- Procedures for tracking pupils and monitoring their work have been established.
- There is ongoing improvement in resources and staff expertise.
- Additional resources have yet to be purchased to develop, as planned, the monitoring of events component of the National Curriculum for older pupils.
- There is no formal booking system in place for reserving the laptop computers in advance so as to enable pupils to have first hand experience of developing new skills immediately following a demonstration of a new ICT tool.

Commentary

81. By the end of Year 6 pupils' skills are above average. In the direct teaching session seen in Year 6, boys and girls confidently worked very well together; there was real co-operation. They created, tested and refined a sequence of instructions so as to make things happen. The very good subject knowledge of the teacher enabled the pupils to make very good progress in a relatively short session. Pupils have gained their present levels of confidence and competence

due to the consistently high quality teaching. Year 3 pupils were attentive and interested during the whole-class session on using a database. The opportunity for the pupils to complete the task following the direct teaching input was restricted by the lack of availability of computers in the classroom. Standards observed in Years 1 and 2 are broadly average. Strengths are word processing and using ICT for research and presentation purposes. It was not possible to reach a judgement about standards in the other year groups as no direct use of ICT was observed during the inspection.

82. Since the last inspection national and school funding has meant that the resources for the subject have improved as has staff expertise through training. The school has purchased a community connect three server from which it runs the school networking system. A lunch time ICT club has been set up for pupils in Years 3 and 4 who have limited computing resources at home. The school is aware of the need to develop further its resources so as to stimulate a greater degree of motivation towards the development of pupils' skills including the 'monitoring of events' element of the National Curriculum Programme of Study for older pupils.
83. Conversations with pupils and examples of their work show they are enthusiastic about using computers. They use ICT to present their work including using text, use of CD-ROM's and the Internet for research. Direct teaching sessions do not always yield quick results nor enable pupils to make rapid gains in their ICT skills when there are only two computers available to the whole class at the time.
84. The relatively new ICT co-ordinator is extremely enthusiastic about the role. A portfolio of work has been assembled but it does not indicate what the objectives were of the tasks given nor the learning outcomes. Formal pupil tracking now takes place and assessments are conducted well in accordance with the school's assessment policy. There is a commitment to improving the provision and resourcing for ICT so as to stimulate a greater degree of pupil motivation towards skills development. A detailed audit of the provision led to ICT being a priority for school development in 2003-4. The supportive linked governor who has a background in ICT works closely with the co-ordinator and recognises the need to have a strategic plan for its ongoing development. The school has an Internet policy (January 2004) but parents have not been asked about this in regard to formally seeking their agreement about the acceptable use of ICT.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

85. During the inspection use was seen of ICT in English, mathematics, science, geography and history. Displays indicate that good use is made of ICT to present work in art and design. Pupils in Year 2 reported that they used ICT for word processing and in art, producing designs and pictures using programs such as Colour Magic. In science, ICT is used on a regular basis, for example, to record investigations, research information and record results. Pupils in the 'Fuzz buzz' classes access and use ICT programs regularly as a means of consolidating their literacy and numeracy skills.

HUMANITIES

Geography and history

Provision in history is **satisfactory**. Too little geography was seen during the inspection to make an overall judgement about the provision in this subject.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for geography and history concentrates largely on facts, with too little emphasis being made on differences and comparisons.
- Assessment is not fully in place, being largely a record of what has been covered.
- The pupils have very good attitudes to learning.

- The curriculum is enhanced by a good programme of visits to add interest and excitement to both geography and history.
- Many displays, though interesting and attractive, are by pupils who have left the school.

Commentary

86. Although most of the required content of the geography and history syllabuses is covered, there is insufficient concentration in some years of those elements of the curriculum concerning change, differences and comparisons. Teaching in the few history lessons seen was satisfactory. The one geography lesson was very good, and here the pupils concentrated on comparing their own locality with that on an imaginary Scottish island. This was an exception to much of the work seen in the pupils' exercise books in both subjects, which concentrate too heavily on facts, and too little on using these facts in relation to each other. From the limited evidence seen, pupils are very interested and enthusiastic in both subjects and contribute willingly in lessons. Assessment is not fully in place, being largely a class record of what has been covered each term. The curriculum for both subjects is enhanced by a good range of visits to add interest and excitement. These include the seaside, Hadrian's Wall, a castle and museums. Many displays, though interesting and attractive, are by pupils who have left the school, and so the opportunity to celebrate and reinforce the work done by those pupils still in the school is missed. For example, a series of written accounts and photographs of a visit to Beamish Museum was produced by Year 6 pupils in 2001! However, the school has not visited the museum since that date. 'Old' displays are eventually mounted in books, which is an effective way of building resources, and this needs to be done more often.

87. The leadership and management of these subjects are effective. The co-ordinator monitors planning and works with other staff to look at pupils' work, although there is no time allowed for her to observe lessons. The level of resources for both subjects is good and, when needed, books and artefacts are borrowed through the local education authority.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

88. There was not enough evidence to report on art and design, design and technology, music and physical education individually. However, at least one lesson was observed in each subject, work was sampled and discussions held with staff and pupils.

Art and Design

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory** overall.

89. Provision in art and design is similar to that reported in the last inspection. The work seen is what would be expected of pupils by the end of Years 2 and 6. It is evident from teachers' planning, the prospectus, sketchbooks and the art displays throughout the school that pupils of all ages explore and develop their ideas using a variety of tools and materials including paint, pastels, textiles, and ICT. There were good examples of Victorian portraits in the Year 6 William Morris Gallery. In the special educational needs 'Fuzzbuzz' room, 'Over the Moon' and 'Funtasia Island' displays celebrated the work of pupils. They were very colourful, and made up of card, wool and other art materials. There were several examples of observational drawing including Year 1 observations of fruit and vegetables and self-portraits with a focus on hair colour and eyes. Good attention was given by the teacher to the development of brush strokes and painting skills in a Year 2 lesson. As a result, the pupils applied paint and water carefully in the style of Water Lilies by Claude Monet.

90. Information and communication technology is used throughout the school to develop aspects of art and design. A lunchtime art club for Year 6 was well attended, its focus being pattern work, colour associations and the work of other artists. There was little seen of the roles and purposes of artists, or craftspeople related to diverse cultures from outside western Europe. The school has identified the need to review the art policy and guidelines and the use of assessment. The

policy was formulated in 1997 and there have been no formal lesson observations of teaching and learning in this subject since 1998.

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- The curriculum provision is satisfactory.

Commentary

91. Due to timetabling arrangements only one lesson was observed so overall judgements have not been reached for teaching, learning or achievement. Evidence from this lesson, displays, photographs and a discussion with Year 6 pupils about their recent work indicate that standards are in line with what would be expected for the pupils' age.

92. By the end of Year 6, pupils have learned to design a product commencing with outline sketches. They can satisfactorily list the materials they plan to use. Pupils have acquired an appropriate range of cutting and fixing skills that they use to assemble the components. On completion, they have evaluated their work to see how it might be improved. Pupils in Year 6 enjoyed describing this process as it related to the theme of space exploration. Most made models of spacecraft; one pupil designed and made a robot with a keyboard to control its movements. These pupils had also learned to sew using cross-stitches when they made bookmarks as presents for Christmas.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy music and they perform well for others.

Commentary

93. No lessons in music were observed during this inspection. Consequently, no judgements were reached for teaching, learning or pupils' achievement. Standards of singing were above average during a school assembly and in a concert to which parents were invited. The pupils have learned a good repertoire of songs appropriate to school assembly and they sing these sweetly and tunefully. Some pupils have made good progress in learning to play recorders and violins. They confidently accompanied the singing, adding positively to the sense of occasion.

94. All pupils took part in a short St Patrick's Day concert where they sang appropriately "*In Dublin's Fair City*", three songs representing the traditions of their local area and a song from a musical that they will perform on stage later in the school year. Pupils confidently announced the songs and provided some background information on the lyrics. They sing well from memory, performing enthusiastically and confidently. Parents show their appreciation through generous applause.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in those aspects observed by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Teaching is mostly very good.
- Pupils enjoy physical education lessons, they work hard and achieve well.

Commentary

95. Provision is better than at the time of the previous inspection. Three lessons in physical education were observed covering gymnastics, games skills and dance. These show that by the end of Year 2, pupils have acquired good co-ordination and use this to control movement well. Pupils in Year 1 produced imaginative movements to represent plants and insects living in a magic garden. They make good progress and by Year 6 can combine movements effectively into sequences. In a lesson for pupils in Year 6 most pupils demonstrated good control as they developed a sequence that included running, jumping and landing.
96. The teaching of physical education is lively and engaging; in most lessons the subject is taught very well. In a very good lesson for pupils in Year 3, the teacher very confidently taught basketball skills of throwing, catching and dribbling. The teacher's enthusiasm for the subject transferred well to the pupils who were eager to succeed. They watched the teacher demonstrate the passing techniques and tried hard to match them through some very effective collaborative work with a partner. The teacher's tip to "side step while dodging and darting" was an effective way of raising standards of speed and accuracy in movement.
97. Pupils enthusiastically take part in physical education lessons; most are highly motivated and want to succeed. From the start of a dance lesson pupils in Year 1 responded well. They listened carefully to the pre-recorded musical extracts and tried hard to make movements that represented a magical journey. Year 6 pupils thought carefully about the use of space for themselves and others as they put great effort into concentrating on balance and position.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

98. It was not possible to see any personal, social and health education and citizenship lessons during the inspection and so only a brief comment can be made. A programme is in place and senior staff monitor the plans for this. It is not possible to make any judgement about the impact of this scheme.

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

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