

INSPECTION REPORT

St Patrick's RC VA Primary School

Ryhope, Sunderland

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108845

Headteacher: Mrs Mary Wood

Lead inspector: Mrs Margaret Shepherd

Dates of inspection: 18th to 21st April 2005

Inspection number: 267915

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
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 143

School address: Smith Street
Ryhope
Sunderland
Tyne and Wear
Postcode: SR2 0RQ

Telephone number: 0191 5536256
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Michael Hendy

Date of previous inspection: 26th April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School serves the village of Ryhope on the outskirts of Sunderland. The employment used to be predominantly coal mining before the pit closed. The school serves an area in the lowest 20 per cent of deprivation in the country. There are 143 pupils on roll, with 60 boys and 83 girls. The numbers in each year group vary considerably from year to year. Attainment on entry to the school is below average overall. Seventeen per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is broadly average. Thirty per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register, which is above average. Four per cent have full Statements of Special Educational Need, which is well above average. Six per cent of pupils have English as an additional language. Several of these pupils are asylum seekers. The school organises its pupils into single age group classes in the mornings through the employment of two additional teachers. In the afternoons Year 1 pupils are split between reception and Year 2 and the Year 4 pupils join the Year 3 pupils. The great majority of staff have worked in the school for a considerable period. The accommodation is old and has had two major improvement phases. The computer suite only became fully operational at the beginning of this spring term. There is a new chair of governors and several governors who have only just taken up their roles.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|---|
| 11328 | Mrs M. R. Shepherd | Lead inspector | Mathematics, information and communication technology, English as an additional language |
| 9928 | Mr A. Dobson | Lay inspector | |
| 29188 | Mrs G. Ulyatt | Team inspector | Foundation Stage, science, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education |
| 8839 | Mr M. Egerton | Team inspector | English, geography, history, special educational needs |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school. The headteacher provides a very clear educational direction for both personal and academic development. Together with the good deputy headteacher, she promotes a family based education for pupils, with high levels of inclusion. Pupils develop a real love of learning, which is established very effectively in reception. Pupils achieve well. Teaching is good. Management is efficient. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well and by Year 6 standards are now well above average in English and mathematics; standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below the expected level overall.
- Pupils with special educational needs, pupils with English as an additional language and asylum seekers achieve well.
- The school has a very positive ethos and excellent relationships resulting in very good personal development, attitudes and behaviour; attendance is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching is good overall with very good teaching in Year 6.
- Leadership and management are good overall.
- The school provides a good quality curriculum with very good opportunities for learning outside lessons; the outdoor accommodation for reception is inadequate.
- Care and welfare are very good, links with parents and other schools are good.

There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Standards have risen in English and mathematics and key strengths have been sustained.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | all schools | | | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2004 |
| English | C | A | A | A* |
| Mathematics | D | B | E | B |
| Science | D | B | D | B |

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar prior attainment

Standards in 2004 in mathematics and science fell because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group and the lack of challenge to more able pupils. The varying numbers in each year group taking the tests each year has a negative impact on the consistency in standards over time because in some year groups each pupil carries such a high percentage of the total marks. This does not have the same impact on English because the school has set a high priority for this subject over the past two years, challenging more able pupils very effectively and supporting pupils with special educational needs very well. The school is working hard to raise standards in mathematics and this has had a positive impact this year. The overall improvement between Year 2 and Year 6 in the national tests

last year was well above average compared with all types of schools. Pupils achieve **well** through the school and very well in Year 6. The inspection judges standards in Year 6 as well above average in both English and mathematics. Standards in science are average and are lower than English and mathematics because the school has not placed such a high priority on this subject. Standards in ICT are below the expected level but are now improving due to the introduction of the computer suite.

The Year 2 national tests show standards as above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. The inspection confirms the standards in reading and writing but standards in mathematics are rising and are now above average. Standards in science are at the expected level in Year 2 and standards in graphics in ICT are above the expected level.

Standards in reception are on track to be well above the expected level in personal, social and emotional development, above the expected level in reading and at the expected level in all other aspects of the reception curriculum.

Personal development is **very good**. The school has extremely high expectations of pupils' conduct and they behave very well. Pupils are very interested in school activities and are very willing to take responsibility. The school council works very effectively. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Moral development is excellent.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**.

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall with very good features in each stage but some unsatisfactory teaching in the junior age range. The consistently very good quality teaching in Year 6 has a significant impact on pupils' progress. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well. The partnership between the staff in reception is very good quality. Assessment is good quality. Homework is very good.

The curriculum is good quality. The opportunities for learning outside lessons are so good that the school has won a national award for this provision. The organisation of the curriculum in single age groups in the mornings contributes very well to the good achievement in English and mathematics. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The use of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is very good but opportunities are missed to extend ICT development.

Care and welfare are very good. The school greatly values the views of pupils.

Partnership with parents and other schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. She has a very good understanding of the whole life of the school. She works very closely with the good quality deputy headteacher. The leadership and management of co-ordinators are good overall. Management is good overall. The governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and development issues for the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents appreciate the work of the school and are pleased that their children make good progress. Pupils thoroughly enjoy being at the school and expect to have to work hard.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in ICT;
- increase attendance rates;
- improve the provision for outdoor learning in reception.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **good** through the school and **very good** in Year 6. Children make a **good** start in reception, which is consolidated well in the infant classes and by Year 2 standards are **average** overall. Standards are **above average** in Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The single age group organisation in the mornings contributes very well to the good achievement in English and mathematics throughout the school.
- The consistently good provision in reception gives children a good start and they achieve well.
- Progress accelerates in Year 6 and leads to standards well above average in English and mathematics.
- The school's priority for supporting pupils with special educational needs, pupils with English as an additional language and asylum seekers results in these pupils achieving well.
- Standards are rising in ICT but are below the expected level overall in Year 6.

Commentary

1. Children enter the school with standards below the expected level. Overall they achieve well in reception because the teaching team provides stimulating activities for each child. There is a high emphasis on personal, social and emotional development. Children achieve very well in this aspect and standards are on track to be well above the expected level. Children concentrate very well on their tasks and they are very proud of their achievements. Staff place a high emphasis on reading development and standards are on track to be above the expected level. Children know their letter sounds well and enjoy listening to stories. In all other Areas of Learning¹ standards are at the expected level. Children talk confidently and form their letters correctly. In mathematical development they write out simple sums with support.

Key Stage 1

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 16.9 (16.7) | 15.8 (15.7) |
| writing | 15.6 (15.2) | 14.6 (14.6) |
| mathematics | 16.8 (16.6) | 16.3 (16.2) |

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

¹ There are six Areas of Learning that form the curriculum for children in reception.

- Standards in the national tests have risen over the past two years. This is due to single age group teaching in English and mathematics, together with a new teaching team in the infant classes that works very well together. Standards in the national tests in reading and writing have risen to above average compared with all schools and well above average in reading when compared with similar schools. The school has also introduced a very good range of group and individual target setting in English, which has helped to sustain the rising standards in this subject. The inspection judges achievement as good in this subject with standards well above average in reading. The reading partnership with parents works very well and pupils expect to read very regularly at home, which reinforces key skills very well. Pupils have a very good understanding of how groups of letters combine to make sounds and they read fluently. The inspection judges standards as above average in writing and speaking and listening. Pupils write in a range of different styles and their handwriting is well presented. Standards in the national tests in mathematics have also risen over the past two years and are now average. Compared with similar schools standards are above average. Standards are still rising and the inspection judges standards as above average. Pupils handle mental mathematics confidently, adding two-digit numbers accurately. They have a good knowledge of the full mathematics curriculum. Teacher assessment shows standards in science as average and the inspection confirms these standards. Pupils have the expected level of scientific knowledge across the different aspects of the science curriculum but are not as confident in investigational work.

Key Stage 2

| Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004 | | |
|--|----------------|------------------|
| Standards in: | School results | National results |
| English | 28.5 (29.2) | 26.9 (26.8) |
| mathematics | 25.7(28.3) | 27.0 (26.8) |
| science | 27.6 (29.4) | 28.6 (28.6) |

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Pupils showed a much greater level of improvement in the national tests in 2004 between Year 2 and Year 6 when compared with all schools and with similar schools. The 2004 national tests show standards were well above average in English, well below average in mathematics and below average in science. Compared with similar schools standards were very high in English and above average in mathematics and science. The trend over time is below average but the school is disadvantaged by considerable differences between year groups and small class sizes where overall standards are not statistically significant. Last year two fifths of the year group had special educational needs whereas in this year's cohort there are fewer of these pupils. This does not have a negative impact on the consistency of standards over time in English because of the very good support for pupils with special educational needs for this subject and the high level of challenge for more able pupils. The inspection judges achievement as good overall and very good in Year 6 due to the very good teaching in this year group. This has resulted in a rise in standards this year. The inspection confirms the standards in English as well above average,

including speaking and listening. Pupils hold subtle conversations with each other and adults and judge their audiences skilfully. Reading has a very high priority and pupils read fluently and discuss different authors' work with enthusiasm. Their writing is lively and well structured and pupils are proud of their clearly presented handwriting. Standards have risen significantly in mathematics this year. This is partly due to the long-term impact of the organisation of single age group teaching in mathematics, partly to the increased emphasis on mental mathematics and partly to the Year 6 teacher's focus on challenging more able pupils this year. The school has greatly increased the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5². Last year only 4 per cent reached this level, whereas this year 42 per cent of pupils are well on track to reach Level 5. Pupils handle mental mathematics with great confidence. They use different mathematical operations accurately and handle different types of measurements and graphs confidently. Science standards are at the expected level. Pupils have the expected level of knowledge of the science curriculum and a good understanding of healthy living but are not as confident in the investigational aspects of the subject. The level of challenge for more able pupils is not as high as in English and mathematics, resulting in lower standards overall.

4. The school places a high priority on including all pupils in their work. There are careful systems for supporting pupils with special educational needs and detailed individual education plans. These pupils achieve well overall and particularly well in English. Pupils with English as an additional language and asylum seekers are welcomed into the school. They settle quickly into lessons and gain confidence in their new learning. The sensitive support they receive from teachers ensures that their achievement is good.
5. The school has had a computer suite in operation for a term. The use of this suite is raising standards. In Year 2 standards are at the expected level apart from graphics, where standards are above due to stimulating teaching in this aspect. In Year 6 standards are below the expected level because these pupils have missed out in previous years from the regular practice that a suite allows. These pupils have covered a term of using data and spreadsheets and in this aspect standards are at the expected level.
6. Improvement is satisfactory since the previous inspection, with higher standards in English and mathematics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **very positive** attitudes to school. They are sensible and mature and their behaviour is **very good**. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is **very good** overall. Attendance is **unsatisfactory**. Punctuality is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes are so good that their personal development reaches a high level.

² Level 5 is the level that Year 9 pupils are expected to reach.

- Behaviour is very good with excellent features and pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Pupils are very willing to take on responsibility.
- Moral development is excellent, spiritual and social development is very good and cultural development is good.
- Attendance levels are not high enough but the school is trying to improve attendance and there are good procedures in place.

Commentary

7. One of the most striking features of the school is the way everyone works together. The whole-school commitment of caring for each other is very good and is a model of inclusiveness. Through the high priority set by the headteacher for personal development, the school devotedly caters for the needs of everyone. Pupils follow the very good role models seen among staff and never hesitate to support anyone in their class who may need help with their work. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy the opportunities it provides. In lessons, they are very interested, listen well and show a clear sense of purpose in all they do. This is one reason for the good standards pupils achieve in English and mathematics. Reception children develop very good levels of concentration and show a very positive attitude to all the activities provided.
8. Behaviour during lessons, lunchtimes and playtimes is very good. In many lessons behaviour is exemplary. This is because everyone in the school follows the same procedures. Pupils feel safe and welcome. They mix well and make friends easily. They respond very well to the many opportunities available outside lessons and say that problems are rare.
9. Older pupils are very keen to help with the smooth running of the school on a day-to-day basis. They check that all pupils behave sensibly inside the building. Through the school council's suggestion box, pupils across the school have very good opportunities to shape the rules and plan different aspects of their school. Councillors make key decisions such as the organisation and healthy content of the snacks available. Pupils develop a very good understanding of environmental issues and seriously consider recycling goods or think of ways to save energy.
10. Moral development is excellent due to the high emphasis set throughout the school. Pupils clearly know right from wrong and are delightfully polite and helpful. Pupils think that the school's rules and sanctions are fair and they work hard to achieve awards for outstanding behaviour. Spiritual development is very good. Assemblies offer pupils very good opportunities to pray and meditate together. Pupils are reflective and thoughtful and the sense of family is very evident. There is a very good range of opportunities for pupils to develop social skills both in lessons and in extra activities such as whole class productions. Pupils develop a good cultural understanding, particularly of their own locality.

11. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in behaviour.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data: | 7.3 | School data: | 0.0 |
| National data: | 5.1 | National data: | 0.4 |

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

| Categories used in the Annual School Census |
|---|
| White – British |
| White – any other White background |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian |
| Black or Black British – African |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background |

Exclusions in the last school year

| No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 116 | 6 | 0 |
| 1 | | |
| 1 | | |
| 3 | | |
| 3 | | |

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded. Numbers from reception are not included in this figure because these statistics are not collected by the government.

12. The school is concerned about its attendance levels, which have dropped in the last two years. Being a small school, individual pupils with poor attendance have a significant effect on the overall figures. The school has targeted particular pupils diligently in an attempt to improve their attendance and has clear procedures to encourage all pupils to attend regularly. However, some parents do not value education enough to ensure their children attend school every day. Holidays in term time are significant with over a sixth of absences due to holidays. The exclusions last year were all very short term and the school worked closely with parents to ensure that the pupils covered the work being carried out in school. There have been no exclusions this year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching, learning and assessment are **good**. The curriculum is **good** quality with **very good** quality support outside the school day. Care and welfare are **very good** and pupils' views are greatly valued. Links with parents and other schools are **good** and links with the community are **satisfactory**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall and **very good** in Year 6. Assessment is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff manage behaviour very well, which ensures that pupils concentrate well on their learning.
- Teachers give pupils great encouragement and pupils expect to work hard.
- The learning of pupils with special educational needs, pupils with English as an additional language and asylum seekers is good because teachers meet their needs well.
- There are excellent features in the teaching and learning in Year 6 and some unsatisfactory features in Year 5.
- The teamwork in reception is high quality and provides a very good model for children.
- Teachers do not plan consistently enough for the use of ICT across different lessons.
- Homework is very good quality.
- Assessment systems are very good in English and good in other subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 2 (6%) | 9 (26%) | 16 (47%) | 5 (15%) | 2 (6%) | 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.

13. The school sets a high priority on the promotion of good behaviour and all teachers reinforce this very effectively in their teaching. Lessons are orderly and pupils expect to listen carefully to each other and to staff. Movement between different parts of the school or between different parts of the lessons is carried out efficiently and ensures that pupils settle quickly to their tasks.
14. Teachers give individual pupils great encouragement to try their best. They celebrate successes very effectively and pupils develop a real pride in their achievement. Pupils value their teachers' and classroom assistants' approval and tackle new tasks with confidence. This applies to both the smaller single age group sessions in the mornings and the mixed-age classes in the afternoons. These different contexts make no difference to the very positive work ethic that is evident in lessons.
15. Staff understand the needs of the pupils with special educational needs very well. This is due to the very good communication systems across the school as well as the clearly written individual education plans for these pupils. Pupils with English as an additional language and asylum seekers enjoy their learning because staff check that they understand what to do. Teachers organise pairs carefully to give additional support to these pupils and this ensures good levels of collaboration across the class.
16. Features of the excellent teaching include a very fast pace, high quality questioning, based very carefully on each pupil's prior learning, and very high

expectations of every individual. Features of the unsatisfactory teaching include an inconsistent match of tasks to different pupils' needs and uninteresting sessions at the end of lessons.

17. The teacher and nursery nurse work very effectively together in reception. The very good communication between these staff ensures that the focus for learning is clear in each session and particularly good in the adult-led activities. This high quality partnership has a very positive impact on children's personal, social and emotional development.
18. Teachers do use the computers effectively in some lessons for a range of different types of activities. However, they do not plan this consistently enough across the school day. This leads to some inefficient use of these resources and missed opportunities to extend every pupil's skills in the use of ICT.
19. Teachers place a high value on homework and organise it very well. Pupils expect to carry this out to a good standard. The tasks set are well linked to the learning in lessons. There is a particularly good programme set up for reading homework and this is having a very positive impact on reading standards throughout the school.
20. The school has worked hard to extend assessment in English and there are very good systems in place. Pupils have a very good understanding of what they have to do to improve their work. The school sensibly plans to transfer these systems across to mathematics. The school uses a good range of tests to assess pupils' progress and teachers analyse the results effectively in order to improve future provision.
21. The school has sustained the good teaching and assessment from the previous inspection.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good** quality. Accommodation is **satisfactory** and the quality and quantity of resources to support learning are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The organisation of the curriculum in single age groups in the mornings has a very positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Personal, social and health education is very well planned and makes a very positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Activities outside lessons enrich pupils' lives and widen the scope of their learning.
- The development of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is good but opportunities are missed for ICT.
- The outdoor play area for the reception class is inadequate.

Commentary

22. The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, which supports achievement well. Pupils' needs are identified at an early stage and the school provides carefully focused support across the curriculum. A strong feature of the programme for special educational needs pupils is the way in which the school makes every effort to include them fully in the lessons provided for rest of the class. On very few occasions are they withdrawn from classroom lessons but instead they are fully included in everyday activities and supported within these tasks. By being included in this way they gain in confidence and self-esteem, feel equal members of the group and achieve as well as the other pupils. Targets in individual education plans are achievable and realistic and regular reviews are carried out to monitor progress. Parents are fully involved in this monitoring process and become partners in the education of their children, providing support at home whenever they can.
23. The school organises its classes very effectively each morning into single-year groups for literacy and numeracy. This allows staff to match the curriculum closely to the needs of the pupils, leading to better achievement. In these smaller groups pupils benefit from personal support. This enables all pupils to make good progress whether they are more able or have particular special needs because they are fully included and gain confidence and self-esteem.
24. Personal, social and health education plays an important and successful role in the work of the school and has a strong impact on developing very good attitudes to learning and excellent relationships. This curriculum ensures that individuals develop very good skills, such as decision-making. The school ensures that sex and relationships and drugs education is covered sensitively. By the time they have reached Year 6 they are polite, mature and it is a pleasure to engage in conversation with pupils who are so positive about their work in school.
25. The school enriches the curriculum very well with an exciting range of visits and visitors and provides the pupils with a very good breakfast club, lunchtime and after-school clubs. The high quality of this work has been validated through the QISS³ award. All members of staff are involved in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and every year the older pupils enjoy a residential visit to Kielder. Visits and visitors give pupils real experiences that bring learning to life and effectively enhance their cultural development. The breakfast and after-school clubs bring together pupils of all ages who play together, organise their own games and enjoy the fact that the school day and learning are effectively extended into their personal lives.
26. Staff ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to extend their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. This is having a positive impact on raising standards in English and mathematics. However, the school has not identified consistent opportunities for using ICT in other subjects on the computers in classrooms. Planning does not consider how skills in ICT can be

³ QISS stands for Quality in Study Support and is awarded by a national body.

developed across other subjects or how computers in classrooms can be used systematically through the day.

27. The reception class does not have direct access to a secure outdoor learning area with storage space for outdoor equipment. This is reducing the range of learning opportunities for these children.
28. Improvement is satisfactory overall since the previous inspection and the provision for learning outside lessons is better.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are **very well** cared for and receive a **good** level of support and guidance in their personal and academic development. The school takes the views of pupils **very seriously**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very well looked after in a loving and safe environment.
- The school supports pupils very well in their personal development.
- Apart from in English, pupils are not given enough specific guidance on how to improve their work.
- The school is very good at listening to and acting on pupils' views.

Commentary

29. The very good provision identified in the previous inspection has been sustained. The school is a very child-centred community. The pupils' care and welfare are paramount with all the staff. The high level of care for the individual reflects the strong Christian principles that permeate the school. Supervision is very good at all times and there is a good level of expertise in first aid. Child protection and health and safety procedures are well embedded. Parents are right to feel confident that their children are in a safe, loving and secure environment.
30. The school is very good at supporting pupils' personal development. Relationships are very good and pupils are well known to the adults in the school. The headteacher knows the pupils, their families and the local community very well. This ensures that any advice can be given on the basis of a very secure knowledge of each child's circumstances. Pupils are at ease when talking to the staff and report a high level of confidence in their teachers' abilities to sort out problems. The headteacher's comments in the pupils' reports, when necessary, give pertinent advice on what pupils need to do to improve their personal qualities. Formal guidance on academic development is patchy; pupils have clear targets for improvement in English but procedures in other subjects, whilst satisfactory, are less well developed.
31. Pupils are very much encouraged to be involved in the way the school develops. The school has a good appreciation of pupils' views through regular questionnaires. The school council is highly effective, meeting weekly with very little adult intervention. Most ideas and concerns emanate from a well-used

suggestions box. Current issues include improving opportunities for recycling within the school and better playground markings. Pupils think the school council is very effective.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **good** partnership with parents. Links with the community are **satisfactory** and are **good** with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have a good opinion of the school.
- The school keeps parents well informed on their children's progress but opportunities for communicating the content of the curriculum are being missed.
- Parents make a big contribution to ensuring that pupils are very good readers.
- Pupils benefit from close links with secondary schools.

Commentary

32. Parents think St Patrick's is a good school and approve of the way it is run. They praise particularly the standards achieved, the good teaching and the way their children mature whilst at the school. Parents think highly of the headteacher. Overall, the partnership between school and parents has improved since the previous inspection.
33. Parents' consultation meetings with teachers are well attended. Pupils' reports are easy to read with progress being clearly stated. Targets for improvement are listed and are often specific enough to allow parents to be involved in their children's learning. However, parents have limited access to what is going to be taught. Although broad curriculum plans are displayed on a parents' notice board within the school, they are too general to be useful. The exception is reception where a useful half termly newsletter has been introduced to explain what is being covered in lessons. The school has no procedure for sending plans home to parents. The Friends of St Patrick's Association works well in organising social events and in fund raising activities.
34. Pupils' homework is very well organised overall with arrangements for reading at home being particularly effective. Pupils throughout the school are expected to read regularly to a parent or other competent reader. Signatures in the pupils' reading books confirm the dedication that most parents give to this aspect of their children's learning. The result is impressive with pupils by Year 6 having very high skills in reading.
35. The school has close links with two local secondary schools. Older pupils benefit from these links by having particular lessons taught by specialists from these schools. Subjects include cookery, French, gymnastics and dance. These lessons make a valuable addition to breadth of the curriculum. The reception teaching team has good links with their feeder nursery school.
36. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The leadership of the headteacher is **very good** and her management is **good**. Leadership and management of the key staff are **good**. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear vision of the educational direction for the school and she manages systems well.
- Key staff take their responsibilities seriously.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school.
- The school considers financial decision-making carefully.

Commentary

37. The headteacher sets very clear priorities for the school. She emphasises personal development very strongly within a Christian context. This has a significant impact through the school and results in very positive attitudes to school life and a real level of confidence from pupils in interpersonal skills with both other pupils and with adults. She also sets a high priority on English and mathematics. This is resulting in rising standards in these key subjects. She sets a very good example in her assemblies, where there is a strong spiritual dimension, resulting in very good spiritual development. The headteacher manages the school well. She has a very good knowledge of each pupil and is a very effective special needs co-ordinator. She ensures that pupils are identified early and given well-focused support. She considers organisational strategies carefully, such as the single age groups in the mornings, which are contributing well to the rising standards. The headteacher makes good use of the small size of the school to ensure good communication. There are very good informal systems in operation, which complement the formal systems well.
38. The headteacher works closely with the good quality deputy headteacher. He sets a very good example to teachers in his high quality teaching and he has the respect of the staff. The strategy of two co-ordinators, one from the infants and one from the juniors, for each key subject is working well. This ensures a good level of understanding by co-ordinators of the provision running through the school. This is particularly good in English, where the key staff have introduced very good assessment systems to raise standards. Co-ordinators are enthusiastic and take their responsibilities seriously.
39. The governors bring a good range of expertise to their work in the school. They have a good understanding of the specific nature of the catchment area. They use this well in making key decisions. They support the headteacher's vision for the developments of the school. Recent changes in the position of chair and new appointments to the governing body mean that some governors are learning their new roles and responsibilities. The new governors share the more established governors' commitment to taking the school's work forward but have not all had the opportunity to take up their monitoring role in the school.

40. The headteacher considers budgetary decisions carefully. She looks at long-term strategies, such as the introduction of the computer suite, and manages the available funds to improve the school's provision. She works hard to ensure that key good quality staff are retained and this leads to a very stable whole school team that understands the pupils' needs well. There is a strong sense of loyalty between staff that leads to continuity of whole school systems and beliefs. The management of the budget ensures that the school provides good value for money.
41. The school has sustained its good leadership and management from the previous inspection.

Financial information

| Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005 | | | |
|---|---------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Income and expenditure (£) | | Balances (£) | |
| Total income | 398,572 | Balance from previous year | 19,000 ⁴ |
| Total expenditure | 418,251 | Balance carried forward to the next | -679 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,639 | | |

⁴ This surplus was earmarked for the setting up of the computer suite.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The quality of provision in the reception class for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

42. The good provision of the previous inspection in reception has been sustained. Children get off to a good start. Levels of attainment on entry are below the expected level. By the time they enter Year 1, the majority exceed the standards expected in personal, social and emotional development and reach the early learning goals in all other areas. Children achieve well. Teaching is consistently good with some very good features. Teamwork is very good and staff ensure that all children have equal access to the range of experiences on offer. Leadership is good, the co-ordinator manages the reception curriculum well and leads this age group with great enthusiasm. Planning for adult-led activity is very good and focuses well on individuals. Staff are aware of the need to plan an increased range of opportunities for children to learn for themselves through playing. The reception classroom is small in size and this restricts free play at times. At present children do not have access to an enclosed area outdoors and this reduces learning opportunities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' sensitive interaction with children ensures they make very good progress.
- Children show care and concern for each other because staff emphasise this very well.

Commentary

43. Children achieve very well and teaching is very good because staff take time to work and play alongside children throughout the day. The majority are on track to well exceed the expected levels by the end of reception. In this caring and positive environment children flourish and make huge gains in their attitudes, social and emotional development. Activities overall are interesting and children develop very good concentration skills, particularly in small group activities. They are very proud of their achievements and enthusiastically show adults their pictures and their writing. They are very well behaved because staff have high expectations and treat all children with care and respect. They sit quietly during whole class teaching sessions and listen carefully to the opinions of their friends. Staff interact closely with them, offering praise and encouragement. Adults carefully plan and teach children how to respond to feelings and in this way they learn to respect others. Many children have established friendships, sharing equipment and helping each other, even when not closely supervised by adults. For example, two children were tidying dough away and one child remarked, 'I am helping my friend!'. Children show high levels of self-esteem

and are confident and comfortable with adults. They learn about their own and different cultures in planned, practical ways.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a high priority on reading and children are very confident with books and enjoy reading.
- The systematic approach to teaching early writing skills has a strong impact on standards.
- Good assessment systems support learning well.

Commentary

44. Teaching is very good. Adults give a tremendous amount of attention to the recognition of letter sounds by using an inspiring scheme which children enjoy. Children are on track to reach the expected level in communication, language and writing and to exceed it in reading. Staff emphasise the importance of listening and children do this well. This has a significant impact on their learning in all areas. Staff give children many opportunities to talk about their learning in small groups and to the whole class and this helps improve their vocabulary. For example, they learn that *angry* and *cross* have similar meanings. They act out in role and play with puppets and many children already speak in clear sentences. They negotiate plans, especially when playing in sand and with the road layout. The very good, focused teaching has resulted in very good achievement in reading. Most children know and use letter sounds in their reading and writing. All children read fluently, choose to browse in the book area and obviously enjoy stories. They sound out unknown words and have a good bank of words they recognise from memory. Children achieve well in their writing. They form letters well and any errors are corrected in a positive and business-like way, so children are confident to have a go. More able children are encouraged and supported well to write short phrases and sentences and spell simple words accurately. Adults know children very well and use clear assessment systems to record progress in detail. They use the information well in planning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because staff have high expectations and support individuals well in group work.
- Staff do not plan enough opportunities for mathematical independent learning.

Commentary

45. Teaching is good and children achieve well. Staff place good emphasis on number skills and mental work so children achieve well. The majority are on track to reach the expected level by the end of reception. Staff are very focused on what they want each child to learn when they are working with individuals

and small groups. They make good use of practical resources to improve children's understanding. However, staff do not plan enough activities to enhance mathematics through independent activities. The room in which children work is small and this sometimes restricts opportunities. Children learn to add correctly with adult support. Most manage to record simple sums, writing numbers and symbols accurately. They recognise numbers to 20. Children's workbooks show they have a good understanding of size, shape and pattern. Some children spontaneously use pattern when colouring objects. They recognise two-dimensional shapes and use solid shapes in their play.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have regular access to technology equipment.
- The area in which children work is small and this restricts opportunities to investigate and explore through play.

Commentary

46. Teaching is good overall and children achieve steadily. The majority are on track to reach the expected level by the end of reception. Children use technology equipment confidently. They use the listening station and computers well and without immediate adult support. Staff plan a good range of activities throughout the year to ensure children become aware of living things and the changes in seasons. Children play confidently with toys and learn how to make them move. They enjoy discussing topics, such as their families, with staff and talk about their journey to school. Children enjoy constructing models and playing with the road layout. They cut and join materials and use the tape dispenser with confidence. The area indoors is small and this restricts investigative opportunities with sand and water. Adults take children into the playground and are very vigilant. However, the lack of a secure area outdoors means activities and independent learning opportunities are restricted. Staff ensure children learn about the Christian faith and they learn about religious festivals from different faiths as well as cultural events as they occur throughout the year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because they have regular access to the school hall for physical activities.
- There are daily activities provided to promote fine finger skills.
- Opportunities to practise large scale physical activities outdoors are limited.

Commentary

47. Teaching is good and children achieve well. The majority are on track to reach the expected levels by the end of reception. Staff plan regular activities in the school hall that help children move with confidence and control and become aware of their space and the space of others. Here they listen to music and dance in response. Staff use outdoor apparatus well to help children develop skills such as climbing up steps or crawling through tunnels. However, children's attainment and achievement in their large movement are hampered by the lack of a designated area where they could play freely. The area outdoors is not fenced so regular use is limited. Children have chances to move vigorously outside when they play with older children at playtime. Children achieve well in using their hands because staff offer regular opportunities for them to develop these skills well across a wide range of different tools. All children use the computer mouse with increasing accuracy. Children develop an awareness of a healthy lifestyle and have healthy snacks. They know they have to wash hands after messy play.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff place strong emphasis on all aspects of art.
- The new music scheme is contributing well to raising standards.

Commentary

48. Children achieve well and are on track to reach the expected level by the end of reception because teaching is good. Adults give good attention to children when they paint. They encourage them to observe carefully and to use colour creatively and children's work shows increasing detail. Adults show how much they value children's efforts by displaying it well in the art gallery. Role-play⁵ is planned even though the area allocated to it is small. Children play happily together in the *baby clinic* and pretend to be doctors, nurses and parents. Dressing-up clothes are readily available. Children play spontaneously and creatively with puppets. In dance lessons staff actively encourage children to use their imagination and provide good models to help generate ideas. Staff teach music in a systematic way and this is having a good impact on learning. Children learn to clap and stamp in unison and maintain a steady beat. They enjoy the sessions and have opportunities to practise new skills with instruments outdoors. The reception classroom is small and this sometimes restricts freedom of expression through lack of space.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

⁵ Role play is carried out in an area designated for playing in different contexts, such as a garage or a café.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising in both the infant and the junior classes.
- Teachers provide a wide range of opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills and pupils achieve consistently well.
- Staff develop reading skills consistently well throughout the school.
- Work is consistently well presented.
- Target setting has a positive impact on pupils' progress, but opportunities are missed to use ICT in lessons.
- The co-ordinators are enthusiastic and work very well together.

Commentary

49. In the 2004 national tests in Year 2 standards were above average in both reading and writing and well above average in reading compared with similar schools. The inspection confirms these standards and judges speaking and listening as above the expected level. Standards have risen in the Year 6 national tests and have been well above average for the past two years. The inspection confirms these standards and judges standards in all aspects of speaking and listening, reading and writing as well above the expected level. Pupils with special educational needs performed particularly well and all attained the expected level in the national tests in 2004. This is due to the very good provision for these pupils in English. Teachers challenge more able pupils very well and they achieve their potential. Achievement in English is consistently good throughout the school and very good in Year 6.
50. There is a strong priority in the school for personal development and this emphasis supports the development of speaking and listening skills very effectively. This supports the learning of pupils with English as an additional language and asylum seekers well and ensures that they achieve well. All pupils expect to speak in formal situations, such as assemblies or whole class productions, and these give them very good levels of confidence. By Year 6 pupils carry out sophisticated conversations. When pupils are talking their friends listen carefully and appreciatively and the introduction of talking partners has helped with the development of good listening skills throughout the school.
51. Throughout the school the teaching of reading is a real strength. From an early age the pupils are taught their letter sounds and how to use their knowledge of these to break down new words. The emphasis on building up these skills means that by the end of Year 2 the majority of pupils are fluent readers and even the less able pupils are reading at a good level. Attitudes to reading are excellent and by Year 6 the pupils talk with great enthusiasm about books they have read and about their favourite authors. They are very familiar with the library and how they can access any information they need and many of them use the local library on a regular basis. The school has been particularly successful in enlisting the support of parents in developing reading at home and all the pupils are heard to read on a regular basis.
52. Writing skills are similarly well developed. In Year 2 pupils have a good handwriting style and write confidently across a range of different subjects. By

Year 6 pupils write at length in a wide range of styles and for different audiences. They use punctuation well and structure pieces of writing into good sentences. Spelling is consistently accurate and the writing is lively, imaginative and a pleasure to read. Teachers make clear links between speaking, listening, reading and writing. In Year 6 pupils are never short of good ideas and this stems largely from the wealth of opportunity they are given to develop their speaking skills. While discussing why the author Jacqueline Wilson is so popular the Year 6 pupils responded with very mature and well thought out statements. They had the confidence to challenge the teacher when he referred to one piece of work as a diary and a pupil disputed this as it contained no dates or reference to days.

53. Pupils' work in all aspects of English is very well presented. Handwriting is well formed and pupils take pains to ensure that they do their best at all times. This applies not only to presentation in their English books but across other curriculum areas. High expectations are set by the teachers and these can be seen in the marking of pupils' work where teachers make comments that help the pupils to improve their work.
54. Teaching is good overall, with very good features in Year 6. Target setting has had a strong influence on the maintenance of high standards in English. Assessment information and information from national tests is used very well to determine the needs of the pupils and to set targets. These targets are set at three levels and can be targets for a class, for a group of pupils or for an individual. The pupils know what their targets are and regular reference is made to them and what the pupils need to do to achieve their next target. These targets have made a strong contribution to raising the number of pupils able to achieve the higher levels in tests and to enabling all pupils in 2004 to achieve Level 4 in English, a considerable achievement.
55. Although there is some use of ICT teachers do not plan consistently through the school to develop word processing skills across a range of different subjects.
56. The leadership and management strategy to have two co-ordinators across the different age groups works very well and is impacting well on the consistently good achievement. This is having a very positive impact on the very good provision in this subject. They both have a very clear understanding of how the subject is being delivered through the school and what they need to do to maintain high standards. They are totally committed to the continual raising of standards and have the vision and energy to drive the subject forward. Resources have been acquired to enable all aspects of the subject to be taught well and these are all of good quality. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is good. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to read and write in other subjects, particularly history, geography and religious education. For example, in history the pupils'

work on Victorians contains some excellent examples of extended writing as they describe aspects of Victorian Sunderland. In geography there are very good examples of both descriptive and reported writing, whilst in science pupils write out their planning for an investigation and then write up the results and draw conclusions.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising and pupils achieve well overall and very well in Year 6.
- Standards of mental mathematics are higher than other aspects of this subject.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards mathematics.
- Teaching is excellent in Year 6 but there are some unsatisfactory features in Year 5.
- The two co-ordinators work well together.
- There are good opportunities for developing numeracy across the curriculum.

Commentary

58. The school is working hard to raise standards in mathematics to match the standards in English. The strategies that they are putting in place are now having an impact. Those strategies include:-
- teaching single age groups, which reduces class sizes and ensures a clear focus on their curriculum;
 - improving the mental mathematics sessions;
 - challenging more able pupils, particularly in Year 6;
 - providing more focused support for pupils with special educational needs;
 - very good homework systems;
 - analysing the end of year tests throughout the school and improving the teaching the following year.
59. Standards have risen in the national tests in Year 2 over the past two years and are now average compared with all schools and above average compared with similar schools. This is due to the strategies identified above, together with the good teamwork between the current Years 1 and 2 teachers. The inspection judges standards as above average this year. This continues the upward trend in standards. In Year 1 pupils handle numbers to 50 confidently and explain how they get their answers. They enjoy handling simple graphs and making simple mathematical questions from them. Pupils build well on this good foundation in Year 2 and have a good understanding of number, such as hundreds, tens and units. They are developing confidence across the mathematical curriculum and are beginning to measure accurately. The national tests in Year 6 are erratic over time. This is partly due to the considerable differences in the size of classes each year, which make overall standards not statistically significant, partly to inconsistent challenge for more able pupils and partly to a higher emphasis on English than mathematics for the past two years. Standards were well below average last year and above the

year before. In the 2004 tests more able pupils did not do as well in mathematics as they did in English. The Year 6 teacher has worked very hard to remedy this difference and this year the proportion of pupils working at the higher Level 5 is now the same in both subjects. This is a considerable achievement, with overall standards now well above average. Over two fifths of pupils are working at this level, the highest proportion that the school has ever achieved. Pupils work confidently across the mathematical curriculum. By Year 6 pupils use mathematical operations accurately, handle measurement confidently, particularly work with angles, and interpret a variety of different graphs and charts. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because staff consider their needs carefully and ensure that they have individual support when carrying out tasks. The school is extending the provision for these pupils to match the very good support they receive in English.

60. The school has been working hard to improve the provision for mental mathematics. This has had a positive impact on achievement and standards, particularly in the current Year 6 class. In both infant classes pupils respond accurately and speedily to mathematical questions in whole class sessions. By Year 2 they add units to two-digit numbers in their heads with ease. Teachers have a good understanding of each pupil's needs and ensure that their questions match those needs well. Pupils acquire great confidence in their tables in Year 3 through the regular quick fire questions that begin each lesson. By Year 6 the teacher's very high expectations produces a great level of confidence from pupils in mental mathematics. Pupils tackle different questions at speed, such as identifying the highest and lowest decimals to two places or adding them together accurately.
61. Staff are enthusiastic about mathematics and this results in very positive attitudes from pupils. Pupils tackle new work with enthusiasm and try their best. They settle to group tasks quickly and produce carefully written work. These attitudes have a very positive impact on achievement because pupils tackle mathematics with confidence and cover a good volume of work, reinforcing key skills well. Pupils with English as an additional language and asylum seekers achieve well because they are fully included in the work and catch the enthusiasm generated from the rest of the class.
62. Teaching is good overall. All teachers manage behaviour very well, which ensures that there are good levels of concentration during lessons. There are very good quality homework systems in place. From Year 1 pupils take this work seriously and expect to complete the tasks. This extends the learning from the lessons well. Teachers support pupils with special educational needs very well and their achievement is good. This is particularly good when teachers use computers to support these pupils, with programs that interest them and match their needs well. Whole class sessions at the end of lessons are inconsistent. Some teachers effectively recap on key learning that has taken place and celebrate success, but others miss opportunities to use this time to maximum effect. Features of the excellent teaching in Year 6 are a very fast pace, high expectations, very carefully sequenced tasks that build on the previous learning and a very good understanding of each pupil's learning needs. This teaching has a significant impact on raising standards. A key

feature of the unsatisfactory teaching is an inconsistent match of the group tasks to the different pupils' needs, which reduces their rate of progress in some lessons.

63. Leadership and management are good. The two co-ordinators from the infant and junior age groups work well together. This provides them with a good understanding of the work through the school. Co-ordinators have a clear view of taking the school forward, such as by transferring the very effective individual target setting in English across to mathematics. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. Teachers work hard to develop numeracy across the curriculum. In science they include tables, charts and graphs to report findings. This effectively develops pupils' understanding of the application of mathematics to practical situations. There are good opportunities for the development of accurate measurement in planning projects in design and technology. The use of spreadsheets in junior classes transfers pupils' knowledge of the interpretations of mathematical data and simple graphs and bar charts well.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a good understanding of living processes and healthy living but are not as confident in investigative science.
- Pupils enjoy science and have a positive attitude to the subject.
- More able pupils do not make consistently good progress through the school.
- Teachers cover the curriculum systematically but miss opportunities to extend investigative science.
- The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge but has not had enough opportunities to monitor teaching.

Commentary

65. Teacher assessment of Year 2 pupils in 2004 shows standards as average. The inspection confirms this standard and judges achievement as satisfactory. This subject is taught in mixed age classes. The provision for the Year 1 pupils is good. However, there is not always enough challenge for the Year 2 pupils and the tasks do not allow them to carry out independent investigations. By Year 2 pupils have the expected level of knowledge across the science curriculum and a good understanding of healthy living. They are not as confident in trying out their own ideas in experiments. The results of national tests in Year 6 are very erratic. Over the past four years results have swung from above average to below average each year. This is partly due to the differences in sizes of the class each year, where the small numbers in some year groups makes the overall standards not statistically significant. It is also due to the higher priority on English and mathematics throughout the school

and also partly to the level of challenge for more able pupils not being consistently high enough. The inspection judges achievement as satisfactory and standards are average in Year 6. Pupils understand the full science curriculum. They transfer their knowledge about healthy eating very effectively into practice. For example, they have changed the school tuck shop from confectionary to fruit. Pupils enjoy carrying out investigations but there is not a consistent challenge to more able pupils as they move through the school, which reduces the number that achieve the higher Level 5 in the national tests. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because teachers offer a good range of practical tasks that support their learning well.

66. Pupils enjoy science lessons and set about their work enthusiastically. Behaviour in lessons is very good and pupils are confident to talk about and explain the processes they use during their investigations. Relationships at all levels are very good. Pupils show a clear sense of purpose as they work in pairs or small groups where they share the workload so that everyone has a part to play in setting up, carrying out and recording the experiments. This supports pupils with English as an additional language and asylum seekers well because they gain confidence in their understanding. These pupils achieve well. The consistent approach to the presentation of work results in pupils being very proud of the way they record their findings and the way they draw supportive illustrations and diagrams.
67. The level of challenge for more able pupils is not consistent through the school. In some lessons teachers do not provide different tasks that extend these pupils' thinking. This reduces the proportion of pupils reaching higher standards in this subject. The very good teaching in Year 6 partly compensates for this weakness but overall standards are adversely affected by the lack of challenge earlier in the school.
68. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with very good features in Year 6. Overall teachers' planning supports learning and ensures that lessons are interesting and enjoyable. However, in some classes the outcomes of investigations are predictable and teachers do not challenge more able pupils well enough. Staff work well in making sure that pupils understand and use scientific vocabulary. For example, after listening to the teacher describe materials as *transparent* and *opaque*, pupils in Year 3 were well able to answer questions in a scientific way. Although teachers explain investigations well and encourage pupils to find solutions for themselves, they do not make sure that the investigations are kept open for deeper scientific discovery. Teachers cover the way to conduct investigations well, but miss opportunities to carry out this work in other aspects of the science curriculum. Teachers use pupils' literacy and numeracy skills well in science and encourage them to take the time to record their scientific experiments and investigations accurately and systematically. They talk through each step of an investigation and provide examples of different ways of setting down their findings.
69. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and provides a very good role model in his own teaching quality. He has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of this

subject and is working to raise standards through strategies such as improving assessment systems and analysis. He implements changes well, such as amending planning systems to match the needs of mixed-age classes. However, he has not had enough opportunities to monitor teaching due to time constraints and the high priority on English and mathematics through the school. This is having an adverse impact on standards because teachers are not benefiting from his expertise in improving their teaching methods. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The introduction of the computer suite this year has increased pupils' rate of progress.
- Infant pupils work confidently on computers.
- Year 6 pupils have not benefited from the use of the computer suite over time and standards are below the expected level.
- Teachers are working hard to extend their ICT teaching skills.
- The school does not link its use of classroom computers effectively enough with that of the computer suite.
- Teachers do not always ensure that the content of ICT lessons links across to other subjects.

Commentary

70. The school is in the early stages of extending its ICT provision through the use of the computer suite that opened in January. Staff have been successful in setting up systems to ensure that pupils settle quickly into lessons. Despite the small size of the suite, teachers manage the pupils very well. This reinforces pupils' social development very effectively and they co-operate very well with each other in sharing the hardware.
71. Pupils in the infant classes build systematically on the skills they have developed in reception. By Year 2 they all handle computers confidently, opening files, saving their work and printing it out with assurance. Achievement is good in lessons because teachers challenge all pupils and expect them all to work hard to carry out the tasks. Standards in graphics are above the expected level due to the imaginative teaching in this aspect. Pupils thoroughly enjoy producing individual responses to the tasks and use colour and graphics techniques with confidence.
72. Achievement of junior pupils this term is good. They work at a good rate in the computer suite and tackle tasks enthusiastically. Year 5 pupils use word processing confidently, including paragraphs and introducing graphics into their stories. They draft their work directly onto the screen and modify it as they go. Year 3 pupils also handle word processing confidently and run through different menus at a good rate. Standards in Year 6 are at the expected level in the aspect of spreadsheets covered this year because the teacher has covered this aspect systematically and pupils have developed their skills regularly each week in the suite. However, in other aspects of the ICT curriculum standards are below the expected level by Year 6 because pupils have not had enough time to develop their skills across the full curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school. Teachers organise them carefully in the computer suite to work in pairs where their partner supports them in carrying out the tasks.

73. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in the computer suite. Teachers are enthusiastic about the new facilities and are not afraid to try out new techniques, such as using the interactive whiteboard, to demonstrate new skills. Explanations at the beginning of lessons are clear and provide a good example of the new learning. Teachers use technical terms well. Management of behaviour is very good and lessons are calm and well organised. Teachers do not organise the use of the computers in classrooms efficiently enough. This results in missed opportunities for pupils to develop their skills outside their time in the computer suite. Teachers support pupils with English as an additional language and asylum seekers well. Staff give them extra encouragement and this extends these pupils' confidence well.
74. The school is running a new programme of work to make the best use of the new facilities. It is evaluating the effectiveness of this scheme as the work progresses. However, staff have not considered the way that learning on the classrooms' computers can complement the learning in the suite. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The partnership of the infant and junior teachers ensures good communication, but co-ordinators are in the early stages of supporting staff. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. The range of facilities has improved considerably but staff do not have a complete understanding of the impact of whole class ICT teaching over the full year. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

75. This is unsatisfactory because it is inconsistent. In some lessons teachers make good links across to other subjects being taught during the week. For example, in Year 5 pupils used their plans for a story written the previous day to begin their first drafts on computers in the ICT lesson. However, in other lessons opportunities are missed to plan the content of the tasks from learning in other lessons. Teachers use computer programs well in their classrooms to support pupils with special educational needs.

HUMANITIES

76. Only one lesson was seen in **geography**. It is not, therefore, possible to make detailed judgements about provision, standards or teaching and learning. However, examination of the work produced by pupils and discussion with staff provided additional valuable information.
77. Teachers' planning shows that the curriculum is covered systematically. Staff use the local environment well. Infant pupils enjoy studying local housing and methods of travelling. As they get older pupils develop geographical skills, such as carrying out a noise survey and a litter survey around the school. This then leads to discussion and debate about how the local environment can be improved. Studies of a village in India provide the pupils with opportunities to identify similarities and differences between the way of life in Ryhope and in the village. By the time the pupils are in Year 6 they are able to carry out extensive studies of rivers and lakes in different parts of the world using statistics and producing high quality pieces of descriptive and reported writing.

History

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop historical knowledge well through practical experiences.
- The school uses local resources well to develop historical understanding.
- Teaching has good features in Years 6 and 3 but unsatisfactory features in Year 5.

Commentary

78. Achievement overall is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy handling practical resources and develop the expected level of understanding of the past. Infant pupils know that toys were different in the past because they compare their own toys with those from earlier times. Infant teachers use stories well, such as about Guy Fawkes, to extend pupils' understanding. In junior classes pupils gain skills effectively by finding historical evidence from books, portraits and pictures, objects, letters, museums, clothes and the Internet. They understand time lines and can talk with the expected level of knowledge about the topic they are studying. Important historical events in other cultures are studied and in Years 3 and 4 pupils learn about Ancient Greeks and the origins of the Olympic Games. Good links are made between history and geography in tasks such as using maps of the world to track the voyages of Elizabethan explorers and identify the lands they visited.
79. Teachers use visits to local places such as the museum effectively to deepen pupils' understanding. They choose topics carefully to ensure that they are relevant to the pupils, such as the coal mining in the area, with the result that pupils develop a good understanding of their own culture..
80. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The good features in Year 6 include the careful match between the tasks and the pupils different needs. The good teaching in Year 3 includes the use of interesting historical objects and the links to observational art. Unsatisfactory features in Year 5 include a lack of challenge, particularly to the more able pupils, and a slow pace. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

81. It was not possible to make an overall judgement about **art and design**. Good links are made with other subjects and pupils in infant classes draw detailed sketches of buildings, which support their work in geography. They look at pattern in great detail and create beautiful tiles, which express their ideas well. Teachers make sure pupils have plenty of chances to sharpen their observation skills. In Years 3 and 4 they draw detailed sketches of historical artefacts prior to their museum visit and in Year 5 they draw a range of containers. In Year 6 pupils look carefully at the work of artists such as Picasso and Van Gogh and learn to paint portraits and landscapes in a similar style. They work in three dimensions and make eye-catching head-pieces using a range of fabrics and materials.
82. It was not possible to make an overall judgement about **design and technology**. Teachers plan lessons using national guidelines and the activities

for pupils have been devised to ensure that skills are taught in a systematic way. From work displayed pupils are working within the expected level by the age of eleven. In the excellent lesson seen in Year 6 pupils were well challenged to consider the way pneumatics are used to move objects. Pupils engage in well-focused discussions where they analyse their work and evaluate the outcomes. They are well guided to use mathematical skills when drawing their ideas. Pupils throughout the school enjoy the subject and have opportunities to develop their ideas through designing and making.

83. **Music** was sampled by talking to pupils and staff. Pupils enjoy singing in assemblies. The school has recently purchased a commercial scheme to assist the non-specialist. Teachers speak well of it and say that it supports them well because it links well to national curriculum guidelines. Some pupils benefit from instrumental lessons at after-school clubs given by trained musicians on the keyboard. Other pupils learn to play the guitar during school time. Pupils have some opportunities for musical enrichment through the musical groups invited to perform for them at school. The recent group who came to play Greek music, using traditional instruments, was very popular with pupils. The *Aurora Ensemble* also plays for pupils and gives them opportunities to identify the sound of the instruments they use.
84. **Physical education** is enjoyed by all pupils. In the very good lesson seen in Year 6 pupils were taught how to improve the skills they need to play team games. The teacher used very good methods through a variety of short games to help pupils improve the speed and accuracy in which they change direction and maintain their balance. Pupils in Year 3 have weekly swimming lessons and the majority manage to swim 25 metres, although several swim much greater distances with confidence. The co-ordinator takes full advantage of every opportunity to support staff. She has introduced a new scheme of work to support the non-specialist and has organised in-service training and specialist support for staff in aspects of the subject, including gymnastics.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

85. It was not possible to make an overall judgement about the provision in this subject as no lessons were seen. The school places a high emphasis on personal and social development. This begins in the reception class where the staff are very skilled in this area of learning. Teachers build very successfully on this very good start and pupils develop into confident and articulate members of the school community. The school council works very well. The headteacher gives the council a high level of decision making in real situations, such as whether to put recycling bins in the playground for the community. Councillors are very proud of their role and expect their voices to be heard at the meetings. The rest of the school feeds issues into the council well because there is plenty of notice about meetings posted around the school. Health education is covered well in science and pupils transfer their learning well into practical contexts, such as running a healthy tuck shop.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| Inspection judgement | Grade |
|--|----------|
| The overall effectiveness of the school | 3 |
| How inclusive the school is | 2 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 4 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 3 |
| | |
| Overall standards achieved | 3 |
| Pupils' achievement | 3 |
| | |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos) | 2 |
| Attendance | 5 |
| 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 | 3 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs | 3 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 2 |
| Accommodation and resources | 4 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 2 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 3 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 3 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 4 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 3 |
| | |
| The leadership and management of the school | 3 |
| The governance of the school | 4 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 2 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 3 |
| The effectiveness of management | 3 |
| | |
| <i>Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).</i> | |