

# INSPECTION REPORT

**St Lawrence's CE VA Primary School**

Heslington Road, York

LEA area: York

Unique reference number: 121607

Head teacher : Mr D Thewlis

Reporting inspector: Mr A Smith  
18037

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> March 2001

Inspection number: 188210

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Heslington Road York
Postcode:	YO10 5BW
Telephone number:	01904 625131
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Jackson
Date of previous inspection:	June 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

	Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18037	Mr A Smith	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it?
			Science	The schools results and achievements.
			Information and communication technology	How well are the pupils taught?
			Art and design	How well is the school led and managed?
			Physical education	What should the school do to improve further?
			The foundation stage	
			Equal opportunities	
9511	Mrs A Longfield	Lay inspector		Pupil's attitudes, values and personal development.
				How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well is the school led and managed?
19041	Mr R Linstead	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Design and technology	
			Geography	
			History	
			Music	
18463	Mr S Bywater	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
			SEN Initiative	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Lawrence's CE VA is an average sized primary school situated close to the centre of the City of York. The backgrounds of the pupils are varied and cover a wide social spectrum, however, a significant majority of pupils come from less advantaged backgrounds. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, 35 per cent, is above the national average. Most pupils start in the nursery and move on to the reception class. At the time of the inspection there were 182 pupils taught in seven classes in the main school. A further 47 children were attending the nursery either mornings or afternoons. There are 53 pupils on the school's special needs register. This is over 25 per cent of the school's pupils and is broadly average when compared to all schools. There are four pupils with statements of special educational need. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need is broadly average. At the time of the inspection, 20 traveller pupils were on the school's roll but this number varies at different times of the year. The school also educates a very small number of refugee children. Twenty five pupils are from ethnic minority groups and the majority of these pupils speak English as an additional language or are at an early stage of language acquisition. The most common languages spoken are Spanish, Korean, Russian and Malay. The level of attainment of children when they enter the school represents the full ability range but is below that normally found for children of this age. The inspection of this school included a detailed inspection of its provision for pupils with special educational needs.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very effective school and is committed to improving standards in all it does. This is because it is very well managed and the head teacher provides very effective leadership. The quality of teaching is good and this enables the pupils to make good progress. The pupils enter school with attainment that is below what is normally expected. By the age of 11, they are attaining above average standards in music and average standards in English, mathematics and science. In comparison to pupils in similar schools, pupils do well. The school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils make good progress due to very effective teaching.
- Pupils achieve high standards in music.
- The school has very good partnerships with parents and the community; parents feel welcomed and supported by the school.
- The head teacher is a very good leader. He gives excellent direction to the work of the school and is supported very well by a hard working deputy head teacher, staff and governors.
- Pupils respond very well to the very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school's management of behaviour is very effective and most pupils have good attitudes to their learning and behave well.
- It provides a very good range of extra curricular activities, including sport, music and drama.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in English in the infants.
- The use of information and communication technology to support work in other subjects.
- Attendance.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection in June 1996. The quality of the curriculum has improved and teachers follow good national guidance for most subjects. The school has also successfully introduced the new national methods of teaching both English and mathematics. It gives all pupils a good range of interesting learning activities both in and out of school. Standards have risen in English, mathematics and science and are now typical for pupils' ages at the end of the juniors. Standards have also risen in art and design, design and technology and information and communication technology. The school has developed good procedures to allow subject leaders to monitor teaching and learning in their subjects. Good links have been established between the professional development needs of teachers and the priorities identified in the school development plan. The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers make good use of them to shape the next stages of pupils' learning. The school has worked hard to maintain the high standards of care and good pupil behaviour. It has the capacity and commitment to maintain this level of improvement.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				<i>Key</i>
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	C	E	C	A	top 5% of schools A*
Mathematics	E	C	A	A*	Well above average A
Science	C	D	B	A	above average B
					Average C
					Below average D
					Well below average E

In the 2000 national tests for 11 year olds, pupils' standards were well above the national average in mathematics, above the average in science and close to the average in English. When compared with similar schools standards were very high in all three subjects and in mathematics were in the highest 5 per cent nationally.

The full range of inspection findings shows that at the age of seven, standards in speaking and listening and writing, including those in handwriting and spelling are below national expectations. Standards in reading are just below the national expectation for pupils of this age. Pupils attain standards in mathematics and science that match those found nationally for their age. Standards in English, mathematics and science are in line with national expectations for pupils aged 11. In information and communication technology, pupils reach the nationally expected level by the age of seven and 11. In art and design, design and technology, geography, history and physical education standards are at the levels expected at the end of the infants and juniors. In music, pupils achieve high standards throughout the school. There are many examples of good work in most subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good: Pupils are eager to learn and try hard to do their best. They respond enthusiastically in lessons and concentrate well. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are proud of their achievements.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good: The pupils move around the school in an orderly manner. They show appropriate respect for adults and a good level of self discipline when in school and in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Good: The pupils' personal development is good. Relationships between pupils and adults are good and this helps to create a very effective learning environment. The school council provides the pupils with the opportunity to discuss issues relating to the life of the school.
Attendance	Attendance is unsatisfactory. In spite of the best efforts of the school it is below that found nationally in similar schools. The number of traveller children in the school is a factor in these figures.

The school has very good strategies to manage pupils' behaviour and these are very effective in developing their self-control. The pupils know that any incidences of bullying will be quickly dealt with. The majority of pupils are punctual and lessons start promptly, as a result little time is wasted at the start of lessons.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Teaching is good overall and no unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Of the 45 lessons seen, 22 per cent were satisfactory, 44 per cent were good, 29 per cent were very good and 5 per cent were excellent. The quality of teaching for the foundation stage is good. The staff work together very well as a team and show very good understanding of the foundation stage curriculum and how young children learn through practical activities.

In the infants and juniors teaching is good and often very good with some excellent lessons in Years 5 and 6. The big improvement in teaching quality since the last inspection has raised standards a lot. Teachers' have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, particularly in English, mathematics and music. They use this knowledge effectively to promote high standards. Teachers ensure that pupils know what they are expected to learn in lessons and as a result pupils are clearly focused and concentrate well. Impressive mental arithmetic sessions are increasing pupils' speed and their understanding of strategies, which are then effectively applied to solve problems. Review sessions at the end of literacy and numeracy lessons are consistently used well to consolidate learning and provide a firm platform on which to develop understanding. Teachers provide insufficient opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology across the curriculum.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school gives all pupils a good range of interesting learning activities both in and out of school. Extra-curricular provision is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school ensures that these pupils receive their full entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum and this has a positive effect on learning. Traveller pupils are supported well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well from nursery onwards. Pupils are quickly taught the routines of school and how to follow instructions.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Staff provide very good role models. Pupils are taught right from wrong, the promotion of citizenship and the valuing of others' strengths.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are very good procedures in place for child protection and promoting pupils' well being, health and safety. There is a good standard of care from all staff with strength in their promotion of good behaviour.

The school has very good relationships with parents. Most parents have a very positive view of the school and many provide valuable help in class. The very active Parents And Friends Association works extremely hard to raise funds and contributes to additional resources. The quality of information that parents receive about the school and its curriculum is good. Parents give good support for their children at home by listening to them read and supervising the homework set for them.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The school is very well led and managed by the head teacher, with the good support of the deputy head teacher, staff and governors. All staff share a commitment to improving pupils' standards of work and behaviour. Subject leaders carry out their roles very effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body are very supportive and very involved in the life of the school. Governors have specific curriculum support responsibilities, for example, in literacy, numeracy and special educational needs.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring and evaluation of performance is good. There is a rigorous analysis of standards, frequent checking of the progress towards targets in the school development plan and regular observations of teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Good. There is a clear link between development planning and finance. Best value principles are clearly understood and are at the heart of the financial planning process. The school provides good value for money.

Staffing is very good. Non-teaching staff make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The school has very good accommodation. High standards of decoration, maintenance, furnishing and cleanliness further refine the atmosphere for learning. The quality of learning resources is good and has set the scene for the improvement in standards since the last inspection.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children enjoy coming to school.</li><li>• The progress their children make.</li><li>• The behaviour of children in and out of school.</li><li>• The standard of teaching in the school.</li><li>• The school expects children to work hard.</li><li>• The school works closely with parents.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li><li>• The school is approachable.</li></ul>	

Parents overwhelmingly support the school and are very appreciative of what it achieves for their children. The findings of the inspection fully support the positive comments they made.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1 The level of attainment of children when they enter the school represents the full ability range but is below that normally found for children of this age. Many children begin nursery with poorly developed skills in speaking and listening, mathematics and personal independence.

2 The effective teaching in the nursery and the reception class means that children have a good start to their education and make good progress. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, most children achieve well and attain the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. In communication, language and literature their attainment is still below expectations. However, the school admits high numbers of pupils with special educational needs and increasing numbers of traveller pupils whose poor attendance has a substantial impact on standards as many have missed work through frequent changes from school to school. These factors affect standards, particularly in the infants. As a result, last years test results for seven year olds were low in reading and not high enough in writing and mathematics. Over a third of the pupils did not reach the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Only one or two reached standards above those expected for their age. The school makes very careful analysis of its performance, is fully aware of those areas in need of improvement and is working very hard to put things right. The work of the present Year 2 children indicates the progress that is being made and where work is still to be done. Pupils in Year 2 reach average standards in mathematics and science. Standards in reading are just below those expected for pupils' ages but writing standards, including those in handwriting and spelling and standards in speaking and listening are lower than in most schools by the end of the infants. They are similar to those found at the last inspection and are not high enough, but the school has had a significant change in it's intake since then.

3 Standards in English, mathematics and science are typical for pupils' ages at the end of the juniors. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when standards were lower than in most primary schools. Pupils' results in last year's national tests were similar to those in most primary schools and a lot better than in schools, which have a similar intake. This was a good achievement, as many pupils had low standards when they started in the school and reflects the good levels of progress made by pupils in the school. The school has set challenging targets for the coming year and is on course to meet them.

4 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 speak clearly and confidently to say what they think, feel, see and want to ask. However, by the age of seven, many pupils do not have enough words to enlarge on simple statements. This is because of poor standards of speech when they first come to the school and their slow progress in reading. Good singing teaching in the infants makes their speech clearer. The quality of speaking and listening continues to improve in the junior classes. Standards are as expected for pupils' ages in Year 6. Pupils take part thoughtfully in class discussions of new work and ideas. This is because teachers, particularly in the second half of the juniors, are skilled in stimulating pupils' speech.

5 Reading standards are just below those expected for pupils' ages at the end of the infants. This is because pupils have few early reading skills when they start school. In the last two years there were also shortcomings in the teaching of reading in some infant classes. Reading skills are now well taught and pupils are achieving higher standards. Reading standards by the end of the juniors are as expected for pupils' ages. Nearly all pupils read by themselves for enjoyment both at school and at home. They know how to work out both stated and suggested meanings in text. Pupils of all abilities read to learn from both computer screens and worksheets. More able pupils read quickly and often widely.

6 Writing standards, including those in handwriting and spelling are lower than in most schools by the end of the infants. More able pupils control sentences well and make clear statements in joined-up writing. Less able pupils, and those with special educational needs in language vary letter shapes and sizes too much. As a result, their work is hard to read. Pupils make good progress in writing in the juniors because of good teaching in the second half of this key stage, particularly in Year 6. As a result, standards are similar to those in most schools by the end of Year 6. Less able pupils have effective extra support in small groups. This improves their spelling, description and punctuation.

7 Good teaching, very effective subject leadership and the impact of the National Numeracy Strategy are improving pupils' learning in mathematics and standards are rising due to pupils' increased motivation and enthusiasm. Pupils make steady progress in the infants. By the age of seven most pupils have a good understanding of place values for sequencing numbers and are aware of addition and subtraction patterns. They are competent in mental arithmetic and number work. Pupils make steady progress in Years 3 and 4 and good and sometimes very good progress in Years 5 and 6. By the age of 11, most pupils have developed sound numeracy skills and can apply these effectively to a variety of problems. They have good recall of multiplication facts and can make complex mental calculations involving several operations.

8 Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain the standards expected for their age in all areas of science. Standards have improved since the last inspection as a result of good teaching and effective planning for science. Pupils' results in last year's national tests were above those in most primary schools and a lot better than in schools, which have a similar intake. By the age of seven, pupils effectively carry out tests and record their findings well, for example as a pictogram. By the age of 11 pupils know which materials make the best insulators and which conduct heat. They make simple electrical circuits and effectively investigate the effect of adding extra bulbs and switches.

9 Pupils make steady progress in developing their information and communication technology skills and by the age of seven and 11 standards are similar to those in most primary schools. This represents sound improvement from the findings of the previous report where a key issue for action was to raise standards. This improvement is the result of good curriculum leadership and improved teacher knowledge and understanding. By the age of seven, pupils have sound keyboard skills and are confident in using the computer for word processing and accessing information. Eleven year olds effectively use information and communication technology to organise, re-organise and analyse ideas and information. Links between information and communication technology and many other subjects are insufficiently developed. The school plan to remedy this by well structured use of the recently completed computer suite.

10 Pupils make sound gains in their learning in art and design, design and technology, physical education, history and geography. Standards of work are mainly at the level expected for their age. In music, pupils achieve high standards as a result of exemplary subject leadership. Pupils' achievement in music is a strength of the school.

11 Most pupils on the special needs register have learning difficulties and as a result they attain below the expected levels. They make good progress towards their individual learning targets as a result of good quality additional support lessons. Many of the pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve highly and the majority achieve at least the national expectation in English and mathematics by the age of 11. This does of course depend on the length of time that they spend at the school. Many pupils who speak English as an additional language are from supportive backgrounds and their parents are often highly educated and studying at the university. Traveller pupils often achieve less well than others in their year groups. This is because they are not present in school for substantial periods and also because they enter school with few of the basic skills.

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

12 The ethos of the school is to value and care for each other and the pupils' good attitudes to learning, their good behaviour and their good relationships with others continue to be a strength of the school.

13 Nearly every parent who returned a questionnaire agreed that their child likes school and inspection evidence supports this. Pupils enjoy school life and are willing to learn. They show an interest in lessons, particularly when there is something new. Pupils are excited about using the computers in the new computer suite and even the oldest pupils were proud of what they had achieved. Pupils try hard in class to please their teachers. They usually get on quickly with the task and concentrate well even when the work is mundane. Pupils co-operate well in-group work and are appreciative of the work of others. This was seen in a year one geography lesson about the local neighbourhood and by the whole of the junior school when the orchestra had played in assembly. Children under the age of five develop confidence through the activities that they undertake. They behave well and are familiar with school routines.

14 The pupils move around the school in an orderly manner. They show appropriate respect for adults and a good level of self discipline when in school and in the playground. Pupils are aware of the school rules, what is right and wrong and the sanctions that can be imposed. There have been four exclusions and staff work hard to ensure the assertive discipline policy has a positive impact throughout the school. The pupils know that any incidences of bullying will be quickly dealt with.

15 There are good relationships throughout the school. Boys and girls play well together. The pupils react very well with each other, with teachers and with other adults in the school. They talk readily to visitors and are courteous and polite. The staff provides excellent role models. The absence of litter and the tidy cloakrooms are examples of the respect the pupils have for their own and other people's property.

16 Personal development is good. Ninety-eight per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their children become mature and responsible. Pupils develop in self-confidence. The Year 6 pupils take the opportunities to show initiative and responsibility they are given. They provide valuable assistance to the staff and are willing to accept responsibility and carry out duties in class and around the school. The younger pupils have classroom duties appropriate to their age and development. The school council provides the pupils with the opportunity to discuss issues relating to the life of the school.

17 Pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory. It is below that found nationally in similar schools. The rate of unauthorised absence was above the national average. The number of traveller's children in the school is a factor in these figures. Most pupils are punctual and lessons start promptly, as a result little time is wasted at the start of school sessions.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

18 Teaching is good overall, with a significant proportion of very good lessons in the infants and juniors and a few excellent lessons in Years 5 and 6. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is consistently good or better. Teaching in other subjects is never less than satisfactory and is mostly good or better. The teaching of music is very good. The big improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection has raised standards a lot particularly by the end of the juniors.

19 Teachers' have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are teaching, particularly in English, mathematics and music. They use this knowledge to effectively promote high standards. For example, in mathematics where the Year 5 teacher gave an exciting and challenging introduction to a lesson on addition, which set the scene for an excellent lesson in which pupils' learning

was of a very high quality and they achieved high standards. Teachers' planning is good because it identifies clearly what pupils need to learn and this is very well shared with them so that they know what is expected of them. Teachers explain new areas of learning clearly so that pupils' learning is improved. For example in the Year 3 class where the effective use of a triangle helped pupils to grasp quickly how to add three numbers together. Teachers expect pupils to do their best at all times. For example, the Year 2 teacher showed a group of pupils the good quality of work in their handwriting books. This was to remind them of the writing standard needed for their diary entries.

20 The management of pupils is very good and enables them to concentrate on their work and make good progress. Teachers know when it is appropriate to explain things to the whole class and when group work is more effective. This enables pupils to carry out tasks which are matched well to their prior attainment. The use of additional adults to support group work is particularly effective throughout the school, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons. This enables all staff to ensure that pupils are on the right track in their learning and allows them to use questions to help pupils build on their prior learning and deepen their understanding. For example, the classroom assistant in Year 5 knew exactly when to ask a probing question and when to leave pupils to try things for themselves.

21 Time and resources are used well. Lessons start promptly and are well paced allowing for quick responses and also more extended periods for concentrated work. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson pupils were given a time limit when completing their mental introduction and this strategy was used in several other lessons where pupils were challenged to improve their time. Resources are well prepared and used effectively to promote learning. In a Year 5 science lesson the teacher had prepared very high quality resources to allow pupils to test materials to see which would form the most effective head for a mop. The resources gave pupils a greater understanding of what they were doing and how the test could be made fairer. In the infants, resources are chosen carefully to meet the needs of the pupils, for example the use of big books in the literacy hour and mathematical games in numeracy lessons.

22 Teaching is greatly helped by the good relationships that exist between all adults in the school and the pupils. Praise is used effectively to encourage pupils and teachers value pupils' contributions. Teachers provide very good role-models, demonstrating enthusiasm, interest and enjoyment for the subjects they teach and supporting pupils to achieve their best. For example, in music where the subject leader plays in the orchestra, takes singing practices and lessons, recorder groups and lessons, often teaching through playing a variety of instruments. As a result, standards in music are very high. All teachers use opportunities to circulate during group work, giving pupils one-to-one help and encourage pupils to maintain their concentration by praising their efforts.

23 Teachers are careful to ensure that the work provided for pupils matches their prior attainment, thus ensuring that the needs of all pupils, including the highest attaining and those with special educational needs are met. The highest attaining pupils in Year 6 are given well matched work which challenges them. In English and mathematics good examples were seen of teachers carefully targeting questions to individual pupils to extend their understanding and maintain concentration. In the infants for example, word recognition was well matched and questions in the mental arithmetic session of the numeracy hour ensured that all pupils were included and made progress.

24 There is early identification of special educational need and this ensures that the school addresses learning difficulties as soon as possible. The individual education plans are at least satisfactory in all cases and some are very good. In classes where the plans are very good, targets are very specific and this allows the teacher to measure progress accurately and plan further targets to develop learning. There are however a number of targets that are a little too general and although they are reviewed half-termly, some pupils would benefit from earlier review and more specific targets. The evaluation of success is good due to the special needs co-ordinators and the class teacher's knowledge of the child. Individual education plans are linked to the English and mathematics elements of the National Curriculum but also include

behavioural targets for some pupils. When planning lessons teachers do not always make explicit reference to pupils with special educational needs although in all lessons these pupils are well supported by teachers and support assistants. In many lessons the support assistants were able to concentrate on helping the pupils by constantly reinforcing learning and ensuring pupils knew what they were doing and intervening when necessary. Throughout the school, teachers give homework that has a positive impact upon pupils' reading, spelling and learning of number facts. Marking is generally undertaken regularly and accurately.

25 The good teaching, combined with the good attitudes displayed by pupils, enables them to make good progress in their learning. Because tasks are matched well to prior attainment and the assessment of their work informs the next stage of learning, they extend their knowledge and understanding systematically. Pupils are confident, enthusiastic learners because they are provided with a secure environment where their efforts are valued. They have a clear understanding of what they are learning, where they have made mistakes and what to do next, because teachers share this with them. Overall, pupils' learning is good and results in standards, which are often beyond expectations for age and which are improving.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

### **How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?**

26 The school provides all pupils with a good range of interesting learning activities both in and out of school. These meet all the requirements of the National Curriculum. This is an improvement since the last inspection when several subjects did not meet requirements. The curriculum reflects the school's aim to "encourage balanced and challenging learning for children of all abilities". The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' musical education.

27 Curriculum provision for the foundation stage curriculum in both nursery and the reception class is very well matched to the six areas of learning for this age group. Children are provided with very good opportunities to develop through selecting activities independently, exploring and investigating.

28 Teachers ensure learning is broad and, at times, detailed. The school also ensures that the right amount of time is given to each subject. The timetable covers all subjects of the new National Curriculum and religious education. Pupils may receive sex education and gain an appropriate awareness of the dangers of drugs through their science and personal, social and health education lessons. All pupils in Year 4 have weekly swimming lessons at a local baths.

29 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and these standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The school ensures that all pupils with special educational needs receive their full entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum and this has a positive effect on learning. These pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life. When pupils are supported in their lessons by receiving extra help or different work, this is done sensitively and is well planned to meet particular pupils' needs. The Code of Practice for special needs is fully implemented.

30 Traveller pupils are supported well and the school does much to include pupils and provide suitable work. For example, pupils are assessed on entry to the school and work is well matched to their needs. If the school is aware that pupils are to leave the area for a while, they provide a pack of work, which shows a good awareness of the travellers' culture as well as taking into account the pupils' interests.

31 Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well from nursery onwards.

Teachers are well aware of the need to provide a rich, language filled curriculum alongside relevant practical activities to consolidate their understanding.

32 The quality of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection. Teachers now follow good quality national guidance for most subjects. The school has also successfully introduced the new national methods of teaching both English and mathematics. Teachers are revising learning in each subject in the light of the new National Curriculum.

33 Good arrangements to plan work over yearly, half-termly and weekly periods ensure that all pupils meet each new step of learning at the right time. Weekly planning meetings of teachers for each year group improve the quality of learning. For example, all lessons now follow through clear aims. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils therefore know what they are to learn and why, and so concentration is good in nearly all lessons.

34 There are good arrangements to support pupils' personal education, to improve their social skills and their understanding of citizenship. Weekly personal, social and health education lessons address personal and social issues appropriate to pupils' ages. Pupils value these opportunities to speak, to be heard and, at times to set the agenda. These lessons also reflect the school's success in developing pupils' self-confidence and social skills. For example, pupils in a Year 1 class learned how to take part in discussions. By the end of the lesson, they were speaking more confidently and beginning to respect each other's opinions. A few pupils gain further understanding of citizenship as representatives on the new school council.

35 The school makes good arrangements to enrich pupils' learning and to improve their progress through many extra activities. These include: lunchtime and after-school clubs, groups, practices and teams, a strong junior choir, recorder groups and a school orchestra, a drama group for older juniors, a dance club, a puppet making and story-telling group for pupils in the infants, local visits and a residential visit for older pupils, lessons on clarinet, cello and violin for a small number of pupils, visits by local professionals in art and design, and music. Nearly all pupils take up some of these opportunities during their time at St Lawrence's. Local excursions make a good contribution to pupils' first-hand discoveries of the geography and history of York.

36 Good links with the local comprehensive school to which most pupils transfer ensure that pupils' education does not keep stopping and restarting. Visits of both staff and pupils to and from the secondary school help to give pupils a confident start to their secondary education. The Key Stage 3 staff have observed Year 6 lessons and worked with the pupils especially in English and mathematics. The meetings between the staff help to maintain good communication and pupils' progress.

37 The school gets a great deal of help from the local community to improve pupils' learning. For example a good number of students from the University help in classrooms in the course of a week. Close relationships with the local church also improve the quality of pupils' education. The vicar strengthens community links through regular visits to talk to staff and pupils. The school is only at an early stage of developing links with other institutions through the Internet or correspondence.

38 The school has established very good relationships in the local community. Students from the nearby university help in school and provide valuable role models for the pupils. Local residents help in school with reading and secretaries from a building firm have helped with a reading programme for Year 5 pupils. The harvest produce is distributed locally by the pupils. At Christmas the school choir visit the local Hospice and Old People's Home.

**The school makes very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.**

39 Provision for spiritual development is very good. The pupils are taught about right and wrong and are made aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The school has a clear discipline policy that encourages consideration of others. The adults, who work in the school, have high expectations of courtesy and honesty from the pupils. These are well fulfilled and an atmosphere of trust and respect is created in which effective learning can take place. There is a wide scope for the pupils to take part in tasks to help with the smooth running of the school such as preparing the hall for assembly. The daily acts of collective worship are well planned and support both spiritual and moral development. There are good opportunities for pupils to reflect on day-to-day experiences, values and concerns, pupils think of others less fortunate.

40 Moral development is very good. The school is an orderly community and pupils know the difference between right and wrong. Pupils are taught to consider other people. They play well together and care for each other. The adults working in the school provide good role models for pupils. There is a strong moral element to the personal and social education course. Other subjects such as English, art and design, and music also make a significant contribution to moral development. Pupils' discussion often reveals sensitivity and thoughtfulness as during a Year 6 English lesson, when the subject was Vivisection. The majority of parents agree that the school promotes good behaviour and that the pupils are taught to be responsible members of the school's community.

41 The school's provision for pupils' social development is very good. Relationships between teachers and pupils are consistently very good. All the pupils are expected to work together and to consider the needs of others. Teachers try to include pupils in discussion and demonstrate that their contributions are valued. A residential field trip to East Barmby is organised for Year 6 pupils. This provides good opportunities to promote pupils' social development in a different setting and to encourage independence. Each class has a daily 'Special Person' and representatives from each year in the junior school form the school council. The school council provides a good opportunity for pupils to express their views and feel that they have an influence on decisions that directly affect their welfare.

42 Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. It is developed through a range of activities, including visits to concerts at the university, York Minster and to the many museums in and around York. In assemblies all the pupils are given the opportunity to experience the joy of music by listening to music and singing together. The school has produced its own CD of songs suitable for assemblies.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

43 There are very good procedures in place for child protection and promoting pupil's well being, health and safety and this continues the good practice recorded in the last report. The head teacher takes the lead in setting the ethos of care, order and structure valued by parents through assemblies. There is a good standard of care from the teaching staff with strength in their promotion of good behaviour.

44 The school has a suitable policy for child protection and all teaching and non-teaching staffs are aware of their responsibilities and are kept up to date with child protection issues. Required health and safety measures are in place and regular risk assessment inspections undertaken. Teachers are conscientious in their supervision of pupils in class. Effective use is made of visits from fire officers and the police in conjunction with issues relating to alcohol and drug abuse, and Year 6 pupils take part in local Crucial Crew days.

45 The school identifies pupils with special educational needs at an early stage and this has a positive effect on the progress these pupils make. Teachers consult the special educational needs co-ordinator if they have any concerns. She gives appropriate advice and ensures that an assessment of the

pupils' needs is carried out regularly and whenever necessary. The school has good contact with the educational psychologist and other outside agencies. The advice given by the other professionals is used effectively to plan programmes for the pupils. There is a special needs register; this is regularly reviewed and meets the recommendations of the Code of Practice for special educational needs.

46 Pupils who speak English as an additional language and traveller pupils are also supported well because teachers identify their needs early and take advice from appropriate outside agencies.

47 The school has very good procedures in place to promote good behaviour through its assertive discipline policy. Pupils, staff and parents know the rules and sanctions and parents are informed of instances of their child's inappropriate behaviour. Any instances of bullying, racism or oppressive behaviour is dealt with promptly. Teachers often praise the pupils for their response and behaviour and pupils value the Awards Assemblies.

48 Procedures to monitor attendance are very good. Registers are carefully monitored. The secretary contacts any parent after 10.00am if their child is absent and the school has not been notified. The school works closely with the education welfare officer to contact families when any pupil's attendance or punctuality gives cause for concern. The main problem the school has is in relation to the traveller's children and their unpredictable attendance.

49 Pupils are encouraged to take a pride in their work. The class teachers use their knowledge of the pupils to monitor their personal development and to help them set their personal targets.

50 The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers make good use of them to shape the next stages of pupils' learning. The school uses a full programme of tests appropriate to pupils' ages to measure and track their progress in the National Curriculum subjects. Teachers also keep a close eye on pupils' personal development. Detailed reports give a clear view of all aspects of pupils' achievements. These meet legal requirements. Staff and pupils also celebrate academic and personal achievements enthusiastically in weekly praise assemblies. Towards the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils take all the National Curriculum tests required by law. In addition, the school arranges for pupils to take national end-of-year tests in reading, writing, spelling, mathematics and science in Years 3, 4 and 5. The school assesses very carefully pupils' progress in reading. Parents note what and how much pupils are reading at home. Teachers test pupils' reading ages annually to the nearest month. Pupils progress in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music, and physical education is assessed each half term. Teachers measure and record how well brighter, average and slower learners have understood each new step in learning.

51 The school makes good and effective use of this information to improve learning and teaching. For example analysis of the Year 6 test results showed up weaknesses in writing development. The school then made writing its first priority for the year and improved both resources and teachers' expertise. Pupils' writing now has more structure and detail as a result. Clear assessment information also now helps teachers to plan exactly to meet the needs of different groups of pupils in each age group. For example, the school provides very effective coaching three times a week for pupils in Years 3 and 4 whose reading and writing skills are slipping. Such arrangements change teaching to meet the needs previous testing reveals. However, the school has further to go in making full use of all its assessment information so as to improve each pupil's learning. Individual planners involve pupils effectively in setting personal targets and noting progress.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

52 The supportive and positive views of parents about the school are reflected in the summary of the parent's questionnaires. Parents agreed that the school has high expectations of their children, that

their children receive good teaching, are making good progress and that they feel comfortable in approaching the school with problems or questions.

53 A number of parents and friends regularly help in the classroom, accompanying children to swimming and on educational trips. The very active Parents And Friends Association has raised money to provide the school with digital camera and playground toys.

54 The nursery staff have produced a handbook for parent helpers in the nursery and have arranged parenting courses based on literacy and numeracy skills. The results of the last course, a shoe box scene made by parent and child, are proudly displayed in the school's entrance.

55 The quality of information that parents receive about the school and its curriculum is good. The prospectus presents key information in a straightforward manner and parents are kept up to date with school affairs through the numbered weekly newsletter. The Governors Annual Report gives a clear picture of school life in the preceding year.

56 Parents appreciate that the staff is always available and ready to talk to them about their children's progress or any other problem. There are the termly consolation evenings. The pupils' annual progress reports meet statutory requirements and clearly state what their children know and the targets for the next academic year.

57 The teacher informs parents at an early stage if there are problems with a child's learning. Parents are invited to attend individual education plan reviews. This ensures that they are fully aware of what the school is doing and they may make their own suggestions about targets.

58 The majority of parents have signed the Home/School Agreement. Parents' support their children at home by listening to them read and supervising the homework set for them.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

59 The school is very well led and managed by the head teacher, with the good support of the deputy head teacher, staff and governors. The head teacher was appointed just before the last inspection and the very good improvement that has been made since that inspection owes much to his very effective leadership. He cares strongly about the school, the staff and the pupils. He has been very effective in creating a harmonious staff team and school environment, which reflects most strongly the school aims. The high quality of teamwork is a key to the effectiveness of the school. All staff share a commitment to improving pupils' standards of work and behaviour. The head teacher has a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and works well with staff and governors to identify priorities for school development, mainly linked to improving the achievement of all pupils, whatever their ability.

60 The school has a clear set of aims and values that are shared by pupils, staff, parents and governors. The head teacher adopts a management style which ensures that the views of all staff are heard and valued and, as a result, they work together well as a team and the day-to-day management of the school is very effective. The staff are well supported by a most efficient and influential school secretary who makes a very good contribution to the life of the school. The head teacher manages and monitors the school's finances well. Good use is made of the local education authorities services thereby ensuring compliance with the principles of best value. Grants given to the school, for example to support pupils with special educational needs are used well.

61 Governors are very interested in, and supportive of, the school. An effective committee structure is in place and some governors have specific curriculum support responsibilities, for example in literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. This has improved significantly since the last inspection. The

governors are fully involved in the construction of the school development plan and have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. In addition, governors play an active part in the daily life of the school, for example when the chair of governors visits to help to hear pupils read. However, their role in monitoring the effectiveness of the work of the school has not yet been defined or developed.

62 The school development plan provides a useful framework for managing improvements and is based on an accurate analysis of what the school does well and where it needs to improve. The priorities are clearly identified and are monitored regularly to ensure that targets are met. The school has developed good procedures for monitoring teaching and learning by the head teacher and subject leaders. This has mainly taken place in English and mathematics but opportunities are to be provided in all other subjects. This, together with the analysis of the results of school based and national tests, is enabling the school to effectively track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils and to set realistic but challenging targets in English and mathematics. As a result standards are improving but the school is able to pinpoint areas for further development, for example in aspects of English, particularly in Key Stage 1.

63 The head teacher gives a high degree of responsibility to the subject leaders and this ensures that they make a very effective contribution to school management. They have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their subject area. Subject leaders give effective support to colleagues in planning the work for pupils and many have benefited from opportunities to monitor teaching and learning. As a result, there have been improvements to teaching and learning and the development of a shared commitment to raising standards.

64 A very well qualified and well-organised special educational needs co-ordinator performs the role effectively, meeting fully the recommendations of the Code of Practice for special educational needs. Her role also includes overseeing the provision for traveller pupils and those with English as an additional language. The progress of all pupils is carefully monitored and tracked.

65 Financial planning is good and is closely linked to the educational priorities identified in the school development plan. Financial control and day-to-day administration of the school are good and the school makes effective use of new technology. The head teacher and governors are keen to get the best value for pupils in all resources and services and gather information before financial decisions are taken. All resources devolved to the school are used well to support teaching and learning. Given the low attainment of many children on intake, the good teaching and the high quality learning opportunities, the good progress made by pupils and the improving standards, the school provides good value for money.

66 The overall number, qualifications and experience of teachers and classroom assistants provide a very good match to the demands of the curriculum, including the needs of children in the foundation stage and pupils with special educational needs. All staff have good access to in-service training linked to their professional needs and the priorities identified in the school development plan. The school has very good procedures for the induction and support of new staff. It has made a good start to implementing national guidance for managing the performance of teachers.

67 The school has very good accommodation. The sports field provides two games pitches, and in summer a 200 metre running track. There are separate playgrounds for children in the nursery, for pupils in the infants and in the junior classes. The grounds also accommodate an orienteering course and an area for the nature club. The classrooms and indoor teaching areas are very well lit and have good acoustics. The hall provides spacious areas for assemblies, concerts, productions, some lettings and several after school activities such as dance. High quality display enhances the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Very good standards of decoration, maintenance, furnishing and cleanliness further refine the atmosphere for learning.

68        The quality of resources is good and has set the scene for the improvement in standards since the last inspection. Resources are good in English, mathematics, information and communication technology, geography, music and physical education. In other subjects and aspects of learning they are satisfactory. The new computer suite significantly improves pupils' opportunities in information and communication technology. Similarly, new, good quality books engage pupils' interest in language and literature. However, the junior reference library is small and not easily accessible when the computer suite is in use.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69 In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education the head teacher, staff and governors should;

1. Raise standards In English in the infants by:
  - further developing pupils' skills in using letter sounds;
  - improving the quality of pupils' handwriting;
  - increasing opportunities for pupils' extended writing.(paragraphs 2,4,6,81,82,83)
  
2. Make better use of information and communication technology to support other subject areas by:
  - ensuring that all classes have regular access to the newly completed computer suite;
  - making sure that teachers are aware of how information and communication technology can support teaching in other subjects.(paragraphs 9,97,105,118,125,129)
  
3. improve attendance by:
  - maintaining the very good links with the education welfare officer to contact families when any pupils' attendance or punctuality gives cause for concern;
  - ensure that the parents of traveller children are fully aware of their responsibilities in this area;
  - reinforcing the importance of full attendance in the prospectus.(paragraphs 17,48)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed

45

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

67

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	29	44	22	0	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	24	182
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	61

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	53

#### **English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	14

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	6.9

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	1.3

National comparative data	5.2
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	10	15	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	7	8	12
	Total	16	16	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	64% (59%)	64% (59%)	80% (82%)
	National	84% (82%)	85% (83%)	90% (87%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	8	13	12
	Total	16	22	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	64% (59%)	88% (83%)	88% (83%)
	National	84% (82%)	88% (86%)	88% (87%)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

\* Where the number of pupils is 10 or less figures are omitted.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	17	14	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	14	14
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	23	26	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74% (48%)	84% (70%)	84% (70%)
	National	75% (70%)	72% (69%)	85% (78%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	14	13
	Girls	10	11	11
	Total	20	25	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66% (66%)	81% (67%)	77% (81%)
	National	70% (68%)	72% (69%)	80% (75%)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	131
Any other minority ethnic group	21

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	26

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	92.5

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999 - 2000
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	£
Total income	450,180
Total expenditure	429,978
Expenditure per pupil	2,058
Balance brought forward from previous year	18,060
Balance carried forward to next year	38,262



*Results of the survey of parents and carers*

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	194
Number of questionnaires returned	85

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	85	12	2	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	67	29	1	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	41	1	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	33	13	4	4
The teaching is good.	67	32	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	31	8	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	27	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	37	0	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	49	40	7	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	65	29	2	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	34	0	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	35	5	0	10

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

70 The nursery was opened in September 1996, three months after the last inspection. It was transferred to its current location in September 1997 and is positioned next door to the reception class. Children under five years of age are taught in the nursery and reception class. At the time of the inspection there were 63 children under five in these classes, 14 of them in the reception class. Children enter the nursery after their third birthday and transfer to the reception class in two separate intakes according to their age.

71 Many children begin nursery with poorly developed skills in speaking and listening, mathematics and personal independence. This is confirmed by the initial assessments conducted with these children. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1 the majority of the children achieve well and attain the early learning goals identified for their age in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. However, in communication, language and literature their attainment is still below expectations.

72 The school makes good provision for children in the nursery and reception classes. The staff in these classes work very closely together to provide a stimulating curriculum and a wide range of activities to ensure that children get a good start to their education. Staff create a lively atmosphere and as a result children are encouraged in their learning and many are enabled to make good progress. This is through good teaching in all areas of learning.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

73 Many children enter the nursery class with immature skills in personal and social development. By the time they leave the reception class, despite their initial disadvantage, most are achieving the early learning goals in this area. This shows good achievement and reflects the skilful teaching in both the nursery and reception classes where children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve.

74 The staff create a warm, encouraging and supportive atmosphere in which children flourish, grow in independence and gain confidence and self-esteem. The classroom and the everyday routines are well organised to provide many opportunities for children to take simple decisions, to make choices and to take some responsibility. As a result pupils are confident to try new activities, initiate ideas and speak to visitors, for example when one child explains about the shapes of playdough lollipops while another talks about 'zero' spots on a ladybird. Children are generally enthusiastic about their learning; for example, when they play outside on bikes and trolleys or when making sandwiches. Staff take every opportunity to encourage children to co-operate and develop self-discipline. They provide good role models for the children; always treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This leads to trusting relationships and helps the children to understand one another's point of view. Staff also promote children's personal development effectively by ensuring that the equipment and resources that the children use are easily accessible to them and help them to become independent. They play together sensibly, for example when they share equipment in a variety of play activities.

#### **Communication, language and literature**

75 Children make good progress in developing their communication, language and literature skills from a low base. Nevertheless, by the age of five, their attainment falls below the standard expected for their age. When they enter the school, many pupils find it difficult to express themselves in more than the

odd word or very short phrase, while others are quite fluent. The staff recognise that children's' limited language hinders progress in much of their work and give high priority to promoting purposeful talk and extending children's vocabulary. They plan good activities to develop listening skills and build up the children's concentration. For example, they are effectively introduced to the vocabulary for mother and baby animals and listen to stories about the 'Noisy Farm '. Children followed that up by enacting the story of 'Who will be my mother '. Staff also seize incidental opportunities to promote language development and they enrich children's vocabulary when they join in their activities. For example, when children made sandwiches, staff promoted excellent discussion among children about how to make them, and what ingredients they should use. The children have good opportunities to talk to their classmates and the staff and most gain confidence to do so. Staff effectively teach the children about sounds, letters and words and how to form their letters. The nursery children handle books carefully and they enjoy listening to stories. They are given good opportunities to take books home for 'bedtime reading ' and this forms one of the many very good links with parents. Children learned to recognise their names from their name cards and can find these readily. Most children in the reception class recognised a small number of commonly used words and can interpret labels and captions around the classroom. A few repeat simple sentences from early reading books and a few use letter sounds to tackle unfamiliar words. Children join in enthusiastically, and make good progress when the teacher shares a book with the class. Children join in the story and many volunteer the correct word when the teacher points to those in the story. The children make substantial gains in early reading, although skills are still below average, they are well prepared for work in the infants. In their writing, the majority of children make marks or write letters of the alphabet to represent meaning and can write their own name. Pencil control develops steadily and the majority of children can hold a pencil or crayon correctly. In the reception class they form letters correctly and copy accurately under the teacher's writing. A few higher attaining children use word cards to write their own sentences to label illustrations. The staff make very good use of the 'Jolly Phonics' scheme and this has a good impact on children's writing development. Most children are eager to write and many attain well and make good progress in letter formation and early writing. However, standards in writing are likely to be below expectations for their age by the time they enter Year 1, with a few children working at a satisfactory level for this age.

### **Mathematical development**

76 The children make good progress in mathematics. By the end of the foundation stage most have reached the recommended learning outcomes for their age and most are ready for the early stages of the National Curriculum. In nursery, children learn about shapes, pattern and size through well planned practical activities. They thread beads and copy repeating patterns. Children sort different ladybirds into sets and effectively discuss their reasons, for example, those with white spots, black backs and zero spots. Their work is often related effectively to other areas of learning, for example when they measure the size of their amaryllis plant using joining cubes. They recognise common shapes, such as circles and triangles. In the reception class, children build effectively on what they have learned in nursery. By the time they enter Year 1, most children count accurately to twenty using alternate numbers. They buy goods from the class shop using 1p, 2p and 5p coins. They make effective use of mathematical language such as 'in front of' and 'bigger than'. They are familiar with number rhymes and counting games, for example, 'One, Two Button My Shoe'. Children recognise, match, order and arrange numbers up to 10, and most recognise larger numbers in their everyday lives. Many are beginning to be aware of addition and subtraction activities and are learning how to tell the time. Learning resources are used imaginatively to support children's' learning.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

77 Children generally enter the nursery with a limited knowledge and understanding of the world around them. However, the nursery and reception staff plan well together to provide the children with a broad and exciting range of experiences. As a result, children make good progress in developing their

knowledge and understanding of the world and by the end of the reception year many attain the standards expected for their age. They talk about where they live, their families and events in their own lives. They are able to talk very simply about the progress they make in school, for example, when they discuss what they could do when they started in the reception class and what they can do now. Children have a simple knowledge of the school and its layout and how to get to the school office or the dining area. They develop confidence in using a range of basic computer packages, mainly to develop their language and literacy skills. They work independently moving the cursor sideways and upwards across the screen to successfully match groups of objects to numbers. The children sing with enthusiasm and have learned a wide range of songs. They can vary the pitch and rhythm of the songs with accuracy and sing in time very tunefully.

### **Creative development**

78 The children make good progress and achieve well in creative development. They are enthusiastic and keen to take part in all activities. In art activities, they effectively explore colour and texture using a range of materials to create pictures, prints and patterns. In the nursery, staff ensure that creative activities are available on a daily basis and children have access to paint, paper and collage materials. Children make very good use of playdough and work with great enthusiasm to create a variety of imaginative shapes. They make very good use of a variety of well organised areas such as the farm for imaginative play. In the reception class, children make very good use of paint to portray the story of 'The Princess and the Pea'. They make pots from clay and make very effective drawings of hyacinths using pastels. They paint imaginative pictures and experiment well to see which colours can be mixed from red, yellow and blue. The staff carefully mount children's work and displays in both areas are of very good quality. They represent a wide range of areas of learning and effectively promote children's self-esteem.

### **Physical development**

79 Most children make good progress in the physical development. The staff make good provision in this area of learning. Children are supported sensitively as they build ON physical skills and confidence. By the time they enter Year 1, most children come close to meeting the standard expected for their age. The children in the nursery develop confidence and control of the way they move through good opportunities for outdoor play. They ride confidently on tricycles and wheeled toys and show good skills in controlling speed and direction. In the reception class, children do not have access to outdoor secure play provision. However, they have good opportunities to use the hall for physical development. They move with confidence and imagination over apparatus and jump, balance and roll well. Many children are developing sound hand/eye co-ordination and learn to handle tools and equipment safely, for example when using craft knives in reception to mark out the shapes of bears in art and design.

80 Teaching is good and sometimes very good within all areas of learning. This enables children to make substantial gains in their knowledge and skills and supports their achievement. All staff have a very good awareness of the needs of young children. Staff work extremely well as a team and share the same principles of teaching and learning for the children. This ensures that the transition from the nursery to the reception class is seamless. Staff know the children well and make careful assessments of their progress. They use this information well to match work to what children already know and to provide extra support for those who need it. Relationships with children are very good; staff provide a high level of care and support and this promotes the children's' very good attitudes to learning. The children enjoy their activities and respond very well to adults. They work well in pairs and small groups and sustain concentration well within activities. The children's behaviour is mainly very good as a result of the exciting and stimulating activities prepared for them by the staff. Very good links are established and maintained with parents. The foundation stage leader is a very knowledgeable manager who works extremely well with her colleagues to ensure the provision of a very clear direction for the organisation and development of children's' learning.



## ENGLISH

81 Standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are typical for pupils' ages at the end of the juniors. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when standards were lower than in most primary schools. Standards in the infants are lower than in most primary schools. They are similar to those found at the last inspection and are not high enough. However standards in reading and writing have improved since last year.

82 Pupils' results in last year's national tests tell a similar story. They were similar to those in most primary schools by the end of Year 6. Three quarters of pupils reached the standards expected for their ages with almost half of them reaching the level above. This was a good achievement, as these pupils had low standards in both reading and writing when they started in the juniors.

83 Last year's test standards in the infants were not as good. They remained low in reading, and were not high enough in writing. Over a third of the pupils did not reach the reading and writing standards expected for the beginning of the juniors. Only one or two reached standards above those expected for their ages. Pupils are now doing much better because of high quality teaching in the infant and foundation classes. The increasing numbers of traveller pupils with poor attendance, and higher proportions of pupils with special educational needs, also hold down test standards each year. They go some way to explaining the history of low standards in the infants over the last five years. Girls do better than boys in these tests, following a national pattern.

84 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 speak clearly and confidently to say what they think, feel, see and want to ask. However, by the age of seven, many pupils do not have enough words to enlarge on simple statements. This is because of poor speech standards when they first come to St Lawrence's, and slow progress in reading. The good teaching of singing in the infants makes their speech clearer. Pupils also copy teachers' good examples of speech and expression when they read and discuss stories. All pupils are very interested and therefore learn new words effectively at the same time. For example, at the beginning of a literacy lesson a Year 2 teacher pretended to be a girl from the class story book. Pupils had to discover the girl's point of view. Half the class immediately put their hands up. They asked thoughtful questions such as, "What is it like to be on an island?" and "Do you like delivering the post?". At the end of the lesson, pupils listened attentively to what others had written about the girl.

85 The quality of speaking and listening continues to improve in the junior classes. Standards are as expected for pupils' ages in Year 6. Pupils carefully follow teachers' detailed instructions and explanations of new work. They also take part thoughtfully in class discussions of new work and ideas. This is because teachers, particularly in the second half of the key stage, are skilled in stimulating pupils' speech. For example in a discussion on scientific research on animals, a more able pupil asked: "Could you turn that into a counter argument?". Less able pupils understand terms such as "balanced argument". Lots of singing, both together and in parts, also improves speaking and listening skills. For example a teachers' aims in a music lesson included: "Improve diction". Pupils talk confidently to visitors. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils explained clearly how Egyptian hieroglyphics were different from today's writing. A more able pupil then raised the question of why there were three languages on the Rosetta stone.

86 Reading standards are just below those expected for pupils' ages at the end of the infants. This is because pupils have few early reading skills when they start school. In the last two years, there were also shortcomings in the teaching of reading in some infant classes. Reading skills are now well taught, and pupils are achieving higher standards. More able pupils read simple stories with enjoyment and understanding by themselves. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs in language often need help, because they forget letter shapes and sounds. Other pupils read aloud accurately and expressively. Traveller pupils often struggle with reading because absences slow down their learning of letters. Nearly all pupils know how to use contents pages and indexes to find facts in books. All pupils

begin to read back their own writing to check it. They know alphabetical order, and so they can also use simple dictionaries to improve spelling.

87 Reading standards by the end of the juniors are as expected for pupils' ages. Nearly all pupils read by themselves for enjoyment both at school and at home. They know how to work out both stated and suggested meanings in text. Pupils of all abilities read to learn from both computer screens and worksheets. More able pupils read quickly and often widely. They show good levels of understanding when they compare and discuss books, characters and authors. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs in language now read simple text accurately but slowly. Traveller pupils make slow progress because they are not sure of some letter patterns. Other pupils' sound reading skills contribute to their good progress in English in the juniors. Skills in using libraries and finding information are similar to those found in most schools. For example pupils know how to use catalogues and book numbers. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress because they get effective support in reading.

88 Writing standards, including those in handwriting and spelling are lower than in most schools by the end of the infants. More able pupils control sentences well and make clear statements in joined-up writing. For example, a Year 2 pupil wrote this about the family pet: "When you are stroking her, she will give you her paw, even if you don't ask her". Less able pupils and those with special educational needs in language vary letter shapes and sizes too much. As a result, their work is hard to read. Most other pupils form and join letters, and space words carefully in simple sentences. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress. Traveller pupils' standards are often low, because they miss regular writing practices. Significant numbers of pupils pick up poor writing habits that lead to later difficulties. For example, some pupils do not sit straight or comfortably when they write. Letter shapes are not then true. Some pupils' efforts with writing result in their pressing too hard on the paper. All pupils shape their letters much more clearly in their handwriting books than in their exercise books. Writing rates are often slow and most pupils are not writing enough. Pupils write in the expected range of forms: stories, letters, descriptions of animals, holidays and a local walk, and notes using bullet points.

89 Pupils make good progress in writing in the juniors because of good teaching in the second half of this stage, particularly in Year 6. As a result, standards are similar to those in most schools by the time pupils leave. Less able pupils have effective extra support in small groups. This improves their spelling, description and punctuation. Traveller pupils and those with special educational needs in language benefit from high quality individual support. Pupils learn many new techniques, such as persuasion, because teachers match writing skills to their attainment and understanding. As a result, more able pupils write quickly and neatly using well-chosen words effectively. For example, one pupil created mystery and tension in an imaginative three-page story. However, weaknesses in spelling remain. For example a pupil wrote "the angle spock" for "the angel spoke". However, all pupils improve the planning, drafting and paragraphing of their writing. They also match the tone of their writing to its purpose. For example, pupils used formal but polite English in letters of complaint. Good writing often develops from very close reading followed by detailed class discussion of new ideas. For example, on the Monday of the inspection week, Year 6 pupils read and considered arguments for and against vivisection. During the week they debated, drafted and organised their ideas. They carefully wrote out their views in the Friday lesson. There was complete silence in the classroom, because of the high levels of interest and concentration.

90 The quality of teaching is good. There were no unsatisfactory lessons during the inspection. There was very good teaching in almost a third of lessons. This big improvement in teaching quality since the last inspection has raised standards a lot by the end of the juniors. Although there are good examples of pupils' work completed by word processing, insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to aid teaching.

91 In the high quality lessons, teachers expect pupils to do their best all the time. For example, the

Year 2 teacher showed a group of pupils the good quality of work in their handwriting books. This was to remind them of the writing standard needed for their diary entries. Teachers get and hold pupils' interest from the outset. For example teachers use drama or sit in a special story telling chair. As a result pupils concentrate well on new learning. Clear planning, sharing of aims, careful preparation and stimulating resources also improve concentration. Close teamwork with classroom assistants strengthens support for traveller pupils, the less able, those with special educational needs in language and those with English as a second language.

92 Although satisfactory in all the lessons seen teaching is less effective when learning lacks such interest, challenge and support. This is sometimes because teachers hold limiting ideas of what pupils are to achieve. It can also result from slow pace or too much time when pupils have just to listen and have little to do. The quality of learning also drops when teaching stops as resources are given out.

93 Leadership and management are good. The use of the Literacy Strategy, much improved teaching and resources are coming together effectively to raise standards. However, better achievement in the infants has taken too long and is now overdue. The school now ensures that by the end of Year 6 pupils leave school well prepared for their secondary school language work.

## **MATHEMATICS**

94 In the 2000 tests for seven year olds the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was well below the levels attained nationally. In comparison with similar schools results were below average. The increasing numbers of traveller pupils with poor attendance, and higher proportions of pupils with special educational needs holds down standards in the infants. In the 2000 tests for 11 year olds pupils' attainment was well above the levels attained nationally and was very high when compared with similar schools. During the last four years attainment has varied in mathematics tests but results in 1999 and 2000 show significant improvement.

95 Inspection findings indicate that present standards in the current Year 2 are close to, if slightly below those expected of seven year olds. In the current Year 6 standards are in line with what is expected of pupils aged 11. The improvement in standards, particularly in the juniors is achieved through the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, the good quality of teaching and the very effective leadership and management of the subject leader. This has resulted in increasing pupils' motivation and enthusiasm for mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs meet the targets set out in their individual education plans. These pupils as well as traveller pupils make good progress when they are given additional support in classrooms or when working in small groups on well structured learning programmes with a specialist teacher. There are no marked differences in the performance of girls and boys.

96 Pupils make steady progress in the infants. Younger pupils are very confident at counting sets of objects to twenty. They recognise and use numbers well, write them down successfully and participate in mathematical games that reinforce their basic numeracy skills. These pupils have good mathematical language and show this well when working out how many more are needed to reach a number and explain the strategy they used to arrive at the answer. By the end of Year 1 most pupils can sort, count, match, identify, form and sequence numbers. They can count up to 100, add and subtract numbers to 20 and are confident at working out problems in their heads, for example pupils know that the cost of 8 items at 4p each is 32p. By Year 2 they have a good understanding of place value, repeat patterns for sequencing numbers and are aware of addition and subtraction patterns. They are competent in mental arithmetic and number work. Pupils understand well the properties of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes, for example, they know that a solid square is a cube and a solid triangle is a pyramid. Pupils are confident when using fractions such as  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{4}$ . Their knowledge and understanding of time and money is sound and can effectively use coins to work out the change from one pound. There are good opportunities for

pupils to carry out mathematical investigations and apply their mathematical understanding in a variety of contexts.

97 Pupils make steady progress in Years 3 and 4 and good and sometimes very good progress in Years 5 and 6. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have developed sound numeracy skills and can apply these effectively to a variety of problems, for example when they study a variety of weighing scales and convert standard units to decimals. They have good recall of multiplication facts and can make complex mental calculations involving several operations. The school is effective in promoting the skills and understanding of measurement of length, mass and capacity and pupils are encouraged to apply these skills in their work. Year 6 pupils understand the relationship between fractions and decimals and have a very secure grasp of place value. They have a very good understanding of the properties of shapes such as pentagons, hexagons and octagons. Good use is made of numeracy skills across the curriculum, for example when Year 5 pupils represent their findings from a science experiment making effective use of bar graphs. In all areas of the school the pupils' ability to use information and communication technology to develop their mathematical knowledge is poorly developed. This is because teachers do not provide enough opportunities, however the school has plans to deal with this issue through well structured use of its new computer suite.

98 The quality of teaching is good. There were no unsatisfactory lessons during the inspection. Most teachers have a good understanding of the subject and explain concepts well, for example in the Year 4 class pupils quickly grasp terms such as translation, slide and template because the teacher gives a very simple but clear explanation. Brisk introductory mental mathematics sessions are used effectively to motivate pupils and to re-inforce and develop new concepts. The Year 5 teacher gave an exciting, challenging introduction to a lesson on addition, which set the scene for an excellent lesson in which pupils' learning was of a very high quality. Throughout the school, teachers explain new areas of learning clearly so that pupils' learning is improved, for example in the Year 3 class where the effective use of a triangle helped pupils to quickly grasp how to add 3 numbers together. Most use questions well to help pupils build on their prior understanding and deepen their thinking. This is particularly noticeable when questioning pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils. For example the classroom assistant in Year 5 knew exactly when to ask a probing question and when to leave pupils to try things for themselves. In the best lessons, teachers have a good depth of mathematical knowledge, communicate well with pupils, maintain a brisk pace to keep pupils interested and provide challenging activities to improve pupils' achievement. Teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy effectively as a base for their good planning. Lessons have clear learning objectives which teachers share with pupils at the start of the lesson. This helps pupils to focus on what they are to learn and increases their level of concentration. Support staff are well briefed on the aims for the lesson and how they can support pupils' learning. They work closely with groups of pupils and have a beneficial impact on pupils' progress, especially traveller pupils and those with special educational needs.

99 Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This allows pupils to try out new ideas and develop alternative strategies to solving problems. Teachers generally use methods and strategies, that match the purpose of the lesson. The management of pupils' behaviour is good and teachers generally expect and gain good behaviour from their pupils. Teachers effectively assess what pupils know, understand and can do. They use the end of lessons effectively to assess pupils' understanding and often use probing questions throughout the lesson to gauge the extent of pupils' learning. For example in the Year 2 class when the teacher effectively identified gaps in pupils' understanding of repeated subtraction, which would form the basis of their next lesson. Teachers use resources well and have designed and made many of the resources for their lessons. They set homework regularly and use it effectively to consolidate work begun in lessons or for pupils to learn multiplication tables.

100 Most pupils concentrate well for long periods. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good. The high expectations of most teachers ensures that pupils work hard and do their best. Pupils have

positive responses and attitudes in class and participate willingly in discussion and practical work. They are able to work collaboratively and respond well when faced with challenging tasks. Pupils have the ability to work independently and enjoy investigative tasks and handle apparatus and equipment sensibly.

101 The subject leader provides very good leadership and management. He is recognised by the Local Education Authority as a high quality teacher of mathematics and gives demonstration lessons in the subject to teachers from his own, and from other schools. He carries out a careful analysis of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning with a view to raising standards in the subject. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress are good and records are regularly updated. There is a very effective systematic analysis of tests and assessments of pupils which is used well to help with future planning of work and the setting of challenging targets for pupils and classes. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning across the school is very effective. The school has made sound improvement since the last inspection and standards are rising.

## **SCIENCE**

102 Pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain the standards expected for their age in all areas of science. The 2000 tests paint a similar picture and also show that standards of 11 year olds were better than those found nationally and much better than in similar schools. Standards are improving and since 1996 there has been a steady increase in the proportion of 11 year olds reaching the standards expected in national tests. Standards have improved since the last inspection as a result of good teaching and effective planning for science.

103 From 1998 to 2000 girls have performed noticeably better than boys in science tests, though no obvious reason for this was seen during the inspection. Traveller pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.

104 Pupils make good progress in their learning throughout the school. Teachers' planning is translated well into suitable activities, which extend pupils' knowledge and skills. Pupils are offered a very good balance between being guided in their learning and having effective opportunities to learn independently. Infant pupils steadily improve their ability to record information. Pupils in a Year 2 class, for example, were able to provide information on what happens when water freezes. They effectively recorded results as a pictogram when they tested materials to see if they would squash or bend. In the juniors pupils develop their understanding of the need for a fair test, for example when Year 3 pupils investigated the magnetic properties of a variety of objects. They effectively predicted outcomes based on their prior knowledge and recorded their findings. Pupils demonstrated the extent of their learning when they are able to discuss impressively how to separate steel and aluminium cans. Year 5 pupils showed very good use of scientific knowledge when they tested materials to see which would form the most effective head for a mop. In a well-planned and resourced lesson they were able to effectively record their findings and talked extensively of how their test could be made fairer. Year 6 pupils knew which materials made the best insulators and which conducted heat. They produced simple electrical circuits and effectively investigated the effect of adding extra bulbs and switches.

105 The quality of teaching is good. Key features of the most successful lessons include very good subject knowledge, very good planning and very effective teaching strategies. These were seen to good effect in a range of lessons. In a Year 4 lesson to investigate the properties of solids, liquids and gases the teacher involved all pupils in using their bodies to demonstrate these properties. This had a significant impact on pupils' learning. Teachers generally pitch the work at challenging but achievable levels and pupils respond well to this. Lessons are planned carefully and learning objectives and activities build well on pupils' previous learning. Teachers regularly refer back to work in the previous lesson to reinforce learning and introduce the current aims for the lesson, which are often left on the blackboard for reference. At the end of the lessons teachers recap what has happened and pupils are called upon to explain to the

class what they have learnt. Teachers make good use of scientific vocabulary throughout lessons to good effect and encourage pupils to do the same. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to aid teaching in science.

106 Pupils attitudes to work are consistently good. They show interest and enthusiasm for science, are generally well behaved and listen carefully to explanations and instructions. They are very keen to answer questions. Most pupils show a good level of interest and concentration. They think carefully about the work they have been given and respond sensibly when using potentially difficult and messy equipment while carrying out investigations. There is a good degree of co-operation when working in pairs and small groups.

107 The subject leader provides good leadership and management. She has developed good planning for both key stages and has produced a clear set of subject guidelines for the juniors, based firmly on recent national guidance. The scheme ensures effective coverage and progression of skills, knowledge and understanding. Regular opportunities for assessing pupils' skills and knowledge are built into the planning. The results of formal and informal assessments are used effectively to plan the next stage of learning. Adequate resources are carefully stored and well maintained. These resources, together with good 'Healthy Eating' displays throughout the school provide an interesting and lively background to the study of science. The school makes very good use of it's own wildlife area and the local environment to support pupils' learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

108 Pupils' standards in art and design are at the levels expected at the age of seven and 11. During the inspection it was possible to observe only one art and design lesson, but judgements are made on the basis of past work as well as by talking to staff and pupils and from observing work on display in classrooms and communal areas. It is evident that pupils make steady progress in their learning as they move through the school. There has been sound improvement since the last inspection.

109 By the time they are seven, pupils learn a sound range of techniques and produce work that indicates a satisfactory knowledge of colour and texture. Pupils in Year 1 build on the sound start made in the Foundation stage. They show a strong sense of colour, for example when they make a collage of caterpillars and butterfly using tissue paper and printed patterns using fruit and vegetable prints. Year 2 pupils make effective use of pastels and crayon when they create symmetrical butterfly designs. By the end of the infants, pupils draw and paint to an acceptable standard and use a range of collage materials effectively to explore and support their work in other subjects.

110 Year 3 pupils mix paint to good effect to make different colours when they paint in the style of Klee and Kandinski. In Year 4 watercolours are used effectively to create fantasy landscapes and to paint in the style of Signac. Year 5 pupils show a well-developed awareness of the need to observe closely attempting a composition when they sketch to match a selected photograph. The same year group showed good skills when tinting and shading to find exact colours before they paint to express moods and feelings. Pupils in Year 6 appreciate that art can bring alive other subjects such as work in history linked to the Egyptians. They make high quality sketches and etchings inspired by Egyptian artefacts and make papier-mâché coffins containing mummified bodies created with plaster of paris. By the age of 11 most pupils produce neat and relatively accurate drawings and paintings and have made steady progress in observational drawings and in the use of a wide range of more advanced techniques.

111 Although little teaching was seen during the inspection it is evident from the steady progress and work on display that teaching is at least sound. Work is well planned and ensures that there is increasing challenge as pupils move through the school. During a lesson observation the productivity and pace of learning was appropriate. Pupils are interested in the subject and show pride in their efforts. Many pupils

were keen to show the inspectors their finished work on display. The subject leader provides good leadership and management. She co-ordinates teacher planning but currently has no opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in art and design. Resources for art and design are good though the use of information and communication technology as a teaching and learning resource in art and design could be usefully extended. Staff work hard to display work effectively around the school and this raises pupils' self-esteem.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

112 By the end of Year 6 pupils have the designing, making and evaluation skills expected for their ages. For example, pupils of all abilities used construction kits to make powered model cars. They considered safety, power systems and appearance as they made their first designs. They sketched and drew circuit diagrams and tried out different methods of construction. Pupils wrote clear notes of their evaluations of the work. For example, one wrote “I am disappointed with the way we anchored the battery”. Another noted: “If I did this challenge again, I would start with the motor and work round it”.

113 Effective use of the latest national planning and guidance gives pupils of all abilities an appropriate range of designing, making and evaluation experience, including some food technology work. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 design and make toy monsters with moving parts. Year 2 pupils make hand puppets, bake bread and discover how old construction toys worked. Year 1 pupils make and paint houses using boxes, cardboard and glue. Teachers often link projects to topics in English and history.

114 There was not enough evidence to judge overall standards of teaching, learning and pupils’ responses. Photographs of previous lessons show them working with care and enjoyment. There was good quality teaching and learning in a Year 2 lesson on puppet making. This was because the teacher had planned and prepared activities carefully. The puppets were to be characters from “The Pied Piper” which the class was reading. Pupils looked closely at a puppet the teacher was making. They discovered what materials she had used and how it had been assembled. Pupils then had opportunities to sketch possible designs and decide on the best. They selected different materials and practised sewing and using a sewing machine before cutting out and making simple finger puppets. Clear demonstrations, for example of how to make and cut round a template increased pupils’ interest, understanding and enjoyment of the work. Pupils concentrated well because the tasks were challenging. The school’s annual design and technology week encourages and celebrates pupils’ achievements.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

115 By the end of Year 6, the standards of pupils’ knowledge, understanding and skills in geography are similar to those in most primary schools. Teachers now use topics from a whole school plan based on national guidelines of work for geography. This ensures that pupils cover all the work they should and matches learning to their ages. All pupils including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress.

116 The school teaches geography in one term and history in the next. This gives pupils equal experience of the two subjects. It also means that learning stops and starts and that one subject gets more emphasis than another each year. To bridge the gaps in learning, the school links some geography to current affairs. For example pupils in the juniors recorded the York floods on large-scale local maps, and studied newspaper reports on the Selby train crash. Pupils also located countries in the news, such as Mozambique on maps of the world.

117 By the end of Year 6 pupils have sound mapping skills. They use four-figure grid references to find human and physical features on maps. In orienteering they use large-scale maps to follow routes. Pupils of all abilities understand the difference between climate and weather. They also appreciate how world climate zones affect people’s lives, work and leisure. Pupils also investigate and gain understanding of local issues through observation and discussion. For example, they discussed the possible closure of a local road, following fieldwork on traffic and parking. They compare their own area with the environment of villages they visit, such as South Ottrington and Newby Wiske.

118 Teaching quality is good. During the inspection more than half the lessons were good, with the remainder satisfactory. In the good lessons, teachers plan carefully what pupils are to learn and how they

are to go about it. For example, Year 1 pupils had to remember for homework what they noticed on their journeys to school. The teacher showed them how to record their observations in little books. Pupils of all abilities worked busily, discussing what they had seen. Teachers make good use of globes, maps, photographs and atlases to support learning. For example, by studying diagrams and maps in a high quality junior atlas, Year 4 pupils saw how climate zones covered the world. More able pupils saw these were mirrored in the two hemispheres. Less able pupils found the zones and coloured them according to a key. Other pupils did this work accurately and also found cities with tropical climates. Pupils with special educational needs completed the work successfully as the result of their teacher's skilful support. Traveller pupils were not able to find the British Isles on a map of Europe without help. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to aid teaching.

119 Although satisfactory in lessons seen, teaching is less effective when there is too much talk as pupils work. Pupils' concentration and the quality of work also drop when teaching stops as resources are given out. There is also a loss of focus on new learning when teachers ask for new words and ideas when telling would be more effective.

120 Teachers enrich pupils understanding of their environment through local fieldwork, with outings farther afield for the junior classes. Orienteering is part of the junior curriculum and sharpens map-reading skills.

## **HISTORY**

121 By the end of Year 6 pupils' knowledge and understanding of history and their skills in finding out about the past are as expected for 11 year olds. They recall key facts about Ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman civilisations. They understand how Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings invaded and settled in England. Pupils also describe how life for children and families was different in Tudor and Victorian times. Pupils use historical documents such as census records to find information about life in the past.

122 By the end of Year 2 pupils recall the causes and effects of important historical events such as the Great Fire of London. They also understand the importance of famous people in the past such as Florence Nightingale. Pupils of all abilities understand how we learn about the past from eyewitnesses who wrote down or depicted what they saw. They also learn about the more recent past by talking to older members of their families, and comparing old and new objects such as kitchen utensils and toys.

123 To make up for gaps in learning when there are no history lessons, the school bases some assemblies on history. For example, during the inspection, teachers presented assemblies on Isaac Newton and Martin Luther King. The quality of these presentations gave pupils of all abilities opportunities to reflect on the virtues of these men.

124 There was not enough evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning or pupils' response in lessons. Discussions with pupils showed their thoughtful interest in the past. They had clear memories of what they had learned, particularly through visits and drama. Teachers follow much of the approved national guidance. However, they adapt these plans so as to make the most of the rich historical heritage of York. Pupils visit the Minster and undercroft, study maps of the city in the past, investigate Roman York and visit local museums, including the railway museum.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

125 Pupils make steady progress in developing their information and communication technology skills and, by the age of 11, standards are similar to those in most primary schools. This represents sound improvement from the findings of the previous report where a key issue for action was to raise the standards of pupils' attainment in the subject. This improvement is the result of good curriculum leadership

and improved teacher knowledge and understanding. The school has substantially updated its information and communication technology resources and this has given pupils increased access to computers in the recently completed computer suite. However, the scrutiny of work indicates that links between information and communication technology and other subjects of the curriculum such as literacy, science, and geography are insufficiently developed.

126 By the end of Year 2 standards are as expected for seven year olds. Pupils have sound keyboard skills and are confident in using the computer for word processing and accessing information. Pupils effectively learn the skills of how to move the mouse, choosing options on the screen and print their work. Year 1 pupils are familiar with simple reading, counting and matching programs that help them to improve their reading and number skills. By the age of seven pupils use different fonts, size, style and colour when word processing and talk at length about their experiences of information and communication technology both inside and outside school.

127 In the juniors pupils continue to make steady progress. Year 3 pupils learn how to find and open files when they use 'Junior Pinpoint' database. Most understand the meaning of 'number of fields' and show good control when completing their worksheet on screen. Year 6 pupils are able to develop and complete a sequence of instructions which allows them to program the computer to precisely lift and load a box. By the age of 11, most pupils effectively use information and communication technology to organise, re-organise and analyse ideas and information, for example when Year 6 pupils use computers to support mathematical investigations in shape. They make good use of other equipment such as the digital camera from which they are able to load photographs onto the computer, import them to another program, save and print their work. Traveller pupils and those with special educational needs make effective use of information and communication technology and make steady progress.

128 The quality of teaching in information and communication technology is sound. Teachers make good use of the computer equipment, plan their lessons well and have improved their subject knowledge. They clearly identify what they expect pupils to have learnt. Pupils have very good attitudes to information and communication technology. They are very enthusiastic, enjoy working with computers and work well in pairs, supporting each others learning. Pupils listen well and pay good attention when teachers introduce and demonstrate new skills. They are keen to answer questions and contribute well to discussions. Pupils treat equipment sensibly and safely.

129 The information and communication technology curriculum is well managed. The subject leader provides good leadership and is clearly committed to raising standards. She has developed a school policy and scheme of work that is based on national guidance and is seeking to provide a whole school approach to information and communication technology. All staff have benefited from recent good quality in-service training provided by the subject leader. Recent up-dated computer equipment within the newly completed computer suite provides a good level of resource to support this training. Increased access to computers may well help the school to develop better links between information and communication technology and other subjects. The co-ordinator makes the most of good opportunities to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning, and monitors teachers' planning effectively.

## **MUSIC**

130 The school maintains the very good standards found at the last inspection. The school's planning for music gives all pupils balanced development in singing, playing, composing and appraising skills. Pupils therefore enjoy a full range of music making and listening activities. Their achievement is a strength of the school. It continues the school's musical tradition and strengthens the good reputation of St Laurence's through performances. All pupils have good opportunities to improve their musical gifts in extra-curricular groups for guitar, recorder and choir. The school also arranges specialist tuition in violin, cello and clarinet. Both infant and junior pupils take part in music and drama productions each year. Pupils of all abilities

learn to play the recorder. The programme of music in assemblies enhances the quality of pupils' singing and listening. For example at the beginning of each assembly during the inspection pupils listened to a high quality recording of Vaughan Williams' "Lark Ascending".

131 Year 3 pupils make good progress in learning recorder fingering. The lesson begins with a singing warm up, and includes work on rhythm and sight-reading the notes. By the end of the lesson nearly all pupils play new recorder notes accurately.

132 Year 6 pupils have above average skill in recognising and responding to rhythm. In their weekly lessons they work carefully on two part songs. Pupils of all abilities learn how melodies reflect lyrics in songs. Pupils sang a four part round as a warm up. They recognised the link between words and music as they listened to the Beatles songs, "Yellow Submarine" and "Yesterday". Pupils commented "One's nice and jazzy. One's sorrowy". They then composed football song sequences around "Football's coming home".

132 The overall quality of teaching is very good. Teachers gain confidence and skill through working with the co-ordinator in lessons. They also reflect her high expectations of what pupils of all abilities and backgrounds can achieve.

133 In the best lessons, pupils move through rapid sequences of musical activities. These often combine singing, rhythm work, composition, appraisal and performance. Pupils enjoy and rise to these challenges. For example Year 6 pupils made rapid strides in both sight-reading and response to rhythmical patterns. This was because teachers took them quickly through examples of increasing difficulty. Lively and enthusiastic practices secured the learning of new skills and reflected teachers' energetic teamwork. By the end of the lesson pupils were alert and happy. Several carried on singing as they left the classroom.

134 Leadership and management of the subject are exemplary. Careful timetabling and planning make the most of the two half-hour lessons and a singing practice each week. Activities therefore develop the musical talents of pupils of all abilities. The deputy head teacher shares her expertise, confidence and enthusiasm fully with staff and pupils by taking part. For example, she plays in the orchestra, takes singing practices and lessons, recorder groups and lessons, often teaching through playing a variety of instruments. The school continues to demonstrate the possibilities of primary music. Pupil's rich experiences in music evidently make important contributions to the confidence of their speech and to the quality of their listening, spiritual and cultural development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

135 Standards in physical education are average at both key stages. The picture was much the same in the last inspection. There is no difference in standards between boys and girls. The school has done all it can to broaden the range of 'outdoor and adventurous activities', which was criticised before, even designing an orienteering course in the school grounds. The effect of this has been an improvement in the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in this aspect, particularly at Key Stage 2.

136 Pupils in Key Stage 1 work enthusiastically in dance, for example when they move to interpret the growth of seeds. They respond very well to the music and thoroughly enjoy their work. Year 2 pupils show increasing control when turning, spinning and twisting in gymnastics. They show good understanding of the need for one body part to be fixed to create an effective twist. They are able to work independently and with a partner and have good opportunities to reflect and offer views on their own and others' performance to move the work forward. All lessons begin with a brisk warm-up and end with a cool-down and pupils were able to explain why it is so important to do this.

137 Steady progress is maintained at Key Stage 2. Year 4 pupils achieve well in their games lessons when they improve the skills of throwing, catching, bouncing and dribbling. Pupils work very keenly to gain 'PEGS' certificates as their ability improves. A very effective gymnastics lesson for the Year 5 class leads to high attainment when most pupils show significant improvement to their sequences of run, jump and roll. The teacher's enthusiasm and personal expertise is highly influential in pupils' learning. By skilfully using demonstration and structuring the lesson so that the pupils faced increasing challenges, the teaching ensured that the pupils were working at the full extent of their capabilities. Pupils spoke confidently about what they were doing and offered each other helpful criticism, which they used to make improvements. The lesson was particularly effective because the teacher enabled the pupils to take responsibility for planning and managing their own activities. By the age of 11, almost all pupils reach the recommended standard in swimming.

138 Teaching in physical education is good. Teachers plan lessons well and most have good subject knowledge. Planning is good with clear objectives and where these are shared with pupils at the start of lessons, pupils are more focused in their activities. Most teachers give pupils plenty of opportunities to practise and refine their skills. In the best lessons, work in physical education develops pupils' abilities to talk about their feelings and improve performance effectively. In some lessons, however, pupils have insufficient opportunities to discuss their performance or how they could improve.

139 Most pupils respond positively in physical education lessons. They work well together and cooperate in pairs and in small groups, following the teacher's directions with enthusiasm and enjoyment.

140 The subject leader has a good understanding of the subject and offers sound support to other teachers. He works well with colleagues to ensure a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Teachers' planning is good and is effectively monitored by the subject leader. Assessment of pupil progress is effectively incorporated in planning. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to acquire additional skills in outdoor educational activities during a residential visit to East Barmby. The school makes good use of its hall and the spacious hard play area and grassed areas. Resources are good and are used well by teachers and pupils.