

INSPECTION REPORT

Low Moor Church of England Primary School

Low Moor, Bradford

LEA area: Bradford

Unique reference number: 107307

Headteacher: Mrs V Hartley

Reporting inspector: Mrs L P A Clark
No: 25431

Dates of inspection: 21 – 24 May 01

Inspection number: 190602

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Park House Road Low Moor Bradford
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Holmes
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

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25431	Mrs L Clark Registered Inspector	Mathematics Music	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements What should the school do to improve further?
11368	Mrs K Lee Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
14591	Dr R Perkin Team Inspector	English Religious education	How well are the pupils taught?
18344	Mrs S Walker Team Inspector	Science English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?
22058	Mrs C Richardson Team Inspector	Design and technology Geography History Equal opportunities Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
16173	Mrs L Murphy Team Inspector	Art and design Physical education Provision for children in the foundation stage	
19916	Mrs D Kerr Team Inspector	Information and communication technology	

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REPORT CONTENTS

Page

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

6

Information about the school
How good the school is
What the school does well
What could be improved
How the school has improved since its last inspection
Standards
Pupils' attitudes and values
Teaching and learning
Other aspects of the school
How well the school is led and managed
Parents' and carers' views of the school

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

11

The school's results and pupils' achievements
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13

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

14

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

16

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

17

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

17

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

19

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

20

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

23

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Low Moor Church of England Primary School is larger than average with 334 pupils on roll aged from four to 11. The school is in South Bradford, adjacent to Holy Trinity church and serves the local modern estate and nearby traditional terraced housing, reflecting a very broad range of socio-economic circumstances. The school is currently undergoing reorganisation from a first school to a primary school. There have been substantial changes in the teaching staff in the last two years, largely as a result of this. Traditionally pupils have left at the end of Year 4 to transfer to a middle school in a neighbouring local authority and the current number of pupils in Years 5 and 6 fluctuates according to parental choice of middle or secondary school as the next stage of education. The school has a high level of pupil mobility. A large number of pupils joined the school this year in Year 6, a significant proportion of whom have additional learning needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average at 11 per cent. Eighteen per cent of pupils have special educational needs and 1.5 per cent of pupils have statements of special needs: these proportions are slightly below average. Three pupils have English as an additional language. Currently a very small percentage of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. About 50 per cent of pupils have had pre-school experience at a local nursery. This is a smaller proportion than at the last inspection. Attainment on entry is just about average and the general level of spoken English, confidence and knowledge of the world is lower than at the time of the last inspection. The school is part of an Education Action Zone and recently won an Excellence award from the DfEE.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a highly effective school in which pupils achieve very well. Standards for seven-year-olds are well above average, as they are for many pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5. Standards of pupils in the current Year 6 are in line with those expected nationally, reflecting the very good progress made by the substantial proportion of pupils with special educational needs in that particular year group. Teaching is very good and the leadership and management are excellent. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- There are very high levels of attainment for seven-year-olds and very good achievement throughout the school. Standards in singing are exceptionally high.
- Leadership and management are excellent. Excellent organisational skills and a clear analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses result in clear and consistent approaches by all staff to achieve the school's motto, 'Aim for Excellence'.
- Teaching is very good. The lessons in all classes are interesting, lively and well planned. The classroom assistants, who are well trained, augment the quality of teaching and help all pupils to learn very well.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is excellent and permeates the school's work through assemblies as well as lessons. Through art, music and other subjects pupils gain spiritual insight through sharing and celebrating.
- The school fosters very good behaviour and attitudes to learning. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and have excellent attitudes to other people's different feelings, values and beliefs.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology should be higher for eleven-year-olds.

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 November 1996. Standards are much higher throughout the school as shown by the improvement in results for seven-year-olds in national tests over the past three years. The quality of teaching has improved and as a result pupils achieve very well. Appropriate learning objectives form the focus for all lessons and teachers expect all pupils to achieve highly. Teachers use information about what pupils know and understand very well for pupils of all levels of ability to target what they need to learn and how they are to be taught. Pupils' creative writing has improved, as reflected in the comparative results with similar schools which place pupils' attainment in the top five per cent nationally. Governors are fully involved in planning strategically and financially for future developments taking into account cost effectiveness. Leadership and management have improved overall and are now excellent. All teachers manage their subjects with a high degree of expertise.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	C	A	B	C
Writing	B	C	A	A*
Mathematics	E	A	A	A

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

This table shows that in the year 2000, seven-year-old pupils achieved above average standards in reading and well above average standards in writing. Standards in reading were similar to those achieved in similar schools and in writing they were in the top five per cent. Standards in mathematics were well above average both nationally and compared to similar schools. No comparison can be made with standards for eleven-year-olds because the school has only catered for the full primary age range for the first time this year. Standards in the present Year 6 class are broadly average. This is untypical of the school and standards in all the other junior classes are above average overall. This particular Year 6 has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, and a large number of pupils who have joined the school recently who have not benefited from the school's overall provision. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make very good progress and all pupils achieve very well in relation to their attainment on entry to school. By the end of the reception year, children are likely to attain standards that are above average in language and literacy, personal and social development, creative and mathematical development. This represents good achievement overall and very good progress in language and literacy from the starting points on entry to school.

Standards in information and communication technology are in line with those expected of seven-year-olds; they are below those expected of eleven-year-olds. The new equipment and facilities are enabling many pupils to reach the standards expected of them in most aspects of the curriculum. Standards in religious education are above those expected in the locally Agreed Syllabus for seven-year-olds and in line for eleven-year-olds. By the age of seven, pupils attain above average standards in all subjects and well above average standards in art. At present, eleven-year-old pupils attain broadly average standards in all subjects and in design technology and music, attainment is above that typically expected. Standards in singing are particularly high throughout the school and reflect the importance the school places on music, the shared enjoyment by teachers and pupils alike and the expertise of the teachers. The school sets high standards. Its target setting is rigorous and accurately reflects the high standards the school pushes its pupils to

achieve. Pupils achieve very highly in relation to their ability as a result.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning. They work hard and concentrate well. Children in the reception classes have good attitudes to their work, behave well and are happy in school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well both in and around the school. Pupils know all the adults have equally high expectations and so they behave appropriately. Parents are very pleased with the standard.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. There are excellent relationships between teachers and pupils and pupils readily celebrate the achievements of others. They notice each other's feelings and try to include everyone when they play together. Personal development is good and, when given the opportunity, pupils do show initiative in lessons.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is well above average and pupils are punctual.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The quality of teaching is very good for the six to eleven-year-olds and the pupils learn very well. It is good and often very good for children in the reception classes. In well over half of the lessons seen, teaching was very good or better. In one lesson in seven, it was excellent. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. In reception classes, the teaching of language and literacy is very good and satisfactory for physical development. Basic skills are taught very well and as a result children apply much intellectual effort to their work. The school has got a very good supply of equipment and books that help to make learning fun. Often they are used quite inventively to capture pupils' imaginations and fire their enthusiasm. Literacy and numeracy are very well taught throughout the school. Teachers are particularly good at making learning basic skills not only effective but also interesting. The consistently very good quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is a major strength and has a very strong impact on pupils' achievements. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good as is the teaching of pupils with English as an additional language and they receive high quality support from classroom assistants who work closely with individuals or groups of pupils helping them to learn. Teachers manage their pupils very skilfully and the brisk pace of lessons ensures that pupils work productively. While literacy and numeracy are promoted very well through other subjects there is insufficient use of information and communication technology in other curriculum areas and so restricts pupils' application of technology.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school provides very good opportunities for all its pupils to achieve well. High priority is given to developing pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy.
Provision for pupils with	Very good. The curriculum is relevant and the school's inclusive

special educational needs	policy ensures that these pupils receive a similarly broad curriculum as well as carefully planned programmes to support their individual needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The individual programmes of work support these pupils very well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. Provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is excellent and it is very good for social and cultural development. The school encourages pupils to respect others and to take responsibility for their own actions. Art, music, language and literature and close links with the local church give pupils an insight into a spiritual dimension.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. The school has very good procedures for caring for its pupils and places a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' academic progress and personal development.
How well the school works in partnership with parents.	Very well. Parents are very supportive. The school works hard to maintain very effective links and provides very good information to parents about what their children are learning and how well they are getting on.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The leadership qualities of the headteacher are outstanding. The senior management team and governors provide strong support and subject co-ordinators manage their responsibilities very well indeed. The recent re-organisation from a first to a primary school has been managed exceedingly well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are supportive and well informed and fully meet their statutory duties. They take a keen interest in the curriculum, teaching, standards and finance.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The school constantly seeks ways to improve its performance through a comprehensive range of different types of monitoring for most aspects of the school, involving the senior management team, staff, governors and some pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The policy the governors have produced for obtaining best value guides spending and ensures that all money is used wisely to benefit all pupils.

The school is due to undergo an extensive programme of rebuilding and refurbishment following its development from a first to a primary school. The present accommodation is too cramped. The school is well staffed and the arrival of many teachers new to the school, some of whose previous experience has been in middle schools, has been managed exceptionally well. The result is a unified team who share a commitment to high standards. There is a high ratio of classroom assistants to teachers and they are deployed extremely well to assist teaching. Learning resources are good and are used well to help pupils to learn in all subjects.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects their children to achieve highly. • The teaching is good so their children make good progress. • Their children behave well and the school helps them to become mature and responsible. • The school is well led and managed. • They can come into school to discuss problems or ask questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons, particularly for younger pupils.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views and recognise that parents' views that 'there is never an inconvenient time to be in school' is accurate. The school encourages parents to be involved in the school's work and provides a very good range of information on the curriculum and their children's progress. The activities out of school are satisfactory overall. There is a good range of visits to places of interest but the extra-curricular activities are more limited, especially for younger pupils. Most of the teaching staff of younger pupils, however, are new to the school this year and plans are in place for a more extensive range of outside school activities for next year.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

STANDARDS

1 Standards are high in this school. All pupils, whatever their ability, achieve very well. In national tests, seven-year-old pupils attain highly compared to schools in similar circumstances and in writing they were in the top five per cent in the country. No comparison can be made of standards achieved by eleven-year-olds with the results of national tests because this is the first year the school has completed as a primary school. The trends in the school's results for seven-year-olds are above the national trend and the school is very well placed to improve further.

2 By the end of the reception year children are likely to attain standards that are above average in all aspects of their learning apart from in knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Standards in these two areas are likely to be in line with those typically expected of six-year-olds. Children's attainment on entry is slightly lower than at the time of the last inspection, particularly in their general knowledge and their spoken language. This reflects the lower proportion of children who have received nursery education before starting school. Given these circumstances it is clear that pupils' achievement is good overall and very good in reading.

3 Pupils' attainment by the age of seven is well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. This is a considerable improvement on standards at the last inspection, which were broadly average. In the national tests for seven-year-olds, pupils' performance in reading was above average nationally and in line with similar schools; in writing, their performance was well above the national average and in the top five per cent in comparison with pupils from similar schools. In mathematics, it was well above average both nationally and compared to similar schools. Teachers' assessments of standards in science attained by seven-year-olds indicated an above average proportion reaching the expected level though the number attaining higher than this was well below. Results in science this year show a marked improvement. Careful analysis of test data and the curriculum highlighted shortcomings which have been fully addressed in the teaching this year, resulting in over a third of pupils in Year 2 attaining higher than average levels. The attainment of pupils in the present Year 6 is average. This is because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and of pupils who have recently joined the school who have not benefited from being educated here. Standards in the other junior classes are above average. In Year 6, a substantial proportion of pupils attains above average standards for their age in English, mathematics and science.

4 Throughout the school, pupils of all levels of ability achieve very well in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets on their individual educational plans, and in the development of self-esteem and confidence, because of the very good teaching they receive and the suitability of their targets. The school makes very good use of information to set targets in individual education plans and to decide in which groups pupils should be taught. The result of this is that pupils who need additional support are identified as soon as possible. Pupils with special educational needs frequently attain well for their abilities in national and other tests. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make very good progress because of the staff's awareness of their individual needs and the account they take of this when they teach.

5 Pupils' achievement is very good because of the very structured approach the school adopts to teaching and learning. Teachers take every opportunity to promote literacy and numeracy throughout the curriculum. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been very well implemented and thoughtfully adapted to meet the needs of the school. For example, additional writing lessons, mathematical and scientific displays, which form an integral part of teaching, and a

strong emphasis on the correct use of technical vocabulary all help to raise standards. The structure of literacy and numeracy lessons is used very effectively, modified to produce a consistent structure for science lessons, and in all three subjects the closing session is used very well to assess how well the pupils have understood the work. These assessments are then used to adjust the next day's planning. Teachers use assessment very well to target groups of pupils and analyse national and other tests to give accurate data from which to plan future lessons. This high degree of consistency in teaching methods is a distinctive feature and largely accounts for the very good achievement of all pupils.

6 Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with those expected of seven-year-olds and below those expected of eleven-year-olds. There are some gaps in the oldest pupils' knowledge and skills. The school has only very recently had access to new resources but already, by the end of Year 2, many pupils' attainment is better than expected for their age. Because of the lack of resources in the past, it has not been possible to teach some aspects of the curriculum for older pupils, such as the use of email, the Internet, and more advanced control technology. The new facilities are enabling these pupils to catch up quickly, and by the time they are eleven, pupils are now reaching the standards expected of them in most aspects of the curriculum.

7 Pupils' attainment in religious education is above the expectations for seven-year-olds of the locally Agreed Syllabus and in line with expectations for eleven-year-olds. Pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs and those who have only been in the Year 6 class a short while. In all other junior classes pupils attain above average levels of knowledge of a wide variety of religions, applying what they have learnt very well to their own experiences and situations.

8 By the time pupils are seven years old, and in most junior classes, their attainment is well above expected standards in art and above average in all other subjects. Standards in the present Year 6 class are broadly average across the subject range apart from design and technology and music where they attain above average standards. The standard of singing is extremely high, much better than in most schools. Pupils' work in the creative arts is quite distinctive in that it has a strong spiritual dimension, reflecting their appreciation of visual and aural beauty.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9 Pupils of all ages show very good attitudes to their work and to their life in school. Most parents agree that their children like school. Year 6 pupils spoke of being "desperate" to stay on when the school changed from a First to a Primary school. The high levels of enthusiasm in lessons and willingness to learn contribute to the very good progress. Pupils listen carefully in class and work hard, concentrating well. They respond very well to the very good teaching, interesting lessons and excellent relationships between pupils and all adults in school. For example, in a mathematics lesson, Year 2 pupils persevered to put groups of numbers in the "magic square" to make them add up to 15, as a result of the support and encouragement given by their teacher and classroom assistant.

10 Children in the reception classes have good attitudes to their work. They behave very well and are happy in school. Their confidence in speaking develops though many need a degree of adult help to give clear explanations to the whole class. Children are able to concentrate for increasing amounts of time as they become engrossed in their work.

11 The behaviour is very good, both in and around school. No exclusions are reported and parents are rightly pleased with the standards of behaviour in school. Pupils are confident that any isolated incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and appropriately. Pupils know that all adults have the same high expectations of behaviour and do as they are asked without fuss.

12 There are excellent relationships in school. Pupils are happy to celebrate the achievements of others by clapping to show their appreciation for a task well done. They work well together in

groups and are able to share resources and take turns. For example, in a music lesson Year 6 pupils worked with absolute concentration in their groups to create an improvised rhythm pattern. Pupils of all ages are very polite, holding doors open for adults and each other. They are sensitive to the feelings of others. Pupils sitting alone at playtime were soon noticed and invited to join a group.

13 The personal development of pupils is good. When given the opportunity, pupils show maturity and initiative in lessons and can organise themselves efficiently into groups, for instance. They undertake willingly a number of responsibilities for school routines. These range, for example, from Year 1 classroom monitors to Year 6 librarians.

14 Attendance levels are very good. The school day begins promptly and most pupils arrive on time. The school's rate of unauthorised absence is higher than average due to the school's appropriately strict policy of authorising only legitimate reasons for absence and holidays in term time of up to ten days.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15 The quality of teaching is very good. In well over half of the lessons observed, teaching was very good or better and in one lesson in seven, it was excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. At the last inspection, the quality of teaching was good but there were concerns over the teaching of more able pupils; there have been considerable improvements in both teaching overall and in the provision for higher attaining pupils. Pupils learn very well. The key issue related to the quality of learning objectives and the use of assessment information in planning has been fully addressed.

16 The teaching of pupils aged seven to eleven is very good. It is good and often very good for children in the reception classes. The consistency of teaching and the rate at which pupils learn throughout the school is a major strength and has a very strong impact upon pupils' standards and behaviour; it is underpinned by a very effective teaching and learning policy. Teachers new to the school and those working with an age group with which they are unfamiliar have a rigorous and effective induction to ensure that they know how the teaching and learning policy operates and teaching and learning are very thoroughly monitored. Consequently, there is a strong feeling of very effective teamwork in the school and very good equality of opportunity for all pupils. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is very good and both literacy and numeracy are very well taught across the curriculum. Teaching in design and technology, geography, history and music is very good and pupils learn very well.

17 The quality of teaching in the reception classes is good and at times very good. Support staff are deployed exceptionally well and this enables the full breadth and depth of the curriculum to be explored by the children. Key strengths are in the teaching of communication, language and literacy. Teachers know how to teach basic skills effectively and pupils learn at a fast rate, applying much intellectual effort to their reading and work with letter sounds in particular. Teaching is good in mathematics with strengths in the teaching of number. The daily lesson in mathematics is effective in promoting children's understanding of the number system and in making sure that they can use their increasing mathematical skills to good effect. Excellent, high quality resources, often made by the staff, really engage children's interest. For example, when children were counting in sets of two they were able to watch pictures of animal pairs being flipped over in time to their singing. This demonstrated very clearly the pattern to their counting. As a result they were able to use a mental picture of the pattern to help them in their next practical task. Teaching is good in all other areas of children's learning apart from in physical development where it is sound. In the latter the teaching is less confident and as a result children do not make the same speedy progress as in other aspects of their learning.

18 The quality of teachers' planning is very good. Its major strength lies in the way it uses assessments very effectively to target activities accurately for the needs of pupils of different ability

levels within the class. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs undertake activities in most lessons that are challenging but manageable; these pupils are often given excellent support from well trained and very capable support staff or effectively briefed volunteers. The planning takes full account of individual education plans when appropriate and teachers know pupils' needs very well so that they can target questions to maintain involvement and promote good behaviour, thus enabling the pupils to make very good progress. Similarly, teachers and support staff are very well aware of the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language and make very good provision for their learning. Teachers' planning also caters effectively for the needs of more able pupils, who are provided with stimulating and challenging tasks that build on their previous learning and develop it well. Teachers mark pupils' work very effectively, particularly in English and mathematics, setting individual fortnightly targets for pupils to aim at. Pupils respond well to these. Homework is used consistently and well to consolidate learning and to set up future activities.

19 Because teachers know their subjects well, they are particularly good at developing the pupils' basic skills in most subjects, particularly in English and mathematics. Consequently, reading and research skills are systematically taught through literacy and other English lessons but also in subjects such as history and science. In these lessons, pupils have the opportunity to write at length in a variety of forms for a range of purposes. The skills of speaking and listening are less consistently taught. In some lessons, very productive techniques are used to ensure that pupils have good opportunities to talk and plan together and listen to one another's ideas; for example, in a science lesson, pupils were allocated responsibilities within 'expert groups', one of which was to record in writing the decisions of the group and another was to report back orally to the class. In some literacy lessons, pupils have 'speaking partners' with whom they are asked frequently to consult before giving an answer to the teacher. However, such strategies are not used in many lessons or in all classes and consequently pupils' speaking and listening skills are not as well developed as their reading and writing skills. Numeracy skills are promoted well in mathematics lessons and in other subjects such as design technology and science, where pupils are expected to measure accurately. There is insufficient use of information and communication technology in other subjects.

20 Teachers' very skilled management of pupils is built firmly on excellent relationships; consequently, pupils behave very well and work very hard. Classrooms are invariably pleasant and stimulating environments that promote pupils' respect for the ideas and feelings of others. The brisk pace of lessons ensures that pupils work very productively; very little time is wasted. Lessons are very well organised and learning resources are used extremely well to stimulate interest and focus attention. For example, the teacher in a Year 5 religious education lesson was not content simply to show the pupils the artefacts involved in a Shabbat meal, she got the pupils to actually lay the Shabbat table, reinforcing the significance of each object as it was set in place.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

21 The curriculum for pupils aged six to eleven reflects the school's aims very well and makes a valuable contribution to the learning of all its pupils. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to achieve well in a stimulating and interesting way. Teachers make very good use of nationally recommended guidelines in all subjects, which ensure that each aspect of the curriculum is taught in appropriate depth and detail and pupils develop their understanding in a systematic way. They plan very purposeful links between subjects and use of numeracy and literacy across the curriculum is very good. Since the last inspection the school has adopted the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and they are having a significant impact on standards across the school. All statutory requirements with regard to the National Curriculum and religious education are met in full.

22 Much time and effort has been put into re-writing the curriculum for children in the reception classes. It is based on national guidance and takes very good account of the national strategies for

literacy and numeracy. The outcome is a lively and dynamic curriculum which brings together each strand through an overall topic. It is very well matched to the needs of the children. The outdoor provision is sound overall and an area that the school needs to concentrate on to bring it into line with the high quality provision in the rest of the curriculum. Overall the curriculum prepares children very well for later work in the National Curriculum.

23 Provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved since the last inspection. The provision is now very good because of its relevance for all pupils with special educational needs and the level of inclusion in lessons and the life of the school. Pupils receive specific help in literacy and numeracy lessons, and carefully planned programmes support pupils with emotional and behavioural or physical needs very well. Teachers and support staff work together to individual education plans for pupils with statements of special needs. The programmes for pupils for whom English is an additional language are appropriate for each individual and teachers provide challenging extension activities for higher attaining pupils. A small number of pupils have been identified as having particular talents and individual programmes of work ensure that the school meets their needs successfully.

24 The school makes satisfactory provision for activities such as clubs for pupils aged seven to eleven, which is an improvement since the last inspection, and good use of visits and visitors into school to enrich pupils' learning. Some of these events take place in school and older pupils take part in a residential trip, which benefits their social and physical development. The school encourages pupils to enter competitions and sporting tournaments, often with great success. Two pupils recently came first and second in a local art competition. The content and organisation of the curriculum ensures that pupils have equal opportunities for learning and participating in activities. There are good arrangements for the induction of pupils into the school and to transfer from each year group to the next. Links with secondary schools through the curriculum are good; for instance, teachers coming to Low Moor to take Year 6 pupils for physical education lessons each week. Pupils and staff are benefiting from increased contacts, which have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Links with the community are very good and include the local football and rugby teams, local industries and the Church.

25 Good provision is made for personal, social and health education, including sex and drugs awareness through a scheme used throughout the school. This is supported extremely well by the imaginative and skilled presentations for all ages during the annual visit of the Bradford Life Education caravan. The provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is excellent overall and represents an improvement since the last inspection.

26 The excellent provision for spiritual development is tangible. Assemblies are very special times. Pupils come into the hall and listen to music, learning to appreciate its qualities. The Madagascan music, played each day during the inspection, began to make more sense to the pupils as they were guided to listen to it carefully, to hear the different instruments and to empathise with its message of forgiveness. Much of the singing in assemblies and in music lessons is spine-tingling because of the exhilarating spirit of shared celebration as pupils and staff listen, reflect and sing together. The sensitive approach to religious education ensures that pupils gain an understanding of how religious belief affects people's lives. They learn stories from other faiths and gain a real insight into the nature of right and wrong. At the end of each day, pupils and teachers pause to reflect and to say a prayer together. Pupils are encouraged to empathise with the feelings of others as illustrated in their evocative poems about how they felt on entering a dark, damp cave in the Yorkshire Dales. The leadership places great importance on pupils learning to appreciate music, art and literature and to look beyond the material world. This gives the school a very special climate for learning.

27 Provision for moral development is excellent. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and are frequently encouraged to think about how their actions affect others. There is a clear code of behaviour in classes and throughout the school. It is used very effectively to promote moral and social development, which is very good. Relationships in the school are exemplary and provide pupils with very good examples on which to model their own social behaviour. Pupils work co-

operatively, sharing ideas and supporting each other as needed and they are given opportunities to contribute to the smooth running of the school by undertaking responsibilities. Pupils' cultural development is very good. Stories and music from other cultures are used in lessons throughout the school. Pupils develop a good general knowledge, learning about other countries in geography, or following the travels of Barnaby Bear around the world as younger pupils do with great interest. In English pupils read a wealth of literature and in art they appreciate the works of artists such as Andy Goldsworthy, and study Aboriginal, Asian and Islamic art. Pupils are taught to value the multi-cultural nature of their own country through religious education where pupils study a wide range of faiths, including Buddhism and Judaism.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

28 The school has very good procedures for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Child protection procedures are appropriate and effective. The headteacher makes sure that these procedures are known to all staff. The daily organisation of the school takes account of the very clear health and safety procedures. The caretaker is conscientious in keeping full records of risk assessments and fire drills, for example, and the school is very clean and well maintained. The very good programme for personal, social, health education and citizenship (PSHC) encourages healthy living and pupils' awareness of safety issues. For instance, pupils in Year 1 were fully involved in a discussion on healthy eating in a lesson led by a visiting teacher from the Life Education Centre.

29 The provision for promoting pupils' educational and personal support and guidance is very good. The excellent relationships promoted by class teachers and all adults encourage pupils to work hard and do their best. The school rewards pupils at every opportunity, from stickers for good work and effort to the celebration assembly for the "Stars of the Week". Year 6 pupils agree that everyone is treated fairly, commenting that "There are no teachers' pets here."

30 The use of day-to-day assessment for children under the age of six is very good. Teachers make clear assessments of pupils' development and use the information well to set the next step of learning. Parents hold a very positive view of the provision for the children in the reception classes including the support for those children who have special educational needs. The inspection judgement confirms this.

31 The school has developed very good procedures for assessing and recording the academic progress of individuals and groups. These start when the child enters the reception class and are used consistently to track progress throughout the school. All teachers use the same simple but effective system for recording pupils' progress. Because these records are passed on and continued from year to year, teachers can identify patterns of progress and act upon any individual learning difficulties or underachievement in any of the subjects of the curriculum. Teachers make very good use of the information to plan lessons effectively to ensure that the work in class meets the needs of pupils of all levels of ability. Individual pupils and groups are set realistic targets so that all pupils can achieve their best and make very good progress. The individual targets are shared regularly with pupils and parents though the school has yet to involve pupils formally in setting their own targets.

32 The systems to check and promote pupils' personal development including individual targets for social development are excellent. Not only do class teachers know their pupils well but record a clear assessment annually of their personal development. This is then passed to the next teacher who contributes to this record by recording pupils' progress in the light of the previous year's assessment.

33 The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good and effectively contribute to the very good behaviour seen in school. All adults have the same high expectations that pupils will behave well in and out of the classroom and pupils receive clear and consistent messages about the standards expected of them. The school monitors attendance thoroughly

using a computerised system and any patterns of absence are quickly noticed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

34 The school works hard to maintain very effective links with parents. Most parents are very supportive of the school's work and ethos. They agree that the school is welcoming and that they are able to visit the school freely to discuss any concerns they may have. As one parent put it, "There is never an inconvenient time to be in school." Parents feel that teaching is good and that the school expects their children to work hard and that they make good progress. The inspection team agrees with all these positive views of parents. Some parents are not happy with the amount of homework set and a significant number of parents are not satisfied with the range of activities outside lessons. The team finds that the school makes good use of homework, setting tasks regularly which extend pupils' learning in school. The activities out of school are satisfactory overall. There is a good range of visits to places of interest but the extra-curricular clubs are more limited, especially for younger pupils.

35 Very good induction procedures help the children to settle into school and help the parents understand and support the process very well indeed. Parents also help with simple homework including reading which is set regularly. The quality of comment between parents and staff provides further support to the rate of which children learn about letter sounds and improve their reading.

36 The school encourages parents to be involved in the work of the school and interested in their children's education by providing them with a very good range of information on the curriculum and on their children's progress. The annual reports paint a very clear picture for parents on their children's attainment and rates of progress in every subject and also on their personal development. They include appropriate targets to help pupils improve further. The school has held curriculum meetings for parents such as the phonics workshop and sends regular letters giving full details of what pupils will learn every term. Notice boards in the Units give parents very good information on the week's focus for literacy and numeracy, for example, reminding parents of reception class children of the "letters of the week." These initiatives encourage parents to help their children at home. Most parents listen to their children read regularly which helps to raise standards. Some parents make good comments on their children's progress in the reading diaries. Class teachers do not always make full use of the diaries to involve parents with aspects of reading being focussed on in class. Some parents and other adults help effectively in school and the Parents, Teachers, Friends Association (PTFA) is active in raising funds to support the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37 The school is exceptionally well led and managed by the headteacher who receives strong support from the senior management team and the governors. The leadership qualities of the headteacher are outstanding. Her very clear educational vision for the future direction of the school is realised through analytical thinking, excellent organisational skills and a secure knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. At the heart of this is the school's commitment to 'aim for excellence' which is reflected in its work and in the commitment of staff, pupils and governors.

38 There is considerable strength in the school's consistent approach to teaching and to the systems it has set up to ensure that learning is effective in all classes. Effective systems for areas such as planning, display, assessment and behaviour management are applied in the same way by all staff. These systems underpin teaching well by providing support for new and inexperienced staff and by ensuring a consistent approach throughout the school. The leadership has high expectations and staff strive to meet them because they know their work is valued.

39 The monitoring and evaluation of the school's work is excellent. The school constantly seeks ways to improve performance, for example, through the rigorous analysis of data, the tracking of individual pupils and the setting of targets. There is a comprehensive range of different types of checking of most aspects of the school. This process involves senior staff, teachers and governors. The systems are manageable and are administered consistently throughout the school. The results are then used most effectively to make changes where these are necessary. At the same time, there is a lack of fussiness so that all runs smoothly and methodically.

40 The governing body understands its accountability and helps the school to be so effective. It has successfully managed the improvements relating to the key issues in the last inspection. Through a well thought out committee structure, the governing body ensures it covers important aspects of the school. As a result governors are very supportive and well informed. The headteacher and governors plan strategically for future developments very prudently. They are concerned to get the best value for money in both educational and financial terms. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the governors' role was judged to be under-developed. Innovations are now closely linked to the priorities in the school improvement plan and backed by careful financial planning. Governors are becoming increasingly more pro-active in the management of the school. One example of this can be seen in the policy they have produced for obtaining best value. This guides their spending and ensures that money is used wisely to benefit all pupils. Governors are very aware that the school's best value is judged by the standards its pupils achieve and all decisions are made with this view in mind. Each governor has a subject as an area of interest and they have all have been trained in target setting and monitoring and evaluation. The day-to-day administration of the school is highly efficient and effective and contributes substantially to the smooth running of the school. All statutory requirements are met.

41 The role of the subject co-ordinators is clearly defined and they play an important part in the management of the school. There are regular opportunities for them to monitor standards and teaching, to manage a budget and to contribute to the school development plan through their regular audits of their subject. In addition they summarise for governors the impact that major spending has had on teaching and learning. The headteacher delegates considerable responsibility to the co-ordinators who rise to the challenge with enthusiasm and commitment.

42 The leadership and management of the reception classes are very good. Organisation is at a high level, staff are deployed very well and the lead taken in updating and improving the curriculum has impacted very well on children's achievement. A keen team spirit is engendered which promotes equality of opportunity for the children very well.

43 The recent re-organisation from first school to a primary school has brought with it a number of challenges including a high turnover of staff and the assimilation of teachers whose previous experience has been in middle schools. This has been handled with sensitivity and insight. New staff have been made very welcome and carefully introduced to the way the school works so that pupils' education has not suffered in any way. Those transferring from middle schools have had excellent support through the transition and their skills in dealing with older pupils have been used to the benefit of pupils. The result of this excellent management has been the emergence of a strong and unified team who share a commitment to improve and who have the same aims and high standards. There is a feeling of optimism among staff and their morale is high which again reflects on the positive nature of the management of the school. There is a high ratio of classroom assistants to teachers and their contribution greatly enhances the quality of teaching. They work in effective partnership with teachers and are deployed to optimum effect with clear roles and responsibilities.

44 The school is due to undergo an extensive programme of rebuilding and refurbishment in the near future. This will improve the existing facilities, which are too cramped. Currently the accommodation is managed efficiently and enhanced by stimulating and attractive displays. The quality and range of learning resources for all subjects are good and they support teaching and learning well.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

45 The headteacher, staff and governors should now:

- ◆ raise standards in information and communication technology for seven to eleven-year-olds.
(Paragraphs 6 and 110)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	92
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
15%	41%	37%	7%	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)	0	334
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	34

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	62

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	28
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	55

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.3
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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	20	14	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	19	19
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	32	33	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (93)	97 (85)	97 (96)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (86)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	19	18
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	31	33	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (91)	97 (98)	94 (91)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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	0
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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	0	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)	14.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.2
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	290

Financial information

Financial year	99-00
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	£
Total income	475,,149
Total expenditure	444417
Expenditure per pupil	1,407
Balance brought forward from previous year	10,008
Balance carried forward to next year	40,740

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	334
Number of questionnaires returned	105

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	43	9	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	46	3	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	49	3	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	51	15	3	1
The teaching is good.	59	37	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	41	8	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	19	5	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	24	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	38	8	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	66	29	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	43	3	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	34	31	13	8

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

46 Standards are above those typically expected in most areas that the young children study. This is a result of the very good leadership of the foundation stage which brings together: successful teaching which is at least good and often very good; an exciting and well structured curriculum; effective use of assessment; and the effective implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. The outcome is that children learn at a good and often very good rate and achieve well over time. Strengths are in the teaching and learning of reading including letter sounds and mathematics, especially number. Areas to improve are: the planning, teaching and learning in outside play including formal play times to better promote children's physical development; and opportunities for self-choice and independence.

47 At the time of the last inspection standards were overall satisfactory with a significant number of children achieving beyond that typically expected. A similar picture is evident now. This does not show the whole picture, however, because on entry to the school the general level of spoken English, confidence and knowledge of the world is lower than at the time of the last inspection. In part this is because fewer children experience nursery education than in 1996 and so have more ground to make up to attain the levels that they do.

Personal, social and emotional development

48 Children look forward to school and they are not disappointed. A very productive start to the day reflects part of the school's creed to 'let the room be full of happiness'. Underlying this are the very good relationships and the very well established routines which enable children to develop as well rounded individuals. Children achieve well and are likely to attain higher than typically expected of their age and this sets them in very good stead for their work in the National Curriculum.

49 Many children have immature skills in personal and social development when they enter the reception classes. Effective induction procedures and teaching of good quality enables children to quickly become settled, and take an active part in lessons. This was the case, for example, when participating in role-play as jungle rangers they took turns and followed instructions alongside a participating adult. The role-play engaged children's attention as they made believe they were on safari. Their concentration and experience were extended because the adult knew what she was trying to do and the resources for learning were very good indeed.

50 Children achieve well overall though their level of confidence is such that they need much more practise at making independent choices and at resolving their conflicts. For example, when building with wooden bricks, once the bricks were all used the individuals had little skill at negotiating how to share and work together. This resulted in solitary play with higher achievers moving away to use other toys. The opportunities to take on small responsibilities and thus develop a mature response are inhibited when adults tidy away rather than building in the tidying up as part and parcel of each activity or lesson.

Communication, language and literacy

51 Children's achievement is very good from the low skills on entry to the reception classes. Every opportunity is taken to develop oracy, much of it built on the concept of 'Talking Partners' which encourages precise modelling of speaking and listening by adults. This the staff do very well, speaking very clearly and making sure that pupils recite back to them new vocabulary and whole sentences. It is particularly helpful to those learning English as an additional language. Children

are keen to respond to questions though often the average attainers use phrases which the adult has to work on hard with the class to attain a full answer. Children enjoy learning new words and try very hard to extend their words into phrases and phrases into sentences. Routines are very well established for the literacy lessons and children respond maturely moving from whole class teaching to group work smoothly and quickly.

52 The teaching of reading is of very good quality marked by the extremely effective planning and excellent resources for teaching and learning. Together these factors ensure equal opportunities for children across the two reception classes. Children learn at a fast pace resulting in good standards in reading and in their understanding of letter sounds and how they are used to make words. Early reading skills develop very well helped by the effective links with parents, the use of a reading diary and very good diagnostic records of children's development. High attaining children point to the words as they read, often their keenness taking the spoken word ahead of the written word. When this happens they find it difficult to go back to the correct spot to continue the story. Intonation is not well developed though staff set a very good example in this as they bring stories alive. Children particularly notice the letters as when one high attaining child asked 'How come 'head' has an 'a' in it?' Average readers draw on cues from the pictures and words to explain the story. They refer to initial letter sounds while lower attainers read together with an adult. All pupils enjoy reading and most appreciate the humour in the well chosen books.

53 Children make sound progress with their writing. Letters are well formed because children are taught exactly how to hold their pencil correctly and the importance of letter formation and of making sure letters are consistent in size. High attainers, with adult help, identify where full stops should be placed. They can write key words independently and give simple accounts of well-known stories. Average attainers write for a range of reasons though at times they forget to leave spaces between words. Lower attainers often reverse letters, and slope their writing across the page.

Mathematical development

54 Children's achievement is good and they are likely to attain above the level expected for their age. This is because the teaching is very well structured and lively. It provides challenging and practical work very well matched to children's capabilities and makes excellent use of resources, many of which have been made especially for the children. The resources engage children's interest immediately as was the case in a lesson on symmetry. Children identified symmetrical features on a glossy picture of a tiger's face and made very good gains in completing individual symmetrical patterns in the shape of a butterfly's wing. Higher attainers were able to complete a pattern working outwards from the line of symmetry. They had some difficulty placing triangles but made gains in understanding the rotational element required to achieve a perfect match. Middle attainers worked on a partially completed pattern which they had to finish. Lower attainers worked with care but were much slower than others in making sure that both sides of their pattern matched.

55 Children make very good gains in their understanding and use of number through their daily lesson in mathematics. On occasion higher attainers mark time when the introduction to lessons spends too much time on the basics. Teaching is good and at times very good and adults are deployed very well to work with groups and individuals. In this way children with special educational needs are very well catered for. The planning of tasks makes sure that a sensible balance is achieved in each lesson. The activities are effectively focused on clear learning objectives. The teaching makes the learning of mathematics fun, as in the use of games, number songs and rhymes. As a result children enjoy their tasks and work hard to improve on their individual best. They are able to concentrate for good lengths of time so that they complete one task before moving on to another one.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

56 Children's achievement is good. On entry to the reception classes children's general knowledge is somewhat limited and lower than is typical for their age. They are likely to attain the level expected for their age by the time they leave the reception classes. This is because they learn at a good rate and respond very well to the teaching which is of good quality. A particular strength in the curriculum is very evident in this aspect of learning. A range of subjects is brought together under the umbrella of a topic very pertinent to the age range and interests of the children. Skills from many subjects are taught step-by-step together with due attention to building up children's knowledge and understanding of what they study, such as aspects of science, geography and history.

57 Children's spirituality is developed through scientific enquiry as when they investigate ice. They notice beautiful patterns within the ice and take time to compare them and admire their beauty. They enjoy using computers and though not yet completely au fait with the keyboard are able to enjoy simple programs linked to their other work. When they use the computer suite they listen attentively and co-operate well. They enjoy telling their friends what they have achieved.

58 Higher attainers use their literacy skills well to write up their findings about the rate at which ice melts. They can make simple predictions and provide plausible reasons why one ice sculpture will melt quicker than another. Generally children need encouragement to provide explanations and ask questions. Their lack of a wide vocabulary is noticeable as when a lower attaining child was unable to name the trunk and branches of a tree.

Physical development

59 The quality of teaching is sound, children make satisfactory progress and achieve soundly over time. They are likely to attain a typical standard by the time they leave the reception class. Children have plenty of opportunities to develop their skills in cutting, pasting, building and painting. Children have formal lessons in the school hall where they develop a range of ways of moving, paying increasing attention to their control and balance. This is helped through demonstration by the teacher and by the children being encouraged to describe the work of others. Children understand that safety is important and listen carefully to the teacher. Higher attainers can place up to four well thought out stretches and curls into a sequence. Lower attainers need help in balancing and climbing.

60 Teachers do not make enough use of opportunities to develop physical skills in the outside environment. Access to the use of apparatus was limited during the week of inspection and children's social skills and their imagination were under-developed through outside play. This was because the teaching on the whole was too tightly structured and directive to allow children to develop and express their ideas and creativity. Provision for the formal daily playtime does not match the standards of provision found elsewhere in the reception classes. At these times children have little or no resources to take advantage of and the supervising adults are insufficiently involved in talking to the children. As a result most girls spend the time eating their snack and not exercising and most boys eat their snack quickly and engage in over boisterous play which on occasion leads to quarrels.

Creative development

61 The quality of teaching is good and the children make good progress. They achieve well and are likely to exceed the targets set for their age group by the end of the reception year. The effective planning provides good opportunities for a full range of creative activities. Children's work is displayed well and they take great delight in explaining it to visitors.

62 Higher attainers have a good eye for colour and texture and use this well, for example, when they use watercolours in their observational work on fruit. The representations are particularly life-like and natural. Good attention is given to detail as in the drawings of the fire fighters which show the body in good proportion and much detail in the facial features. This is because the adults have high expectations and are always urging the children to think of the next step of learning and what they could do to improve. Resources of very good quality are provided, only the best is good enough for the children. Much praise is used and this has a good impact on children's self-esteem. Lower attainers explore patterns and design and most can continue simple patterns but need help to extend their skill to include extra colour or shape.

ENGLISH

63 Pupils' attainment by the age of seven is well above the national average, a marked improvement on standards at the last inspection, which were broadly average. The attainment of the present Year 6 pupils is average, largely because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and of pupils who have joined the school during the previous two years. Standards in the other junior years are above average. No comparison can be made with standards for eleven-year-olds at the last inspection because the school then catered only for four to nine-year-olds. A key issue at the last inspection was to improve the quality of pupils' creative writing; this issue has been fully met. In the national tests in reading for seven-year-olds in 2000, pupils' performance was above the national average and in line with that of pupils in similar schools. In writing, their performance was well above the national average and in the top five per cent in comparison with pupils in similar schools. Pupils of all levels of ability achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment and boys and girls achieve equally well. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of the very effective ways in which teachers adapt planned work to their particular needs, because of their very effective individual educational plans and because of the often excellent support they receive. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make very good progress because of the staff's awareness of their individual needs and the way in which they target questions and activities to promote their learning.

64 Pupils' standards in speaking and listening are broadly in line with those expected for their age for both seven and eleven-year-olds. Younger pupils discuss their views animatedly with a 'speaking partner' when given the opportunity and their response when speaking to the whole class benefits from the practice and is usually clear and coherent. These opportunities are not frequent or consistent enough, however, and many pupils answer the teachers' questions briefly and not always in complete sentences. Older pupils in some classes or subjects speak up well when fulfilling their responsibility to report back in their 'expert groups'. For example, in a science lesson in Year 4, pupils were allocated a variety of responsibilities within each group; one pupil was the designated reporter while another was the official note-taker. The subsequent lively discussion promoted informal speaking and listening skills very well while the 'official' report back to the class involved the reporter in using a more formal speaking register in order to communicate the group's thinking clearly to the rest of the class. When such strategies are used, they are effective in developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and their confidence in public speaking. However, the use of these and similar strategies is too infrequent. The brisk pace of some lessons sometimes cuts short opportunities for pupils, particularly those who are less articulate, to tease out the answers they are seeking to give. For example, a very lively drama lesson stimulated interesting ideas and feelings but there was not always time for them to be expressed fully.

65 Pupils' standards in reading by the time they are seven years old are well above average. Pupils read a range of books, fiction and non-fiction, fluently and accurately, with many showing good levels of understanding and expression. The systematic teaching of reading in literacy lessons ensures that pupils have a broad vocabulary that they can recognise on sight and a secure grasp of a variety of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. Pupils' standards in reading by the age of eleven are broadly as expected, though a significant number in Year 6 and most pupils in the other junior classes achieve above average standards. Throughout the school, shared reading sessions

very effectively promote expressive reading aloud and group guided reading sessions ensure that pupils of all abilities develop both basic and more advanced skills at levels appropriate for their age. Pupils' reading skills and their interest in books are also developed through initiatives such as the Better Reading Partnership. Their skills in retrieving information from books are well developed for their age. They are confident in using the contents and index of a book to discover the information they need. The reading skills of lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs improve very steadily because of the teachers' very good planning and because of the extra support they receive in individual and group work. More able pupils are presented with more difficult books and poems and benefit from the challenge these present. Older pupils are able to give very clear reasons for their preferences; one pupil likes the Harry Potter books because they are unpredictable, for example. They write lengthy and well-organised book reviews that show good levels of understanding.

66 Pupils' standards in writing by the age of seven are well above average. Pupils write for a variety of purposes in a range of styles and the best work is characterised by very imaginative use of language and a stimulating choice of words. For example, Year 2 pupils wrote dramatic descriptions of the masks they had made of the FingerNail Biter and the Yeti – 'the hair was darting out of the head. The tongue was sparkling and shooting out of the mouth.' Pupils' basic skills in handwriting, spelling and punctuation are well developed and stories and other accounts have a convincing structure. Standards of writing in Year 6 vary considerably and overall are in line with national expectation. Pupils write for a wide variety of audiences and purposes and use a number of techniques for shaping their writing, such as drafting and editing. Some of the writing is word-processed but not enough use is made of the computer to develop pupils' writing skills or to present their finished work effectively. More able pupils develop their basic writing skills to an above average level but, while even the less able pupils have the confidence to use language confidently and to be original, their limited technical skills prevent them from reaching the standards expected for their age. There is a clear tradition throughout the school of imaginative writing and a relish for unusual words and images; the appreciation of words and literature is very effectively promoted by the teachers and literature is given a high profile in displays. Pupils' writing is often inspired by other literature or by work in history or art. Literacy skills are very well promoted in most other subjects.

67 The quality of teaching is very good and pupils learn well. The consistently rich culture of books and literacy throughout the school is very well promoted by the teachers' own enthusiasm for books, poetry and language. Teachers read stories with gusto and pupils join in when appropriate. Pupils are encouraged to experiment with words in limericks and shape poems as well as being asked to read and enjoy more serious poems. One pupil wrote an amusing story entirely in the form of short letters from one character to the other. Relationships are excellent and teachers are very skilled at managing their pupils. Consequently, pupils behave very well and work very hard in whole class sessions, individually and in groups. Teachers and support staff have received extensive training in how to teach literacy and know the subject very well. The literacy hour is used very effectively; the whole class reading or writing session catches pupils' interest and sets up the subsequent group work. The whole class discussion at the end of the lesson is used very well to assess how well the pupils have met the learning objectives for that lesson. Further assessments are made of pupils' written work, which is very effectively marked in the light of regularly revised targets that are set for each individual; so, for example, the teacher will look out for dialogue in the writing of the pupil whose target is 'to include direct speech in story writing'. These assessments are then used to adjust next day's plans. Teachers' very effective planning ensures that the needs and interests of pupils of all abilities are catered for and fosters their positive attitudes to books and words. There are times, however, when more opportunities for free choice could be planned, particularly for more able pupils, in order to develop more independence in choosing, for example, the topic and form for a piece of writing. There is inconsistent planning for the good practice that exists in some classes for developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and for the systematic use of information and communication technology.

68 Pupils with special educational needs are very effectively supported through high-calibre support staff and volunteers working on very well planned activities that are carefully matched to the pupils' needs. The individual needs of pupils with English as an additional language are well taken

care of and they are enabled to play a full part in lessons, consequently making very good progress. Teachers are very good at teaching the basic skills of reading and writing so that pupils make very good progress in acquiring these skills. Even pupils who came late to the school, such as some in Year 6, make very good progress in developing their reading and writing skills, though not in some cases sufficiently to ensure that their reading and writing are at an appropriate level for their age. Regular homework contributes well to pupils' learning. Parents are involved in their children's work through the use of reading diaries though the full potential of these for developing dialogue between the school and the parents to help pupils' progress has not been fully exploited. The new school library is beginning to be used for the development of research skills, particularly in Year 6, but this is not yet consistent across the school.

69 The subject is very effectively led and managed by the literacy co-ordinator and another teacher responsible for developing reading resources. The national literacy strategy has been very effectively implemented to produce the consistency that is having such a strong impact on pupils' progress. English makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the opportunities it provides for pupils to appreciate a wide range of good quality literature and to discuss the issues raised.

MATHEMATICS

70 Pupils' attainment by the age of seven is well above the national average, a considerable improvement since the last inspection when standards were about average. In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000, pupils' performance was well above average both nationally and compared to similar schools. The attainment of pupils in the present Year 6 is broadly average. This is because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and of pupils who have joined the school during the past year. No comparison can be made with standards for eleven-year-olds at the last inspection or with national test results, as this is the school's first year with pupils of this age. Pupils of all levels of ability achieve very well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because teaching is organised very effectively to cater for their particular needs. They receive some excellent support in lessons and work is very closely matched to the requirements of their individual education plans. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also make very good progress because of the staff's awareness of their needs, resulting in specially targeted work to help them to use and understand language in relation to mathematical activities.

71 Standards have risen in the last two years very largely as a result of the excellent leadership and management of the subject. The National Numeracy Strategy has been extremely well implemented so there is consistency in both teaching and learning across all classes. From the start of Year 2, pupils are taught in classes according to their level of attainment. Within each of these, work is very carefully planned so that the needs and interests of pupils of all abilities are specifically catered for. This leads to very positive attitudes towards mathematics and all pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve success. Within each classroom, mathematical displays are purposeful; they contain the standard vocabulary for a unit of work and elements to be used for teaching and learning for specific topics. This reduces time wasted and encourages active involvement of pupils and a degree of independence. The co-ordinator has carried out a comprehensive programme of monitoring lessons, including working alongside teachers or together as a team, planning the lesson jointly. From interviewing pupils he has a very clear idea as to how standards are and what needs to be done to raise them further. The classroom support assistants have received training in numeracy, which enhances the contribution they make to pupils' learning. Last year, most parents attended a curriculum evening to observe their children being taught a mathematics lesson and a smaller number attended a more recent evening to learn about the different 'pencil and paper' methods used in mathematical calculation. In these ways, mathematics has become a very strong feature of the school and parents and their children regard it as important. This is one significant reason why there is no difference between

the attainment of boys and that of girls. From analysing national and optional tests and pupils' work, targets are set to raise the attainment of groups of pupils, resulting in very good achievement for all.

72 Pupils' standards in mathematics by the age of seven are well above average. Pupils have a very good understanding of hundreds, tens and units which means they can add and subtract speedily and accurately. Higher attaining pupils work confidently with large numbers and use and apply different processes to solve problems successfully. Pupils have a sophisticated understanding of different mathematical terms, knowing, for instance, that 'lots of' means the same as 'multiply'. They are quick to see patterns in numbers which enables them, for example, to add or subtract by 9 or 11 efficiently. Average attaining pupils measure accurately using a ruler and understand very well how to use non-standard measurements to determine difference in length. Pupils' standards in mathematics by the age of eleven are broadly average though a significant number in Year 6 and most pupils in the other junior classes achieve above average standards for their age. Throughout the school, practical activities are used very well to help pupils to understand, for instance, the principle of reflective symmetry or how to measure capacity. Pupils use different methods of calculation to solve problems, applying what they have learnt. Higher and average attaining pupils have a very good understanding of equivalence between fractions and decimals. They use a calculator successfully to find fractional amounts such as $\frac{3}{20}$ of 1000. Higher attaining pupils invent highly complex number stories, incorporating addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Lower attaining pupils, with support, begin to understand probability and achieve a large measure of success in applying this principle.

73 The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school. Much of it is excellent. The rich culture of mathematical learning is created by the teachers' interest and enthusiasm; this is evident in the ingenious ways they devise to make mathematics fun. In an excellent lesson, lower attaining pupils were quick to realise that the chair, which would notionally bear only 1kg, would hold both the boy wearing the 200g mouse picture as well as the girl with the 800g hippo. The teacher made the problems progressively more difficult, making very good use of the school's policy of 'Talking Partners' to help pupils to work out the answers. Teachers are extremely good at not giving away the right answer so that pupils have to stand up for what they think and justify their reasoning.

74 The structure of the daily mathematics lesson is used very effectively; the initial mental mathematics session is used very well to sharpen pupils' thinking and to set up the subsequent group activities. There is an element of excitement in many of the mathematics lessons as pupils see a chance to pit their wits against the teacher. Teachers are very skilled at varying the pace of lessons as required. The fast pace most teachers set encourages swift responses as when Year 2 pupils raced to calculate different 'lots of 6'. When further explanation is needed, however, teachers spend time methodically going back to first principles and closely involving pupils' contributions in their step-by-step exposition. Teachers are skilled at using different mathematical terms and at getting pupils to use these in their explanations. When Year 5 pupils worked out a rule to convert improper fractions to a mixed number, they explained 'you divide the denominator into the numerator' and for the converse operation 'times the whole number by the denominator and add the sum'. This accurate use of language means that not only do pupils learn to express what they have learnt correctly but they actually understand much more fully. As a result, at the end of one lesson, a third of a higher attaining class calculated these conversions in 4 seconds with the rest of the class close behind. Often this technique is used in the closing session to check what pupils have learned. Classroom assistants give extremely good support, helping pupils with special educational needs to understand and to participate fully by giving them individual explanations. Through such support, for example, pupils in Year 6 with special educational needs were able to take a full part in the closing part of the lesson, helping to order whole and fractional units of capacity expressed in a variety of different ways.

75 Teachers use the whole class session at the end of lessons very well to assess how well pupils have met the learning objectives. Further assessments are made of pupils' written work which is marked meticulously, often setting targets for individual pupils to fulfil. One lesson began, for instance, with four pupils demonstrating how they had met their target of the previous week.

These assessments are used to adjust the next day's plans. Teachers' planning is very effective and ensures that pupils' interest, their positive attitudes and involvement in mathematics is maintained.

76 Pupils of all abilities clearly enjoy mathematics and feel they are successful. Teachers partly promote this through encouragement and judicious use of praise but largely through an excellent choice of activities which encourages pupils to think independently. Pupils are closely involved in the different stages of the lesson. At the end of one Year 6 lesson, a group of lower attaining pupils were delighted to demonstrate to the rest of the class how they had learnt to convert litres to millilitres and vice versa and the rest of the class was very impressed by their slick demonstration. In the very best lessons, teachers' questions draw out pupils' responses, extending what they know and challenging them to think independently. In less successful lessons, teachers' explanations are less clear and so pupils find it more difficult to work on their own.

77 Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and work on well planned activities designed to suit pupils' needs. Pupils with English as an additional language are very well catered for, receiving the additional help they require to help them to understand. Teachers are very skilled at teaching the basic skills of numeracy so that even pupils who joined the school late, such as some pupils in Year 6, make very good progress in developing their mathematical skills, though some do not quite reach the level expected of their age because they have missed out on earlier learning.

78 Numeracy is used very well across the curriculum in subjects such as geography, science, history and English. For example, pupils look at patterns in spelling and plural forms, enter historical information from sources into charts and use graphs to show how much air is trapped inside different samples of soil. Mathematics makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the opportunities it provides for pupils to appreciate the beauty in sequential reasoning and the successful application of logic.

SCIENCE

79 Standards overall are above average with the exception of Year 6 where they are average. Teachers' assessments last year show that although the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was above average, the number of pupils reaching the higher level was disappointingly low. The results were well below average when compared to those of similar schools. The school has taken this matter very seriously and the past year has seen a concerted effort to raise standards in the subject throughout the school. Science has been a priority in the development plan and there have been clear objectives to bring about improvement in assessment procedures and in the teaching of investigative skills. These two aspects have undergone considerable adjustment and as a result, standards are higher. The results of this year's teacher assessments of seven-year-olds show that 94 per cent of the pupils achieved the level expected for their age and over one third of them achieved at a higher level. There are no past national test results for pupils in Year 6 because this is the school's first year as a primary school. Standards are judged to be in line with the national average. The two main reasons for this are the high number of pupils with learning difficulties in the year group and, most significantly, the unusually high turnover of pupils. These pupils have not benefited from continuity in their education and this is reflected in their results. The pupils achieve very well because the teaching is very good and the school acted promptly when it realised that the pupils were not achieving enough in the infant classes. Standards in all other junior classes are above average. Pupils study a broad range of topics taught through interesting practical tasks. There is clear evidence that pupils make good progress in the course of a year.

80 The quality of teaching is very good. Science is taught in a consistent way throughout the school and this has a strong influence on the way in which pupils learn. Science lessons have several distinct components - an explanation, investigation and plenary and this variety is effective

in holding the attention of the pupils. All teachers place an emphasis on the correct use of scientific vocabulary. They identify key words in their plans and take every opportunity to promote the words throughout the lesson. As a result the pupils use the correct terms as a matter of course. Similarly, all teachers take care to stress the skills that have been used in each investigation and consequently the pupils are aware of the scientific processes they have undergone. When describing how chocolate changes from a solid to a liquid when melted for example, pupils in Year 2 explained confidently how they had observed, recorded and made a fair test. Standards of presentation are more variable. In some classes, workbooks are neat and tidy with carefully ruled lines and well-formed writing, while in others work is untidy and less well presented.

81 When teaching is excellent the explanation is enthusiastic, informative and has touches of humour. Questioning at its best values pupils' own ideas and provides some scope for them to give extended responses yet moves the discussion forward skilfully, as when pupils in Year 4 considered whether their wood lice would gravitate towards the dark part of the habitat or the light. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and this makes them confident to try out ambitious ideas to stimulate pupils and to make imaginative use of the attractive resources available to them. In all of the lessons there is a practical investigation, which pupils clearly enjoy. For example, pupils in both Year 5 classes tested their pulse rate when resting and after exercise and recorded their findings enthusiastically. They described the purpose of their activity, predicted possible outcomes and recorded their findings carefully. Pupils in Year 1 were introduced to an interesting variety of plants, including artichokes carrots and begonias when exploring different types of roots. Behaviour is consistently very good in lessons, partly because of the high expectations of the teachers and partly because pupils are well motivated. Throughout the school pupils are attentive and responsive; sometimes exceptionally so. For example, when framing questions relating to organisms in their natural habitat, pupils in Year 4 discussed the problem seriously and listened well to each other's suggestions and ideas. In all classes pupils conduct themselves maturely when undertaking practical work. They work together co-operatively in pairs, following teachers' instructions and striving to complete their work within the given deadlines.

82 Teachers make very good provision for the differing levels of ability in the class and challenge pupils appropriately. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well integrated and their needs met. Occasionally lessons are over-directed by the teacher, providing little scope for pupils to show independence, by applying their scientific knowledge in planning and carrying out their own ideas for investigations for example. Assessments are made frequently to determine the extent to which pupils have understood the topic. Teachers use these to make predictions about pupil performance and to set challenging targets. When necessary teachers modify their lesson plans for the next day in order to re-visit work that has not been fully understood. This has been a contributory factor in raising standards.

83 Throughout the school there are very good links with literacy and numeracy but there is not enough use of information and communication technology to enhance the science curriculum. For example, pupils in all classes record their observations in tabular format, which would lend itself to the use of spreadsheets and data handling programs, yet there is little evidence of this being done. The subject is very well managed by the enthusiastic co-ordinator who through the effective monitoring system has a good overview of strengths and weaknesses in the subject and an action plan to address the weaknesses.

ART AND DESIGN

84 At the last inspection standards were good by the end of Year 4. Since then, standards have risen for the younger pupils so that by the age of seven, pupils' attainment is well above that typically expected. By the age of eleven, pupils attain standards which are about average. This is because of the composition of the particular year group which has already been explained earlier in the report. Pupils' achievement is good due to: the very good leadership and management; effective provision of a wide range of resources; the quality of the opportunities to learn; and

excellent deployment of classroom assistants.

85 By the end of Year 6 pupils work in a range of media with appropriate dexterity. In their observational drawings of the immediate environment, they achieve a good sense of space and distance. The pictures of buildings are portrayed well against the backdrop of the sky. These are used well to form the basis of paintings using a narrow palette of colours to good effect. Pupils have a good understanding of the strengths and areas to develop in their own pieces. Higher attainers are very original in their work whilst average attainers often take their lead from the adult. The work of lower attainers is often naive but is well finished. The level of observation is insufficiently applied in the figure drawings of Year 5 where figures were at first portrayed, for example, with no necks.

86 By the end of Year 2 pupils use papier-mâché to make 'Yeti' masks and use a few very well chosen decorations in excellent contrast to the dynamic colours of the mask. High attainers carefully hold their chosen colour against the item they are representing to gain a good match of colour which they then shade sensitively. Average attainers can explain very clearly what part of a plant they are studying and how they intend to achieve the desired effect. They blend pastels to apply light and shade very well. Lower attainers are confident in their work and have a good eye for placing their drawing on the paper so that it will fill the space well.

87 Pupils' achievement is good across the school: they clearly improve over time in the detail and sensitivity of their work. They make good gains in their knowledge of both art and artists. The use of sketchbooks for older pupils is beginning to help pupils make reference to previous work when starting new work. Sculpture is an area where there are particular strengths ranging from inspirational 'aerial sculpture', in Year 1, using a wealth of natural materials and based on the work of Andy Goldsworthy, to products made from clay in the older years. Gains in the use of shape, space, pattern and colour are very evident throughout the school. Pupils' achievement is closely linked with their enjoyment for the subject. They get much satisfaction from their work in art and design and often don't want the lessons to finish. Pupils speak with great interest of their past work. Their attitudes are attentive and composed. Pupils work with a clear sense of purpose; for example, Year 6 pupils were very excited about their work on designing hats to wear at the forthcoming end of term 'Madhatter's Tea Party'.

88 In the one lesson observed for seven-year-olds the excellent teaching set very clear objectives for the lesson. The methods used employed the work of other artists, music to promote contemplation and imagination and an excellent range of plants and flowers for pupils to observe, draw and paint. Very effective use was made of specialist vocabulary pertaining to art. Pupils' responses were vibrant and considered and their learning took place at a fast rate. They had plenty of opportunity to talk to adults about their work. They soaked up ideas and techniques and as a result knew exactly what to do and how they were going to approach their canvas. The excellent deployment of adults and the high level of their interest and knowledge led to extremely delicate and detailed water paintings with beautiful shades of colour. Pupils were inordinately proud of their finished work. The high quality support benefited pupils with special educational needs and they were able to work along side others with confidence.

89 The teaching of the older pupils is good. The best teaching takes considered risks which allow pupils to experiment within a given framework. This was the case, for example, in the three-dimensional work by pupils in Year 3. Pupils worked collaboratively in small groups each producing a part of a large sculpture portraying 'spirit wood children' – a topic linked to their English lessons. Higher attainers checked their work as they went along, improving on their original model. Middle attainers gave clear explanations about their choice of materials and the essence of the sculpture. Lower attainers explained their work and the techniques they were using in simple terms. The lesson ended when each part was drawn together ready for the pupils to add their final thoughts. The questioning by the teacher effectively elicited responses to improve the finished piece. The use of a digital camera to record the positioning of the individual pieces was very good and reassured the pupils that even though their work had to be moved it could be replaced according to their agreed design. During the inspection, pupils were not generally expected to clear away their art

materials and this was a missed opportunity to develop pupils' independence.

90 The subject encourages pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development very well. There are lots of opportunities for collaborative work, especially through the sculpture. Pupils listen to the ideas of others and adapt them so well that the quality of their finished work improves leaving them satisfied and proud. Pupils in Year 1 link their art to history when they make detailed pencil drawings of artefacts such as gas masks. Their use of texture produces three-dimensional effects and brings to life the items used long ago. The visit of an African artist has had a very good impact on the quality and detail of work in clay and on pupils' appreciation of another culture. Pupils in Year 4 investigated the use of symbols through finding out about Aboriginal art and producing cleverly crafted signs and symbols, to portray a journey in the style of Aboriginal art. Spirituality through the appreciation of natural beauty is promoted through the resources provided for learning. For example, the teaching assistant in Year 2 made sure that the flowers to be studied were freshly picked for the lesson and that the pupils who were to study them last had flowers and plants that were just as fresh as those provided for the first group. In this way staff and pupils have time to appreciate the splendour of the natural world about them.

91 The leadership of the subject is very good and has a clear sense of standards and of how to best make improvement. A portfolio of work is helpful to staff in identifying aspects of work and the levels that should be expected of pupils. A great deal of time and attention is given to displaying the artwork of pupils. This acts as information for staff as they see what each year group has achieved. It is also very helpful to pupils to see that their work is appreciated. They are very proud when their work is able to be as seen by all. This was the case, for example, of pupils in Year 6 who had contributed to a millennium tapestry. They very proudly explained the ideas behind the individual pieces and the importance of them to the tapestry as a whole.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

92 Standards of attainment are above those expected nationally for pupils aged seven and eleven. This is an improvement since the last inspection and reflects the improvements in the curriculum, planning guidance for teachers and the additional attention given to providing a good curriculum for the new age groups in the school. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and who learn English as a second language, make very good progress throughout the school. This enables them to develop the full range of skills and understanding of design and technology.

93 It is clear that seven-year-old-pupils have a good understanding of the design and making process and that high standards are the result of very good teaching. In each year group the teaching promotes and encourages pupils to plan and design. This is evident when seven-year-olds design their wheeled vehicles. They are aware of the materials and names of parts of the vehicles and have a good understanding of the scientific principles that are represented. Pupils give 'thumbs up' when they think that someone has given the correct answer in response to the teacher's very carefully framed questions. Higher attaining pupils know that the cardboard is 'corrugated' and which is the strongest glue. The majority explain what axles are for, before everyone settles to apply their new knowledge to their task. Pupils estimate and measure accurately how much wood they need for their chassis, saw it carefully using a vice, and glue the pieces together accurately, before evaluating what they have done in preparation for making their own model the following week.

94 Evaluating finished articles is a prominent part of pupils' work and teaching of older pupils continues to be of a high order. There is a very strong awareness of the need to build on skills as pupils move through the school and skills learned in design and technology are used well in other lessons. For example Year 4 pupils designed a chair for a character from a book in their art lessons and used many of the skills of design and making to make their inventive and attractive seats. In Year 5 pupils made treasure chests as part of a stimulus for imaginative writing about

finding treasure on an island and designed plates with food on them, which linked well with their project on 'healthy eating'. Again, this demonstrates effective use of design, joining and sticking skills.

95 Pupils in Year 5 know and understand the names and functions of items used when making moving toys because of the teachers' good subject knowledge. Every eye is on the teacher when she demonstrates her model and examples of moving toys that could be made. Teachers organise the work very well so that pupils work quietly in pairs, measuring carefully, for example, to ensure that the pin in the wheel will be in the right place. They are all very aware of the need for accuracy and work very hard to make their model like the teacher's example. At the end of the lesson pupils talk to the group about their problems and are proud to say how they resolved them. Teachers' high expectations are reflected in pupils' awareness of the need for care in measuring, not putting glue across the area a slider has to move within, and the careful placement of the wheel that operates the movement is reinforced. In Year 6 pupils evaluate the design of the slippers they have made. They try them on and decide how to make them more comfortable. They offer solutions as to how someone can improve the strength of their slipper or sew it again in parts because there are gaps in the stitches. Pupils concentrate very well on their sewing, calmly stopping to thread a needle before carrying on with careful blanket stitch around the sole. No one is frustrated by the difficulties of learning new skills and they are proud to show how they have decorated their slipper.

96 Pupils enjoy the subject, work sensibly together and support one another very effectively when they work as a team. They also say to someone with a problem, 'Let me help you.' This reflects the inclusive atmosphere of the lessons and the expectations of the teachers well. Pupils get the help they need to improve because the teachers plan carefully and prepare thoroughly for lessons so that pupils have tasks that match their abilities well. Support staff give invaluable support in these lessons. There is always an emphasis on learning skills and understanding the process.

97 The head teacher has encouraged and supported other teachers well and has been influential in the development of the subject because of the opportunities offered for training and involvement with advisors and other professionals. This has had a significant effect on pupils' learning and interest in the subject. Sharing the most effective practice widely has given everyone greater confidence in the teaching of design and technology. There is clear planning for skills to be taught in the reception classes when pupils learn to cut, stick and join items together and these skills are built on well as pupils move through the school.

GEOGRAPHY

98 At the time of the last inspection standards of attainment were in line with national expectations at the age of seven. These standards have been improved and are now above expectations, and, as they move through the school pupils maintain these standards. By the age of eleven the current group of pupils is attaining in line with expectations, although over a quarter of the group attain at a higher level. Pupils, including those with special needs and with English as an additional language, gain an increasingly wide knowledge and understanding of the subject. They develop very good skills in geographical research and observation because of the wide range of opportunities provided in the lessons and through visits.

99 The quality of teaching is very good overall and this has a major impact upon pupils' behaviour and attitude in lessons. The main strength is the clear and thoughtful planning of the teachers. As a result explanations and instructions are clear and explicit so pupils understand what is expected of them and what they have to do. Consequently, pupils make at least good progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils in Year 1 think seriously about the traffic survey they carried out the previous week. They look at a bar chart, which Year 4 produced on the computer after their traffic survey, and see that many cars and lorries travel along the main road every day. They make very sensible suggestions about ways of making it safer for

them to cross the road before using the teacher's very good drawing of her route to school to draw their own maps. These are of a very high standard and pupils carefully mark points on the map that are a hazard for example, where they have to walk past a petrol or fire station. By the age of seven, pupils find information about Barnaby Bear's travels in Italy from the Internet. Pupils work in pairs and show great confidence in their ability to answer the teacher's questions and make deductions from their findings. They work out what clothes would be needed for a holiday in the summer in Italy, the name of the capital city and the colours in the Italian flag.

100 In Year 3 pupils use secondary sources, including travel brochures, maps and pamphlets to find information about St Lucia. In the lesson planning great care is taken to ensure that work is suited to each level of attainment. Lower attainers are interested and animated when working with the teacher or classroom assistant to find information in books. Higher attainers work independently, or have some discussion with the teacher about similarities and differences between this country and St Lucia. Without instruction, they make two columns in their books and write under the headings as they discover things the two countries have in common or are different. One is aware that St Lucia is 'one of many islands in a tropical ocean' and knows that this is a difference.

101 Teachers have very secure subject knowledge and use this to plan lessons that are matched well to the topic being studied. Teachers expect pupils to remember and apply knowledge from previous lessons. In the introductions teachers ask probing questions, usually directed to specific pupils, so that all pupils are involved in the discussion and need to use their knowledge to answer. For instance, pupils in Year 4 carry out traffic counts near the school and use their experience to draw inferences and conclusions from the presentation of their graphs. They make sensible predictions about when different results could be obtained in their 'expert groups' and, as 'the scribe' writes down their thoughts, the 'manager' keeps an eye on the time and selects someone to feed back their findings at the end of the lesson.

102 Pupils build well on their geographical knowledge as they move through the school and by Year 5 develop a broader understanding of how physical landscape, such as rivers and mountains, affects where settlements are placed and how people use them. Older pupils express their concerns about pollution and the need to change people's attitudes and behaviour. Pupils in Year 5 write very good reports about a visit to Clapham and they are so stimulated by the experience that they write emotive poems about their walk inside a cave. This is a very good link with literacy, as are the fact files produced by Year 6 on aspects of geography such as mountain ranges around the world.

103 The co-ordinator leads the subject very well and the curriculum has been revised in line with national recommendations. The curriculum makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through visits, visitors and the wealth of interesting and stimulating learning opportunities teachers provide. Links with other subjects, including numeracy, literacy and art are planned very thoughtfully which again helps to raise overall standards.

HISTORY

104 Standards of attainment at the time of the last inspection were in line with national expectations at the age of seven. Standards have improved and are now above expectations, and, as they move through the school, pupils maintain these standards. By the age of eleven, the current group of pupils is attaining in line with expectations, although a quarter of the group attains at a higher level. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, achieve well in the subject and make very good progress.

105 Year 2 pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of famous people and events in the past. They know many important events in British history, such as the Fire of London, and show a very good

level of understanding of the feelings of people as they try to stop the fire spreading and destroying more homes. Through drama they enact the scene and, when the teacher speaks, they 'freeze' in their positions as they throw water on the fire or try to aim a hose. Pupils know why the fire spread so quickly and talk in their groups about what they would want to save from their homes. They produce exciting artwork to convey the impression of flames and burning around the River Thames. Pupils have a good understanding of how life has changed and use sources of information, such as books and photographs, very sensibly. They know how important the diary of Samuel Pepys is because it gives a first hand account of the fire. They have a secure sense of time and are able to order specific events chronologically. Through looking at old and new toys, methods of transport and furniture, they develop a better understanding of how places and people's lives change over time.

106 The quality of teaching is very good and teachers use historical sources imaginatively to interest pupils. Teachers are skilled at asking the right sort of questions to develop pupils' thinking. Year 6 pupils considered the possibilities of a series of photographs of objects found in the Indus Valley and the teacher and classroom assistant asked very specific questions to help pupils to organize their thoughts about the items. In their groups, pupils considered every suggestion and, from the small photographs, produced an excellent range of thoughtful and possible answers. They looked at the scale on a photograph of some pots, measured the pots and estimated the size with their hands before deciding what the pots could have held. With the teacher they build up a picture of the society in which the people in the Indus Valley lived and cheered when the teacher told them what the pictures actually were at the end of the morning. They were thrilled because their deductions were so accurate.

107 Pupils in Year 4 make good use of information and communication technology when they use the website to look at photographs of Low Moor in the past and today. They know the need to ask, 'What was it used for?' and, 'Why has it changed?' Staff support lower attaining pupils well by writing down answers for them so that they can play a full part in the discussions. Higher attaining pupils talk confidently about the changes in the road; the surface of cobbles is now tarmac, the road is wider because of the traffic. Year 5 pupils are fully engaged in the teacher's introduction to a lesson on the effects of Tudor navigation and they want to contribute answers and suggestions for questions they should ask. They look through books carefully selected by the teacher to ensure that they have the information the pupils require and in their groups find out about the sailors' diet, methods of navigation, diseases and daily life.

108 In their work and their discussion, pupils often show a level of interest and understanding above what might be expected for their age. Their work is usually carefully presented and their discussion indicates a keen interest in the subject. Teachers plan the work carefully and use a range of interesting approaches. Displays in the school show the interest teachers have in the subject and the way in which they value pupils' work.

109 The curriculum is well planned and the co-ordinator has a significant impact on the way in which history is taught. There is a broad range of experiences to enhance pupils' learning, including visits to museums and visitors to the school. History makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development through the visits, the links with other subjects and the use of drama, which gives pupils an opportunity to empathise with people and events in the past.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

110 Standards in ICT are broadly typical at present although there are some gaps in the oldest pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject. The school is aware of this and has made the improvement of ICT a priority for development this year. Time and resources have been allocated to staff training and equipment and standards are rising rapidly as a result. At the time of the inspection, the new resources had only been in place for five weeks but already, by the end of Year

2, many pupils' attainment is better than expected for their age. Pupils in the juniors have some lost ground to make up, because the lack of resources in the past has meant that it has not been possible to teach some aspects of the curriculum for older pupils, such as the use of e-mail, the Internet, and more advanced control technology. The new facilities are enabling these pupils to catch up quickly, and by the time they are eleven, pupils are now reaching the standards expected of them in most aspects of the curriculum.

111 The quality of teaching is consistently very good in both the infants and the juniors, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Some excellent teaching occurs in Year 2 which accounts for the high standards reached by these pupils. In all classes, lessons are planned in detail and build systematically on what was learnt the previous lesson. This ensures that new skills are practised and developed step by step. Teachers are very well prepared themselves, they understand the programs they are using and make excellent use of the big screen to demonstrate and explain what pupils need to do, ensuring that everyone fully understands the objectives of the lesson. In the best lessons, the work is securely linked to learning in other subjects. For example, in the excellent lesson observed in Year 2, pupils were using a web site to research their studies in geography of Barnaby Bear's visit to Italy. All pupils were able to log on using their personal reference numbers, load the internet program and find the web site from their 'favourites' list where they had placed it after last week's lesson. The higher achieving pupils could make their own notes from the information displayed and then move into a word processing program to record their findings. The rest of the class was able to answer questions on a work sheet based on the information on the web site.

112 Teachers are quite rightly focusing first on teaching the skills required to enable pupils to use the new system effectively. In a very good Year 6 lesson observed, pupils were learning how to add buttons and sounds to pages of text they had prepared in a previous lesson. All the pupils knew how to log on and retrieve their saved work. After a very clear explanation by the teacher they quickly accomplished the task set. By the end of the lesson the higher attainers had finished their pages and moved on to using the word processing program to make a record of the process for later use. In common with other teachers, this teacher used the time at the end of the lesson very well to revise what had been learnt and quickly recap on the new skills taught. In general, the pace of the lessons is fast, enabling pupils to achieve much in the time available. Only when the equipment misbehaves, which it did in several lessons, does the pace slow down. During lessons, lower attaining pupils and those with particular needs get all the help they need, either by teachers and classroom assistants, who keep a close eye on their progress, or in some lessons by higher attaining partners.

113 Pupils of all abilities demonstrate very positive attitudes to work because they are achieving success and making rapid progress. They enjoy working both alone or with a partner, and show consideration for one another when taking turns to use the equipment. They explain their work confidently and are developing a sound knowledge of the technical vocabulary required.

114 The subject co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the subject's strengths and weaknesses and has detailed plans in place to take the subject forward, aware that the current focus on 'catching up' and the teaching of basic skills means that opportunities for pupils to make choices about their work and develop their skills independently across other subject areas are still somewhat limited. Nevertheless, the school is well placed to fulfil all the requirements of the subject and ensure that standards continue to rise rapidly.

MUSIC

115 Pupils attain above average standards in music at the ages of seven and eleven. Standards in singing are very high indeed and are a distinctive feature of the school. Overall standards have improved since the last inspection, very largely as a result of teachers' expertise and their knowledge and enjoyment of the subject. Pupils achieve very well. Those with special educational

needs or who have recently joined the school learn very well through the very practical approach to music used in most lessons. From an early age, pupils are taught to use the correct musical terms. This enables them to talk with understanding about what they hear and sharpens their appraisal of music. Pupils with English as an additional language also benefit from this structured approach to language so they can express as well as others what they hear.

116 The quality of teaching is very good and leads to very good achievement for all pupils. Work is very carefully planned to suit the different ability groups within the class to enable all pupils to take part successfully. Six-year-old pupils have very good control of pitch, rhythm and dynamics as they echo their teacher's lead in a rhythmic sequence of clapping and singing. By the age of seven, pupils contribute ideas and control sounds as part of a class composition and performance. They work very well together in groups to produce an instrumental commentary on a poem, which they recite rhythmically and articulately. Lower attaining pupils read most expressively, with the excellent support of the classroom assistant, with real attention to the meaning of the words, increasing the volume and speed in time to their controlled rhythmic drumbeat. Teachers use the display boards very well to reinforce particular vocabulary, setting very high expectations of pupils' understanding, which pupils fulfil admirably with a level of maturity and assuredness unusual for their age.

117 The quality of teaching is very good. Younger juniors learn to explore different rhythmic patterns and fit different patterns together to very good effect. They understand clearly the difference between pulse and rhythm and imitate a complex rhythm on percussion instruments successfully. Pupils are quite inventive, using noisy shoe fastenings or tapping their puffed out cheeks to add an unusual layer of sound. The teaching encourages such inventiveness, which leads to all pupils being very actively involved and taking part most willingly. By Year 6, pupils work very well in groups to create an improvised rhythm pattern that lasts for a specific number of beats, repeated, with an attention to timbre which pupils described as 'open and closed sounds', giving the example of a triangle which 'resonates so the sound carries on'. By this age, pupils have developed a very good rhythmic sense and understanding of how to use loud and soft tones effectively. They play very well together and listen quite intently and critically to the tape recording of their composition, consisting of very precisely played rhythmic sequence of contrasting dynamics and percussion. Higher attaining pupils have the freedom to improvise and show good levels of independence. Pupils' knowledge of instruments of the orchestra and of composers is broadly average for their age.

118 Standards of performance, particularly singing, are very high, largely as a result of the excellent team teaching when teachers work together to guide the pupils, which sets very high levels of expectation. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are involved in accompaniments, assisting the teachers who play guitars and the piano, with a range of percussion and recorders. Teachers work very well together and sing unaccompanied quite unselfconsciously to teach pupils a new song. The success is evident in pupils' first attempt; adding movement and paying attention to technical detail further raises the already high standard of pupils' accurate pitch and clear enunciation of words.

119 Music is seen as integral to the most vital elements of the school. Assemblies begin with music from different cultures, which the headteacher talks about as the pupils enter the hall, directing their attention to features they should be aware of as they listen. This same practice is repeated at the start of both infant and junior singing, and reflects the consistency of approach, which is the school's hallmark. It is linked very closely to pupils' spiritual development as they sing the Lord's Prayer with conviction. There is an unaffectedness about the shared teaching and learning which enables pupils to understand with an immediacy the power and beauty of music and gives them insight into a spiritual dimension. This is achieved through genuine sharing and celebrating.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

120 At the last inspection standards were average. For the eleven-year-olds this level has been maintained though standards in swimming are higher than typically expected. Standards have improved for the seven-year-olds and are now above those typically expected for their age. The pupils achieve well across the school because the subject is effectively led and the teaching is good and as a result pupils learn at a good rate.

121 By the age of eleven the pupils take part in a wide curriculum and in Year 6 have access to specialist teaching and coaching. Higher attainers use their hand and eye coordination very naturally and become adept at catching and bowling with a good degree of accuracy. Average attainers need reminders about their stance when bowling and those below average are at times ill coordinated and need much individual coaching to improve their skills at games. The pupils in Year 5 exceed the expectations for their age in swimming. This is in part due to the very good teaching and in part owing to pupils' excellent behaviour which means that the lessons can move on fast and safely. Pupils' listen very attentively and time is used to the very best advantage.

122 By the age of seven the pupils' have built up their physical skills very well. They understand that it is important to warm up their muscles before strenuous work so that muscles are not damaged. In dance, higher attainers move lightly and gracefully, remembering the steps in a country dance and guiding others. Their comments are perceptive as they begin to analyse how movement could be improved. Average attainers move well to the rhythm of music and are very aware that in their dance they need to keep in time with the music and with others. Lower attainers take their lead from the adults. The pupils understand the need to listen carefully to instructions and concentrate on their performance.

123 Pupils' achievement is good. The pupils make consistently good progress because tasks are challenging and achievable and pupils have time to practise and refine their work. When the pupils are helped to improve through coaching, they take on suggestions quickly and make good progress. The good response by the pupils to the subject means that gains in their learning are important to them and they try hard to do their best. Pupils with special educational needs achieve equally well because of the encouragement given by adults and because the tasks are well matched to their level of skills.

124 The quality of teaching is never less than good. In one swimming lesson the teaching was very good and in a Year 6 athletics lesson the teaching was excellent. In the latter, the teaching was extremely effective in teaching posture and positioning for sprinting and pupils' performance improved dramatically through the lesson. By the end of the lesson pupils could pass batons in a simple relay with a technique which was basic but fast and accurate. It was made very clear that it is important to prepare both the body and mind for physical work and the pupils were reminded not to 'follow like sheep' but to think and use their common sense. They did this very well because they had confidence in the teaching and gave of their very best. Excellent use was made of day-to-day assessment as the teacher commented 'I have noticed that and this is what you need to do to improve'. This teaching was pacy and inspirational. Generally the good teaching is well prepared and provides clear instructions. Skills are taught well and demonstration is used effectively. Overall assessment is very good. Pupils are encouraged to assess the performance of others though they are somewhat self-conscious in this. At times the higher attainers are insufficiently well challenged having to practise along side others rather than initially being set more challenging tasks.

125 The well-established specialist teaching provided by the nearby secondary school is used very well to forge links between the secondary school to which most pupils in Year 6 will transfer. It provides coaching of at least good quality and at times of excellent quality. The teaching has a dual role as it provides exemplar teaching for other staff to follow. The outcome is that the pace of the pupils' learning is good and the pupils have a broad level of skills in dance, athletics, games and gymnastics. Effective leadership of the subject has a clear view of standards and how they can be

improved even further. Visitors represent a range of dance and sports and older pupils have opportunities to work alongside professionals such as an African dancer. One pupil commented animatedly how much she had enjoyed learning tag rugby because it gave her an insight into the game and she is now able to follow adult conversations about rugby and understand the rules when she watches a game of rugby.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

126 Pupils' attainment is above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for seven-year-olds and in line with expectations for eleven-year-olds, maintaining the standards seen at the last inspection. Year 6 includes a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs, a number of whom have been in the school for only a short amount of time; consequently, while pupils in Year 6 make good progress, overall their attainment is only average. In all other classes, pupils attain above average levels of knowledge and understanding of a wide variety of religions and apply their learning to their own experiences and situations well. Pupils with special educational needs throughout the school make good progress because of the teachers' consistency in planning for their needs and the expertise of the classroom assistants who often work with them. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also make good progress because of the teachers' very good knowledge of their individual needs. Pupils in Year 1 know about the special books of Christianity, Islam and Judaism and can talk about some of the similarities and differences between them and how they are used. In Year 2, pupils know about special journeys that are valued by different religions and can explain why the journey to the Golden Temple at Amritsar is so important to the Sikh religion. By the time pupils reach the junior classes, they are able to build upon the knowledge they acquired earlier in the school to develop sensitive and perceptive insights into the beliefs of others. They also develop a respect for others' customs and beliefs, listening with great interest to the teacher when she shared her experiences of the Jewish Shabbat meal or empathising with the chair of governors when she described her feelings when she walked down the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem.

127 The quality of teaching is good and pupils learn well. The co-ordinator, who is effective and knowledgeable, has ensured that teachers have up-to-date knowledge of the subject and monitors their planning to identify where they might need support. Consequently, teachers have good subject knowledge that enables them to plan very effectively for the varying needs of the pupils in their classes. Teachers are particularly good at using the school's high quality resources to catch pupils' interest; Year 1 pupils, for example, were intrigued as the teacher explained the proper way to treat the Qu'ran before opening its beautiful box and unwrapping it carefully. They were very taken by the way in which the box transformed into a stand for the Qur'an and by the fact that Muslims cover their heads and bare their feet before reading from their holy book. In another lesson, the teacher very skilfully stimulated the pupils' interest in the Sikh Golden Temple before showing them a picture of the building and sharing with them its importance in the Sikh religion. Teachers are also good at illuminating pupils' learning by referring to their own experiences and relating on every possible occasion to the experiences of the pupils. So, when laying out the table for Shabbat, the pupils were encouraged to think of features of their own special mealtimes and, when considering special places, Year 6 pupils thought about times and places when they felt stirred. Because of teachers' very well developed skills in managing a class and excellent relationships with the pupils, pupils behave very well and work very hard. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, not least because of the consistently respectful way in which pupils encounter the beliefs and customs of cultures other than their own.