

# INSPECTION REPORT

**THIRSK COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Thirsk

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121365

Head teacher: Mr R Wild

Reporting inspector: Mr C Smith  
25211

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> June 2000

Inspection number: 190953

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hambleton Place Thirsk North Yorkshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Armstrong
Date of previous inspection:	June 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Colin Smith	Registered inspector	Science	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
		Religious education	The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Music	Teaching
Andy Anderson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development
			Attendance
			Links with the community
			Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
			Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Monitoring of personal development and attendance
			Partnership with parents and carers
Anne Lowson	Team inspector	Under fives	Leadership and management
		Information technology	
		Physical education	
		Equal opportunities	
Peter Nettleship	Team inspector	English	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		Art	Assessment and monitoring of academic performance
		Design and technology	
Derek Pattinson	Team inspector	Mathematics	Staffing
		Geography	Accommodation
		History	Resources
		Special educational needs	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Thirsk Community Primary School is a large school on the outskirts of the market town. The 307 pupils on roll are made up of 154 boys and 153 girls, allocated to nine mixed age classes and a reception class. In addition, there are 50 part time (25 full time equivalent) children in the nursery. An additional reception class has been set up recently to ease numbers in the nursery. Pupil numbers have remained stable over recent years. The number of pupils with special educational needs has been increasing and the current figure of 26 per cent is slightly higher than the national average. Up to ten pupils arrive or leave the school each year, reflecting a number of families on the move. Sixty six pupils are entitled to free school meals, which places the school in the average band. Currently, all of the pupils are white and English speaking. Children's attainment on entry to school is broadly average.

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

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. Pupils are now reaching above average standards in English and science and average standards in mathematics by the age of eleven. However, pupils make slow progress through Key Stage 1 and standards by the age of seven are below average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in information technology are improving but are still too low in some areas. Standards in other subjects, including religious education, are satisfactory and good in art and physical education. Teaching is good in the nursery and in Key Stage 2, but is unsatisfactory in reception and one of the Year 1/2 classes. Pupils are very well cared for and this benefits all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. Most pupils' have positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is good. The head teacher has just completed his first year in post. He, along with senior staff and governors, provides good leadership and clear direction for the work of the school. A programme of monitoring and evaluating the work of the school has begun, but not all of the weaknesses have yet been remedied. Overall, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils reach high standards in English, science, art and physical education by the age of eleven.
- Teaching in the nursery and in Key Stage 2 is good.
- Most pupils behave well and show good attitudes to learning.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and this enables them to make good progress.
- The school takes care of its pupils well and reaches out successfully to involve parents.
- The head teacher, senior staff and governors provide good leadership and management.

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

- Standards in Key Stage 1 are too low in English, mathematics and science.
- Standards in information technology are improving but still fall below the standards expected.
- Teaching in reception and in one of the Year 1/2 classes is unsatisfactory.

*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 satisfactory improvements since the last inspection in June 1996. Although standards in information technology are still below average, they have improved. Standards in Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science have improved along with national trends and pupils' work in experimental science has improved considerably. However, standards in Key Stage 1 have fallen. Whilst the quality of teaching has improved at Key Stage 2, there are now significant weaknesses at Key Stage 1. The use of assessment has improved at Key Stage 2 and is helping teachers to set more challenging work. As a result, more able

pupils are making better progress. However, there has been little improvement in these respects at Key Stage 1. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is now much stronger in every class. Financial management is much better than at the time of the last inspection because the use of resources is more closely linked to raising standards. Sweeping changes are being made by the head teacher, particularly with regard to monitoring teaching and improving pupils' learning. The school is well placed to continue its improvements.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	C	D	C	C	Well above average A Above average B Average C Below average D Well below average E
Mathematics	C	C	B	B	
Science	D	C	B	C	

Children make a good start in the nursery and by the age of five they reach the standards expected in literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding, creative, physical and personal and social development. However progress slows down in Key Stage 1, particularly in reception and in one of the Year 1/2 classes. By the age of seven, pupils have slipped back and standards are below average in writing, mathematics and science and well below average in reading. Standards at the age of seven are also well below those in similar schools. This is largely because some teachers do not expect enough of the pupils and do not set challenging work. When pupils enter Key Stage 2 they begin to achieve well and start to catch up. Setting pupils according to ability for literacy and numeracy is very effective and teachers are ambitious in their planning. In Key Stage 2, standards have been improving along with national trends but this year standards in English and science have continued to climb and the current Year 6 pupils are reaching even higher standards in both English and science. The successful introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies and the additional booster classes have helped to lift standards. The school has also set challenging targets which are being surpassed. By the age of eleven standards at least match those in similar schools. Standards were above average in mathematics last year but have fallen back slightly because fewer pupils are on course to reach higher levels. Standards in information technology are improving but not high enough yet. In religious education standards are satisfactory. Standards are high in art and in physical education and pupils' work in dance is outstanding.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; Most pupils enjoy school and are interested and involved in their work, although some infant pupils lack concentration.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; Most pupils behave well in lessons and around school. However, a small number have severe behaviour problems in one infant class. They are usually well managed but disturbances can arise.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory; Relationships between pupils, teachers and helpers are good. Pupils carry out their responsibilities conscientiously but there is less evidence of pupils taking initiative and organising their own work.
Attendance	Above average; Pupils arrive on time, ready for lessons.

Pupils with special educational needs are well behaved, attentive and keen to answer questions. Their good attitudes reflect the effort put in by teachers and classroom assistants to make their learning purposeful and rewarding.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	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.*

Overall teaching is satisfactory. Of the lessons seen, 43 per cent were good, a further 15 per cent were very good and five per cent were excellent. However, seven per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory teaching occurs in reception and in one of the Year 1/2 classes where lesson planning is weak and too little is expected of the pupils. In one other Year 1/2 class, a small number of pupils with behaviour difficulties occasionally disrupt lessons. However, these episodes are decreasing because of the prompt action taken to involve parents and bring in outside help. The vast majority of lessons are well managed and pupils are able to learn without distraction. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is good and often very good, particularly in Years 5/6. The teaching of dance is excellent in Year 3/4. In Key Stage 2, lessons move along at a quick pace and pupils show a sense of urgency. High standards are expected and pupils respond positively to this. The teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is good in Key Stage 2 but weaker in some of the Key Stage 1 classes. The teaching of science, art and physical education is often good in Key Stage 2. The teaching of children in the nursery is vibrant and stimulating and the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. Particular teaching strengths include the good contribution made by classroom assistants who work successfully alongside teachers. Teachers make good use of questioning to make pupils think and to assess their understanding. These factors ensure that pupils, in most classes, work hard and acquire new skills.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory; Schemes of work and teachers' termly plans enable pupils to build on what they have learnt earlier. However, teachers' lesson plans are sometimes too brief, particularly in Key Stage 1. The provision of extra curricular activities is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; These pupils are identified quickly and accurately. Activities are provided which interest and challenge them. They are given good support from teachers and classroom assistants to enable them to acquire the basic skills.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good in moral and social, satisfactory in spiritual and cultural areas. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to work together and they are involved in setting school rules. However, an act of collective worship is not provided every day.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good; The level of care, guidance and support for pupils is very good. Pupils' learning is regularly assessed, but Key Stage 2 teachers make better use of the results to gauge how well pupils are learning and set future targets.

The school keeps parents well informed about their children's learning and school events. The head teacher and staff are successful in involving parents in their children's learning and in the life of the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Very good; The head teacher and deputy head teacher have pulled the school together well and introduced a wide range of strategies to bring about improvements. Co-ordinators provide good support for teachers but they are only just beginning to monitor standards and evaluate the impact of the changes made.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are kept well informed and fulfil their statutory duties effectively, apart from collective worship. They offer good support to the school and are increasingly being involved in the drive to raise standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The results of assessments are analysed and weaknesses are identified and shared with teachers. The focus has been at the end of Key Stage 2 where standards are improving. However, these measures have not resulted in improvements at Key Stage 1 as yet.
The strategic use of resources	Good: recent improvements are taking effect, particularly the development of the computer suite and the additional support for pupils with special educational needs. Governors look for cost effectiveness in their decision making and use financial resources wisely to target improvements.

There are a sufficient number of teachers and a good number of well trained classroom assistants to support pupils' social and academic needs. The accommodation is adequate and used well and the school has a good supply of learning resources.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children like school.</li><li>• The teaching is good.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li><li>• Children are making good progress.</li><li>• Behaviour is good.</li><li>• The school is welcoming and approachable.</li><li>• Children are expected to try their best.</li><li>• The school helps children to become mature and responsible.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Information about children's progress.</li><li>• The amount of homework.</li><li>• Extra-curricular activities.</li></ul>

Inspectors largely agree with parents' positive views of the school, but the good teaching and good progress made by children only applies to the nursery and Key Stage 2. Inspectors do not support the views of those parents who feel that they are not kept well informed about their children's progress. The school encourages parents to share their concerns and provides well-written reports and two parents' evenings each year. These are good features. Parents' reservations about the limited range of extra-curricular activities are unjustified. The school provides far more activities than many other schools do. The homework provided builds up steadily and prepares pupils effectively for secondary school. The home-school agreement makes the school's expectations clear.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 Standards reached by pupils aged seven are well below average in reading and below average in writing, mathematics and science. National test results and teachers' assessments presented the same picture in 1999 and also show that standards are well below those obtained by pupils in similar schools. Fewer pupils than might be expected reach the higher levels, particularly in writing and mathematics. Standards reached by the current Year 6 pupils are average in mathematics but above average in English and science. In the national tests of 1999, results in English and science were average but results in mathematics were above average. This year fewer pupils are on course to reach the higher level in mathematics but far more pupils are reaching higher levels in English. Standards have been falling in Key Stage 1 since the time of the last inspection. This is partly because more pupils with special educational needs and behaviour problems are entering the school. However, teaching in reception and in one of the Year 1/2 classes is weak and pupils do not make the progress they should. Standards in Key Stage 2 are higher than at the time of the last inspection and are improving faster because the teaching is stronger. The head teacher has been in post for one year and many changes have taken place in that time. For example, lessons are now observed and pupils' test results are carefully analysed and any specific weakness are noted and worked on. Ambitious targets have been set. The targets were reached last year and have been exceeded this year. Determined action has already been taken to remedy the weaknesses in teaching and the provision for pupils with special educational needs is much better. However, these measures are recent and have not yet had time to influence results, although improvements are evident in Key Stage 2.

2 Children begin school with average levels of attainment. They settle quickly into the nursery and soon begin to explore their surroundings. They learn to make choices and play and work together happily. Gradually more demanding activities are filtered in and children make a good start with reading and counting. A good balance is maintained between direct teaching and opportunities for children to find out for themselves. As a result, children achieve well and make good progress in all areas of learning. When children move into reception, more than half show a secure understanding of letters, words and numbers at the beginning of the year. By the age of five, they have reached the levels expected in all areas of learning, literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding, creative, physical and personal development. However, many of the good features of teaching in the nursery are not continued in the reception class. For example, the classroom is bare, planning is inadequate and children's learning is not fostered. By the end of the reception year many pupils have still not learnt all of the letter sounds and are achieving well below the standards expected. This means that as they enter Year 1 they have much ground to make up.

3 Work seen during the inspection shows that pupils make only slow progress in reading and writing in Key Stage 1. This is partly because in one of the mixed Year 1/2 classes the drive to promote successful learning is lacking and there is little to challenge pupils to improve further. In another class, a small number of pupils with behaviour problems occasionally disrupt the lessons. This class also contains a significant number of pupils with special educational needs. These factors impede progress in both reading and writing. The result is that some pupils have limited strategies to help them to read unfamiliar words or understand their meaning. Progress in writing, is slow for some of these pupils who lack motivation to write independently. Pupils achieve very well in the third class, despite the high numbers of those with special educational needs. Practice at home helps all pupils to improve their reading.

4 Progress picks up and accelerates in all subjects in Key Stage 2, particularly English. Pupils are taught well how to study different texts. They learn to read fluently and accurately and become proficient in grasping the meaning of the passage. They are taught how to locate information in books but have too few opportunities to refine these skills because the library is not well organised and is underused. Pupils' writing

skills, such as spelling, grammar and punctuation are progressing nicely because these aspects are well taught. In addition, many pupils show creativity and imagination in writing because they are encouraged to study good literature and poetry. Reading and writing skills are further refined by using them to discover and record experiences in other subjects. Pupils are given many valuable opportunities to improve their listening and speaking skills. In Key Stage 2, they make good progress and by the age of eleven, they have acquired the fluency to enable them to explain their ideas clearly, although not all pupils have the confidence to speak to the whole class.

5 In mathematics pupils make slow progress through Key Stage 1. They do not get off to a good start in reception and falter in one of the Year 1/2 classes. This is because teaching and lesson planning are weak and not enough is expected of the pupils. In addition, in one of the other classes many pupils have special educational needs and a small number have behaviour problems in the third class. These factors interplay to limit pupils' achievements and result in below average standards by the age of seven. Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 2. They are taught in ability groups and this enables teachers to match the work to the pupils' level of achievement. The pace of lessons is quick and teachers are keen to extend pupils learning as far as possible. Pupils become adept in mental calculation and proficient in their attempts to use their knowledge and skills to solve mathematical problems.

6 Pupils in Key Stage 1 make slow progress in science, particularly in one class. Practical experiences are provided and pupils learn to make reasonable predictions and observe what happens. However, they seldom record their work and when they do, a few words on a worksheet are all that is required. Pupils do not learn to organise their ideas and teachers have insufficient evidence on which to base their judgements on how well pupils are doing. At Key Stage 2, pupils achieve very well in their knowledge and understanding across all areas of science and their skills of experimenting are moving along steadily.

7 Standards in information technology have improved since the last inspection and pupils are now making satisfactory progress. However, improvements are more pronounced in communicating and handling information. They are weaker in monitoring and controlling events. In this respect, pupils at the age of seven and eleven are still falling short of the national standards expected. The computer suite is coming on stream and teachers have shown a determination to improve their knowledge and understanding of how to teach the subject. As a result, standards are continuing to rise. Standards in religious education meet requirements at both key stages and pupils develop a good knowledge of Christianity and other religions, although they do not make such good progress in learning how religious ideas can affect their lives. Pupils' achieve well in art and physical education. They often achieve well in design and technology lessons. However, in this subject progress is sometimes hampered because teachers and classroom helpers are too eager to tell pupils what to do. This leaves little scope for pupils to evaluate their own work and modify it as they go along. In music lessons pupils achieve well in Year 5/6 and learn to compose and perform imaginative musical interpretations of well-known stories.

8 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all classes. Teachers care about their academic and social development and go to considerable lengths to provide work at the right level. Their learning needs are carefully assessed and they often receive good support from teachers and classroom assistants. These factors enable them to achieve the targets set to help them improve. Boys have been achieving higher results than girls over a four year period. The school is in the process of identifying gifted and talented pupils with a view to extending their learning through a summer school. Currently, the few academically gifted pupils are allocated to higher sets and are able to make satisfactory progress.

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

9 The majority of pupils show good attitudes to their work and to their life in school. They enjoy coming to school and arrive punctually. Attendance rates have improved and are now above the national average. There is a very low incidence of unauthorised absence. Exclusions are extremely rare although one pupil was temporarily excluded last year.

10 Children in the nursery develop interests and positive attitudes to learning because the classroom and the activities they are given are highly stimulating. Pupils with special educational needs are well motivated and positive in their attitudes, helped by staff who treat them sensitively and value their contributions to lessons.

11 Pupils in most classes, for most of the time, are enthusiastic and are keen to ask and answer questions. This is particularly evident in upper junior classes and reflects the consistently good teaching and interesting lessons. In Key Stage 2 almost all pupils concentrate well and take a pride in their work. For example, in Key Stage 2 science lessons, pupils were regularly observed working hard and co-operating very well when carrying out experiments. Pupils' attitudes in Key Stage 1 are satisfactory but there are times when limited concentration affects their learning. In one of the Year 1/2 classes, for example, pupils are slow to settle to groupwork and easily distracted. This happens when the teacher fails to inject a sense of purpose and urgency into the lessons and says, 'Do not worry if you do not finish, there is plenty of time tomorrow'. Reception children sometimes have passive attitudes to learning. This is partly a result of a dull and bare classroom environment.

12 Behaviour throughout the school is good. There was one fixed term exclusion in the year prior to the inspection but none reported during the current academic year. Pupils move around the school sensibly and play well together at breaks and lunchtime. Most pupils are polite and courteous. There is no evidence of bullying or isolation of individual pupils. Most pupils behave very well in classrooms because teachers expect them to and make the boundaries of acceptable behaviour very clear. During a visit to the local swimming pool pupils' behaviour was very good. Members of the public comment on the politeness of the children. However, a small number of pupils in one Key Stage 1 class have severe behaviour problems. Although they are usually managed well, they occasionally disrupt lessons and this affects the progress of other pupils. The school is working hard and with some success in identifying and supporting pupils with behaviour difficulties and parents are readily involved. Parents are justified in feeling that the school maintains good standards of behaviour.

13 Pupils' learning is promoted through the good relationships with adults and each other. They show respect for their teachers and each other. Appropriate respect is consistently shown for the occasion during assemblies. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Older pupils have typical opportunities to take responsibility in school. For example, Year 5/6 pupils undertake a good range of duties with confidence, such as setting out the hall for assemblies and taking part in weekly shared reading sessions with the younger children. Younger children have some class duties, for example, returning registers to the office, which they carry out responsibly. Year 1/2 pupils act as 'playground pals' to other pupils who might have difficulties in finding friends or joining in playground activities. Although pupils accept and carry out to their responsibilities conscientiously, there is less evidence of pupils taking initiative and showing creativity. This is because teachers and classroom helpers sometimes influence pupils too much rather than encourage them to solve the problem in their own way.

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

14 On balance teaching is satisfactory and promotes pupils' learning. Teaching is better at Key Stage 2 than at the time of the last inspection but weaker in Key Stage 1. During the week of inspection, sixty two per cent of the teaching was good, of which 15 per cent was very good and four per cent was excellent.

Teaching of dance in the Year 3/4 classes was outstanding. Seven per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory, all in the infant classes. Teaching in the nursery is good. In the recently established under fives class, teaching is satisfactory. However, teaching is unsatisfactory in the main reception class and in one of the three mixed age Year 1/2 classes. Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good in the other two infant classes and usually good or better in Key Stage 2. Standards of teaching have dropped at Key Stage 1 since the last inspection because in the reception class and one of the three infant classes not enough is expected of the pupils. In reception, for example, pupils' reading skills are way behind and by the age of seven too many pupils are unable to read and write fluently. These weaknesses can be traced back to shallow lesson planning and the assumption that young pupils cannot tackle challenging work. Consequently, pupils are often given low level tasks that do little to extend their learning.

15 Teachers in Key Stage 2 expect their pupils to achieve high standards but in too many lessons at Key Stage 1 not enough demands are made of the pupils. At the time of the last inspection more able pupils were not being stretched, particularly in Key Stage 2. Although this still occurs in some of the infant classes, junior pupils are usually given demanding work. For example, In Key Stage 2, pupils are grouped according to ability for literacy and numeracy. This means that teachers can aim the lesson more specifically at the precise needs of the pupils in different groups. In this setting, all pupils are catered for and able to achieve well. Although more able pupils are not always challenged enough in Key Stage 1, pupils who find learning difficult are well provided for in every class. Teachers show a high level of concern that pupils with special educational needs feel valued and confident to give of their best. Teachers bear their needs in mind when preparing the lesson and either simplify the task or provide extra support. In a Year 1/2 geography lesson, for example, pupils were asked to plot the journey from home to school using landmarks to identify the significant points along the route. This was too difficult for pupils with special educational needs so they were given pictures to sort into the correct order. The work of classroom assistants is good throughout the school and they often withdraw small groups of pupils with specific learning needs and offer sensitive support. These factors ensure that pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school.

16 Teachers manage their pupils well. At the time of the last inspection 11 per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory because some teachers were failing to manage the behaviour of some pupils. Although some pupils still misbehave, they are better controlled and rarely allowed to impair the learning of others. Classroom rules are agreed at the beginning of the school year and teachers remind pupils to abide by them when individuals are in danger of crossing the acceptable boundaries. Shouting out answers and talking when concentration is needed, is not accepted and seldom happens. Discipline is firm but fair and teachers and pupils enjoy good relationships based on trust and mutual understanding. In almost all classes for almost all of the time the atmosphere for learning is good and pupils can work in a peaceful and purposeful setting. Just occasionally in one of the Year 1/2 and 3/4 classes a small number of pupils misbehave. When this happens parents are involved and additional outside support is brought in to help these pupils to control their outbursts. The action taken by the school is having a positive effect on pupils' behaviour.

17 Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach is satisfactory but good in the nursery and at Key Stage 2. This ensures that the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are taught well in junior classes. In Key Stage 2, teachers exchange classes for religious education, physical education and music. The system works well because lessons are all taken by teachers with expertise and interest in the subject. The teachers' good knowledge and enthusiasm bring the lessons to life and help pupils to concentrate harder and for longer. In most lessons, teaching methods are effective and new learning is explained in clearly sequenced steps to enable pupils to grasp the essential ideas. In the one very good English lesson in Key Stage 1, the teacher's good understanding of literature enabled her to help pupils to carefully analyse the story. Many good opportunities were found to improve pupils' spelling and ability to use clues to predict what might happen next in the story. This led to very good progress in the lesson. When the ideas are likely to prove difficult to understand, teachers make good use of demonstrations to illustrate the teaching points. For example, in Year 3/4, the teacher used a passion flower head to show

pupils how insects were attracted to flowers by bright colours and scent. This helped the pupils to understand quite complex ideas about how plants are pollinated.

18 Teachers in both infant and junior classes frequently check that they are getting the message across to pupils by asking questions. In Key Stage 2 the questions asked are often very challenging. These are directed towards to higher attaining pupils but simpler questions are asked of pupils who struggle to understand. Teachers listen very carefully to pupils' answers before proceeding. In this way the pupils' level of understanding is assessed and any confusion is corrected. In Key Stage 1 however, the starting points for learning are not always accurate and the use of assessment is unsatisfactory. This is because in many subjects, such as science, pupils do not have books in which to keep a record of their work. Instead, worksheets are used but these are not kept in a careful order and it is harder for teachers to check progress. Consequently, teachers sometimes begin new work at a lower level than pupils are capable of working and this is partly why pupils' attainment by the age of seven is lower than it should be. In Key Stage 2 teachers put a strong emphasis on pupils recording their work and then mark it thoroughly. The next lesson often begins with a reference to how well pupils achieved last time. By sharing this knowledge, pupils are able to move on quickly to their next target.

19 Basic skills, such as spelling and addition of number, are taught well in Key Stage 2. In some Key Stage 1 classes this is a weakness. Teachers are not always effective in explaining instructions and pupils are left without a clear understanding of what they are expected to do. Consequently, when they practise the skills they make errors and fail to pick up the basic ideas. In numeracy in Key Stage 2 and in some Key Stage 1 lessons, a strong emphasis is placed on quick recall of number facts, such as addition and multiplication and improving pupils' capacity to solve number problems. Pupils are encouraged to look for short cuts, such as rounding numbers up to the nearest ten or hundred to improve the speed of calculation. As a result, pupils' confidence and ability to calculate mentally is significantly increased. In literacy, in Key Stage 2 teachers are proficient in the teaching of skills such as vocabulary, spelling, correct grammar and punctuation. As a result, many Year 5/6 pupils are confident to use words to create different effects to invigorate their writing.

20 Teaching of the children under five in the nursery is good but many of the learning gains are lost in the main reception class. In the nursery, the teacher and the nursery assistant know the children well. They provide a caring, welcoming atmosphere in which children gain self-confidence. Classroom rules are clear and children know what they should and should not do. They learn to behave well, take turns and co-operate with other. Together, the nursery staff prepare a happy, yet highly structured and successful learning atmosphere. Lessons are very carefully planned and every opportunity is taken to improve children's spoken and written language. For example, when making sandwiches the children were constantly asked questions such as, 'What shape is the bread and what does margarine feel like?'. This encourages children to use new words and speak in sentences and provides a very good foundation for learning to read and write. During the inspection, temporary teachers worked in reception, therefore judgements had to take account of the work done earlier. Children's learning has clearly fallen behind in the main reception class. Not enough thought has gone into the planning of lessons. The classrooms are bare and the learning opportunities are meagre in comparison to the nursery.

21 Homework makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in the nursery and in Key Stage 2. The home reading programme is well organised and gives pupils essential practise. As pupils move further up the school, they are given good opportunities to improve their numeracy and literacy skills through home assignments.

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

22 The curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory as it was at the time of the last inspection. It



meets all statutory requirements to offer a broad and balanced range of experiences that cover all subjects, including religious education. The school has responded well to two issues raised in the previous inspection. Information technology is now planned carefully to include all of the necessary elements. Secondly, the work planned for pupils with special educational needs is now based accurately on an assessment of their different learning needs. The Code of Practice has been very effectively implemented and pupils benefit greatly from their well constructed education plans.

23 The curriculum for the under fives is good in the nursery but weak in the main reception class. In the nursery, planning is detailed and good learning opportunities are provided in all areas of learning. There is a strong focus on children learning the basic skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing and number. In addition, the nursery is well organised and rich in learning experiences. This encourages children to explore and find out for themselves. The reception classrooms, in contrast, are bare. This does not encourage children to choose activities and develop interests.

24 The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively, especially at Key Stage 2. Here, a strong emphasis on the development of basic skills in English and mathematics is raising standards in several subjects. The decision to teach pupils in groups for English and mathematics, according to their level of attainment, is a good one. Teachers are more able to set challenging work for each group. At Key Stage 1, good opportunities are provided for pupils who find learning difficult. They are helped by classroom assistants to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. However, the work provided for more able pupils is often not sufficiently challenging in the infant classes.

25 Schemes of work in English, mathematics and science give good guidance and support for teachers. Two-year cycles of work are well geared to the mixed age classes. They ensure that new skills and knowledge build well upon the pupils' previous learning. The provision for physical education, dance and swimming is particularly strong at Key Stage 2. Good links are made between subjects, such as history and art, which give added interest and relevance to the pupils' work. There is a good programme of health education that deals well with sex education and drugs awareness issues. The guidance and planning in other subjects are adequate.

26 Teachers' lesson plans are satisfactory on balance, but variable in quality. The best lessons are always backed by thorough and detailed plans where the learning objectives are crystal clear. These are then explained well, so that pupils know exactly what they are expected to learn. In contrast, when planning was not specific and pupils were unsure of what they were expected to do, the lesson had unsatisfactory outcomes. Occasionally, teachers direct pupils too much and this squeezes out opportunities for pupils to think and work creatively. This happens mainly in design and technology. In addition, older pupils have very few opportunities to use the library or computers to find information for themselves.

27 The school's relationship with the community is very fruitful. Curriculum provision is enriched by educational visits and by visitors invited into the school to talk to and work with pupils. This has a strong impact, particularly in art. Local artists inspire work in painting, clay, brass-rubbing and traditional crafts, giving good advice in their specialist areas. High quality work often develops from these arrangements. Good links also exist with the local church, giving the pupils opportunities for additional spiritual experiences.

28 Good equality of access and opportunity to the whole curriculum is ensured for all pupils. Very good provision is made for the children of travellers who regularly return to the school. Good provision is also made for pupils with special educational needs. Activities are provided to both interest and challenge them. For example, in groups withdrawn for mathematics and literacy, capable support assistants deliver well-structured work. Pupils regularly succeed and their self-esteem is raised. This enables them to make good progress.

29 The school continues to maintain its very good tradition of providing a rich variety of activities out of school hours. The many clubs are well attended and are open to all pupils of junior age. This provision gives an extra dimension to the life and work of the school in team sports, in expressive arts such as drama and dance and in music making. Booster classes have been introduced to good effect and homework plays an important part in preparing pupils for secondary schools. The school benefits from good links with partner institutions, such as the local high school. For example, opportunities are given for pupils to benefit from extra coaching in both music and sport.

30 Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Teachers take advantage of opportunities to discuss spiritual issues although these are not specifically planned for. For example, in English lessons pupils reflect on the art of poetry and in science they learn to appreciate the wonders of plant cycles and growth. Through music and art pupils develop and appreciation of beauty and form and in religious education pupils learn about how faith influences peoples' lives. However, there are missed opportunities to enhance pupils' spiritual development through praise and prayer because they are not certain to engage in the act of collective worship every day.

31 Provision for the moral development of pupils is good. Children's understanding of right and wrong is promoted well in the nursery where they are encouraged to think about their actions. Regular opportunities are provide in all classes for pupils to sit in a circle to express their feelings. These 'circle time' sessions are proving effective in Key Stage 1 in helping the teacher to manage the small number of pupils who struggle to behave well. Debates on moral issues are a common feature in some classes and these help pupils to grapple with world-wide issues of morality. Key Stage 2 have a good understanding of classroom rules, and why they are needed, because they are involved in setting them. The home school agreement is clear and helpful. It sets out the moral framework for the school and communicates this well to all concerned. The head teacher and his staff set a good moral example.

32 The school provides good opportunities for pupils' social development. Good examples of correct social behaviour, such as helping and caring for others are publicly rewarded. There are good opportunities for group work, particularly in science investigations and in design and technology practical work. There are also good opportunities for co-operative work in dance. A very good example was observed when a Year 3/4 class gave an excellent dance presentation to the whole school during an assembly. The school aims to promote good citizenship and to this end older pupils are given the opportunity to work and live together on a residential visit. Pupils are taught to think of others less fortunate than themselves and support national and local charities.

33 The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, although pupils' own heritage and traditions are strongly reinforced. For example, many historical and geographical visits are made to the local area and musicians, artists and exponents of local crafts visit the school to share their knowledge with the pupils. Multi-cultural experiences are more limited but are broadly typical for a school of this type. A wide range of faiths and cultures are studied in religious education and pupils enjoy listening to music from other countries. However, the school has not forged productive links with organisations where people have very different cultural backgrounds. This makes it more difficult for pupils to understand the true nature of a multi-cultural society.

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

34 The school takes very good care of its pupils and supports them well. This was noted in the previous inspection report. The head teacher leads very positively in this aspect. Clear procedures for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of pupils work well in practice. For example, guidance and the action to be taken regarding any child protection issues are clearly communicated to staff. Pupils are well supervised at breaks and at lunchtime. Arrangements for promoting health and safety are very good and there is safe practice in lessons. Arrangements for dealing with minor injuries and medical problems are

very good. However, a few health and safety matters needing attention were brought to the attention of the head teacher during the inspection. The school makes good use of appropriate external support agencies, for example, the Traveller Support Service, and has experienced and well qualified classroom assistants who provide good support for teachers and pupils. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good both from school staff and outside agencies.

35 The school promotes good behaviour through the comprehensive policy and class rules. Rewards are given for good behaviour. Most teachers, parents and the pupils themselves have high expectations of good behaviour. Teachers know their pupils well and pupils with behaviour difficulties are tracked and generally supported well. However, the control of a small number of pupils in Key Stage 1 and one or two individuals in Key Stage 2 are a concern to the school because they can sometimes disrupt learning. However, every effort is made to involve parents and outside help in getting to the root of the problems. Attendance is actively promoted and monitored very well. This has directly impacted on attendance levels, which have improved since the last inspection. Exclusions are very rare and none have occurred this year.

36 Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Thorough assessments are undertaken in the Nursery. At both key stages, detailed records are compiled, over time, on each pupil. They are strong in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. They include test results, accurately graded samples of work and personal profiles, on which parents' comments are noted. Pupils' achievements are well documented. Teachers are able to track their progress from the evidence available. Each folder is a very useful source of information if there are any concerns or enquiries about the progress of any individual child. For example, evidence from the folders is being used to identify those pupils in need of additional support, or those who have special gifts in a particular area.

37 Although the monitoring of individual pupils' progress is well established, the progress made by whole classes and year groups is only partly done. End of year and end of Key Stage test results from Year 2 onwards are carefully analysed. The results are used to identify pupils with special educational needs and those who require additional literacy support. In addition, pupils who with extra help could reach the standards expected by the age of eleven in English and mathematics are invited to participate in booster classes. The tracking of these assessment results is enabling the school to set challenging targets for improvement. However, whole class assessments for pupils in reception and Year 1 are not used sufficiently to inform future planning. In some of these classes, progress is faltering and assessment is not playing its part in identifying exactly why. Samples of work are only just beginning to be collected, but they have not yet been evaluated to detect where progress is consistently good or is less evident. As a result of the unsatisfactory use of assessment at Key Stage 1 poorer progress, in a minority of classes, goes undetected. This weakness does not affect pupils with special educational needs because their needs are carefully assessed and recorded in every class. Good quality education plans are provided for these pupils and their progress towards reaching the targets specified is tightly monitored. These factors largely account for the good progress they make.

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

38 The school's partnership with parents is good. This was a good feature at the time of the last inspection but the partnership is growing stronger with recent initiatives to work with parents before their children begin school. The vast majority of parents consistently expressed positive views about the school. The majority of parents are satisfied with the way the school supports their children and helps them to achieve well, but a minority has concerns about some other aspects of the school's work.

39 Plenty of useful information is provided for parents, although some parents do not agree that they are kept well informed about their children's progress. There are regular informative newsletters and letters home about specific activities and events. The school prospectus is comprehensive and informative and contains all the required statutory information. Governors hold an annual meeting with parents, publish a

useful annual report and hold “surgeries” on open nights. Curriculum newsletters are circulated to inform parents about what their children are being taught. The annual progress reports for parents are at least satisfactory and parents are offered appropriate opportunities to attend meetings where they can discuss their children’s work and progress with their class teachers. The head teacher and the teaching staff are very approachable and available to hold informal discussions with parents if they want them. In the light of such compelling evidence, the inspection team feels that parents are kept well informed.

40 The few parents who have concerns about the range of activities provided outside lessons are not justified. The range and quality of extra-curricular activities are very good. Parents’ concerns about homework are partially supported because in the past, they did not receive sufficient information about homework. The school has recognised this and provides clear information about what is expected. The actual amount set in some classes is greater than is the case in many schools. The teachers’ use of homework for children under five years old and in Key Stage 2 is good and satisfactory in Key Stage 1.

41 The impact of the parents’ involvement in the work of the school is good. Many parents help regularly in school and accompany children on out of school visits. For example, parents help supervise children on their way to the local swimming pool. A number of regular parents provide invaluable support for teachers in classroom activities, such as art and design and technology. Many parents hear their children read at home and use the reading records as an effective home/school means of communication. The school had an extremely positive 100 per cent return on the home school agreements. There is a strong and active “Friends” group, which organises events and raises considerable funds for the school.

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

42 The leadership and management of the school are very good and the impact on standards is beginning to show. The school benefits from the dynamic leadership of the recently appointed head teacher, who works very successfully in partnership with the deputy head teacher, senior staff and governing body. The head teacher is held in high regard by staff who see him as a strong and sensitive leader. He has the ability to inspire others with his clear vision for the school and he has worked hard over the last year to build an effective team. He sets high standards and has equally high expectations, but leads by example. He has successfully identified the main strengths of the school and areas for further development. Issues surrounding the low standards in Key Stage 1 have been rigorously tackled, as have issues remaining from the last school inspection. All staff share the head teacher’s clear overview of the school. The school’s aims successfully underpin the work of the school and the school development plan is a very effective tool to drive new initiatives forward.

43 The governing body is well trained, active and effective. The chair of governors leads a supportive team, committed to achieving the best for the school. They meet regularly and the structure of the committees enables the governing body to fulfil its responsibilities, not only for each year but to take a longer term view of the school’s development. Governors are knowledgeable about the strengths of the school and have worked as a critical friend in supporting further initiatives in areas still to be addressed. They work in close partnership with the school, visiting regularly and monitoring aspects of teaching and the curriculum. Support is provided to parents at open evenings, when they are available for discussions about the school. The governors have a clear view of the priorities of the school and are meeting their statutory requirements, apart from ensuring the provision of a daily act of collective worship.

44 The deputy head teacher provides effective support and has very good personal management skills. She liaises effectively with all staff in the school in supporting the head teacher. Other senior staff in school work as a team to support new initiatives and foster a good atmosphere in the school, where all pupils and staff are valued and their efforts supported.

45 Subject co-ordinators are providing good leadership in English, mathematics, information

technology and physical education. The co-ordinator for the early years has identified areas for development that need to be undertaken in reception to improve standards. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is effective and provides good support to her colleagues. Co-ordination in other subject areas is satisfactory. All co-ordinators work hard in producing curriculum policies, ensuring the full involvement of all staff. The monitoring of both teaching and learning is now becoming more rigorous but has yet to lead to higher standards in Key Stage 1. Co-ordinators have not sufficiently explored how to monitor both teaching and pupil's learning, in addition to making class visits; for example, by looking at the work of pupils across a year group, or within key stages. However, there is a shared commitment to the improvement of standards and the school is becoming increasingly better at analysing data and comparing its performance against schools nationally and against similar schools.

46 The head teacher monitors standards in school and has observed every teacher taking lessons and fed back information to help them to improve. He works in classes to support learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy, and to get to know the pupils. He also monitors other aspects of the school's work which are equally important; for example, standards of behaviour, the quality of relationships and attitudes to learning.

47 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good. Teachers' expertise is used well in physical education, music and religious education where classes are exchanged. Staff training has a high profile and new teachers to the school receive clear guidance and support. Regular opportunities are provided for teachers to attend courses, visit other classes and schools to observe and evaluate different approaches to teaching. Such initiatives reflect the head teacher's commitment to raising standards. Classroom assistants play an important part in pupils' learning and the effective support they offer is highly valued. The school provides good accommodation for both teaching and resource management, and the premises are well cared for. The generous amount of hard and soft play areas enables physical education to be taught well. Resource provision for most subjects is good. For example, there is a good range of artefacts to support the teaching of religious education and history. However, the library is seldom used and this restricts pupils' opportunities to find information for themselves.

48 Financial management and budget control are very good and spending priorities are closely linked to improvements in standards. The school has a large budget surplus but it is being whittled down judiciously. Governors are using the reserves wisely to keep staff in post during a temporary period of falling pupil numbers. Information technology is used effectively to streamline the school's administration and the data on spending patterns is carefully analysed to assess the impact on major developments. The governors strive to ensure that spending decisions provide the best value for pupils. Grants are used well. For example, funding allocated for pupils with special educational needs is used to provide a good level of adult support and well-chosen resources. Administration is smooth, efficient and unobtrusive, and is managed very well on a day-to-day basis, with the skills of responsible staff complementing one another most effectively.

49 The school has made satisfactory progress in improving the issues identified since the last inspection report and the strength of the management structure means that the school is now well placed to continue its development and improvement. The low standards in Key Stage 1 are being addressed. The school has many strengths in providing a good quality education for its pupils and these contribute to the good progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2. Considering these, the pupils' average attainment on entry and the effectiveness which staffing, accommodation and learning resources are used, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50 The school has many good features and standards by the end of Key Stage 2 are at least average in almost all subjects. However, standards are too low in Key Stage 1 because pupils are not challenged sufficiently and attainment in information technology is still not high enough. The school needs to remedy these weaknesses and the Head teacher and governors should take action on the following issues.

(1) Substantially raise standards in reception and Key Stage 1 in English, mathematics and science by:

- Raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
- Improving the quality of lesson planning and the teaching of basic skills
- Improving the use of assessment of pupils' progress and using the results to set more challenging work.
- Ensuring that the reception classroom is an interesting and carefully structured place to learn.

(Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 11, 14, 18, 19, 20, 37, 50, 53, 54, 55, 59, 62, 65, 67, 69, 73, 75, 79, 81, 83 and 112)

(2) Continue to raise standards in information technology by:

- Improve planning to ensure that skills are taught in a clear sequence and pupils' work is assessed
- Ensuring that all aspects of the subject are covered
- Improving the use of information technology in other subjects

(Paragraphs 7, 77, 82, 94, 97, 98, 99, 100 and 101)

When drawing up their action plan governors will have to take account of two minor issues

- Provide an act of daily worship for all pupils. (Paragraph 30)
- Ensure that all subject co-ordinators monitor pupils' progress to help them to identify weaknesses and take action to improve standards. (Paragraphs 45, 77, 84 and 112)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	67
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

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

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	15	43	30	7		

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)	25	307
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		66

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	81

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

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

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

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	36

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.4

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.0
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
	1999	24	13	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	18	20
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	29	30	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78% (73%)	81% (76%)	89% (84%)
	National	82% (80%)	83% (85%)	87% (86%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	19	16
	Girls	13	13	12
	Total	30	32	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81% (80%)	86% (88%)	76% (82%)
	National	82% (80%)	86% (85%)	87% (86%)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	25	23	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	19	22
	Girls	17	16	17
	Total	37	35	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77% (59%)	73% (65%)	81% (67%)
	National	70% (65%)	69% (59%)	78% (69%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	20	19
	Girls	15	16	14
	Total	34	36	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72% (42%)	75% (39%)	69% (65%)
	National	68% (65%)	69% (65%)	75% (72%)

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	259
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	1	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)	26.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.3
Average class size	28.1

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	100

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	28

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.5
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999 - 2000
	£
Total income	535,013
Total expenditure	499,600
Expenditure per pupil	1,597
Balance brought forward from previous year	65,533
Balance carried forward to next year	100,946

**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	260
Number of questionnaires returned	129

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	41	5	1	2
My child is making good progress in school.	52	43	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	62	5	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	55	12	3	2
The teaching is good.	57	38	2	2	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	42	14	2	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	33	2	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	34	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	42	44	5	2	7
The school is well led and managed.	57	37	2	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	42	2	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	40	10	2	4

## **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**

51 Education for children under-five is provided in the nursery and in one main reception class. Recently, an extra reception class has been opened to relieve pressure of numbers in the nursery. The provision for children under-five is satisfactory overall, with the majority of children on course to achieve the expected learning outcomes in language and literacy, mathematics, personal and social education, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development by the age of five. The provision for children in the nursery is good and has a positive effect on their learning and progress. In the main reception class, the scrutiny of previous work indicates that pupils make slow progress.

52 In the nursery, the teacher and the nursery nurse work effectively as a team to promote good educational standards. The teacher in the reception presently has no regular teaching support. The nursery curriculum is well planned and provides a broad, balanced and enriched programme of learning experiences. In the reception class, whilst planning and teaching are currently satisfactory, in the past children have not benefited from good teaching and standards in language and literacy and mathematics in particular have suffered as a result. Whilst standards in the nursery have improved since the last inspection, as children make good progress with good quality teaching, the standards in the reception class have not been maintained.

53 The personal and social development of the children is good in the nursery and satisfactory in reception. In the nursery, children come into school eagerly and are not upset when their parents and carers leave. They find their own name and match it on a large board to self-register themselves. Children demonstrate their growing independence as they choose activities with others. They share the large wheeled toys outside and wait patiently until it is their turn. Children have begun to appreciate that certain activities have rules, for example they know that they must wear an apron to paint. They accept new challenges readily. The classroom hamster is always treated respectfully; for example, children look in the cage for it but if they find the hamster sleeping, they do not disturb it. In reception, children have planted beans and know that they are living things needing regular watering. However, the reception classrooms are bare, although one has only been recently set up. There are very few interesting activities for children to choose from and this restricts their capacity to explore and follow up their own interests.

54 In language and literacy, younger children in the nursery talk animatedly to the teacher about pictures in their books. They anticipate what may happen next in a story and talk about the main characters. Children sit quietly on the carpet as they listen intently to stories. Early writing skills develop well as children write stories or a list of all the things they would need to go camping. More able children speak clearly in sentences, whilst lower attaining children, or those who are shy, still communicate with single words. In reception, children's attainment is lower than it should be. Children recognise and sound out the first letter when trying to read new words, but are not able to blend two or three letters to make a word. Scrutiny of work over the year indicates that whilst the majority of children write and spell their own Christian name correctly, there is very little evidence of free writing activities, children mainly having completed published work-sheets. Handwriting skills are weak, with incorrect orientation and positioning of letters. Attempts at writing a simple sentence are often not very successful or barely legible. Most children make no attempt at using a capital letter or full stop and the standards achieved by the higher attaining children are not high enough and they make slow progress.

55 Children make good progress in developing their mathematical understanding in the nursery. They point to the scales on a fish and count carefully, with help, from 1-10. They develop a mathematical awareness of shape by counting fat shapes and thin shapes on the fish. They eagerly use scales to carefully weigh shells and stones. The majority of children can successfully match shape and colour. When making

sandwiches, they notice that the bread is square and can be cut up into four triangles. In reception, most children count to 10 using real objects and identify two dimensional shapes correctly. More able children are beginning to use the correct name for three dimensional shapes and can match a football correctly with the shape of a sphere. The majority of children are achieving the expected learning outcome in mathematics, and their progress is now satisfactory, but scrutiny of previous work indicates a lack of challenging activities to extend and develop the good progress previously made in the nursery. Numbers are rarely written correctly and activities involving numbers above 10, to provide a challenge for the higher attaining children, have not been tackled.

56 Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developed well in the nursery. Children talk about their families and pets at home and paint a picture of their house. They show an interest and daily concern for the hamster and name a range of animals when building a small farmyard with Lego. When making sandwiches, the smell and taste of tuna and sardine fillings are explored. Early information technology skills are developed as children independently load a nursery rhyme cassette into the tape recorder, or select which computer program they want to use and load this without help. Cutting, joining and folding skills develop as children make three-dimensional models of vehicles. In reception, satisfactory progress is being made and children have a good understanding of the changing pattern of the weather. Going outside to look at clouds, they talk about the weather from direct observation, for example, the clouds are light grey and dark grey and it might rain. Children explore the local library in Thirsk to look at books and then draw pictures to record their visit.

57 Children make good progress in their physical development in the nursery as they benefit from the opportunities outdoors to climb and balance confidently on the climbing frame and play safely on large wheeled toys. When moving in the hall, nursery children carefully follow a white line and change direction on command. They take very big steps, or move sideways like a crab. Children move confidently in the hall space to run, skip, hop and jump. Older children in reception use the hall space safely when warming up and have a sound knowledge of the effect of exercise on their body as they say, 'it makes our heart beat faster!' They use quite accurate skills to roll a ball to a partner, or work with others on throwing and catching skills. They develop confidence as they perform their increasing skills in front of other children. Children dress and undress themselves for their physical education lessons. The majority of children handle scissors, pencils and paintbrushes with control and use construction toys and shape games with growing expertise.

58 Creative skills develop well in the nursery as children use powder paints and a variety of thick and thin brushes to mix colours. They delight at discovering new colours and enjoy painting with thick paint, or carefully paint their clay models of pirate's treasure with thin paint and fine brushes. Glue is used confidently to stick collage materials onto three-dimensional models. They use play-dough to model animal shapes using pastry cutters. Children respond well to music; this is illustrated when they tidy up their activities happily to a selection of classical music. In reception, children use puppets to make a puppet show, which is later acted out in front of the class.

59 The teaching of the under-fives in the nursery is always good and is often very good. The teacher has a very secure knowledge of how young children learn and develop, resulting in carefully planned, stimulating activities which build on what the children already know and then challenge and extend their learning. The nursery nurse provides very good support in small group focus activities, enabling children to make good progress. Expectations of both work and behaviour are high. Relationships in the nursery are very warm and caring. Children with special educational needs receive good support in their learning. Relationships with parents are effective, particularly through the shared home-school book scheme. There is very good on-going assessment of what children know and can do, and this is used to plan extension activities at an appropriate pace. Teaching in the permanent reception class has been unsatisfactory over the year and as a result children's attainment has fallen behind. A second reception class has been set up in the last few weeks to reduce numbers in the nursery. A supply teacher is taking the class and she has already established good relationships with the children. Planning for activities is now satisfactory for literacy and

numeracy. Teaching is satisfactory but the classroom, although only recently established, is not a stimulating place for young children to learn. There are few displays that interest and excite children.

60 The early years co-ordinator provides good leadership and has recently written new policies and documentation to provide a clear framework for work with young children. She has begun to monitor lessons in the reception class and has already identified areas for improvement.

## **ENGLISH**

61 Standards reached by pupils by the age of eleven in the tests of 1999 were close to the national average and matched those in similar schools. Standards were judged to be average at the time of the previous inspection and have improved along with national trends since then. However, the introduction of the National Literacy strategy has raised standards further and the current Year 6 pupils are reaching above average standards. In Key Stage 2, pupils are grouped according to ability. Teaching is good and extra training in booster classes is provided. These measures are pushing standards higher. The targets set for English have been reached and improvements in assessment are helping the school to set even higher targets. In Key Stage 2 all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from a travelling background, make good progress.

62 Results of the national tests in 1999 and inspection findings indicate that by the age of seven, standards in reading are well below average and below average in writing. The results are well below those obtained in similar schools. Recent results represent a marked fall in standards since the last inspection. The problems begin in the reception class where pupils fall behind. As a result, they enter the Year 1/2 mixed age classes with low attainment. Progress is slow in two of the three Year 1/2 classes because lesson planning does not identify clear learning goals. This results in pupils not receiving challenging work. Consequently, very few children reach the higher levels in reading and writing. In the third class, pupils make good progress. Planning is good, the work set is challenging and well matched to pupils' learning needs and the class is well managed. Despite the lack of challenge for many pupils, those with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported and the work provided is set at the right level.

63 In Key Stage 1, pupils' listening and speaking skills improve, though they remain below expected levels. Stories, read in the literacy hour lessons, capture their interest and imagination well. Good questioning skills are a feature in one of the infant classes because all pupils are encouraged to offer their ideas. In this class, pupils listen carefully to instructions and are able to begin their work promptly. Those children withdrawn for more individual work are skilfully allowed many opportunities to express opinions and to give extended answers.

64 In Key Stage 2, standards in speaking and listening are average. Teachers' use questioning skilfully to make pupils think. In Year 6, the teachers handle class discussion very sensitively and are successful in drawing out perceptive comments from pupils. However, not all pupils are confident to speak to the whole class. Drama clubs are now being run to improve speaking and to give pupils a valuable experience of acting. Pupils also participate in concerts and assemblies where they gain confidence in public speaking.

65 By the age of seven, standards are well below average in reading. Pupils' interests in reading have been aroused and regular homework routines are established. Good communications exist between school and home via the reading diaries. However, the basics skills of recognising letter sounds and blends are too low. Pupils have too few strategies to work out words they fail to recognise. The special educational needs co-ordinator has worked very hard with staff to introduce a good programme of work to address these issues. This is proving very effective in the case of pupils with learning difficulties. However, the programmes have not been extended to other pupils, to raise their reading skills.

66 By the age of eleven, pupils read with confidence, fluency and obvious enjoyment. They know how to find out information for themselves and locate information in books quickly. However, they have few opportunities to use these skills because pupils are rarely encouraged to work in the library. The library is under-used as a source for learning.

67 Standards in writing are too low at Key Stage 1. In the literacy lessons, new skills are introduced and pupils write for a variety of purposes. However, more able pupils do not produce the quantity or the quality of work of which they are capable. Their progress is generally slow. Teachers do not expect enough of the pupils and the tasks are often undemanding. In contrast, pupils who find learning difficult make good progress because the work given to them is set at the right level and they are well supported.

68 Standards in writing are above average at Key Stage 2 and good in creative elements, such as poetry. The better progress made at Key Stage 2 is related to good teaching but setting by ability is also proving to be effective. This allows work to be more accurately planned to the specific needs of each group. Teachers create good learning opportunities for writing in the classes across all three ability levels. Increasing use is being made of computers for word-processing, although this is not even in all classes. Handwriting is systematically taught and skills acquired in English are used well in other subjects.

69 Teaching at Key Stage 1 is unsatisfactory and restricts learning in some classes. However, teaching is very good in one infant class where the teacher has a good grasp of English and plans her lessons in detail. The use of the big book is particularly good because the teacher asks searching questions to make pupils think about the way words are used and what will happen next in the story. In this class pupils learn well and make good progress. In other classes, the same high standards are not apparent. However, in one of the other classes the presence of a small group of pupils with severe behaviour problems makes teaching the whole class very difficult. In reception and too often in Year 1/2 classes, teaching is unsatisfactory. Lesson planning is too general and too little is expected of the pupils. For example, in reception pupils merely repeat the teachers' reading of each sentence in the big book and little is done to develop pupils' understanding of the story.

70 Teaching in Key Stage 2 is good, sometimes very good and occasionally excellent. Teachers are comfortable with the subject and very clear about what they expect pupils to learn. The learning objectives are discussed at the beginning and end of each lesson and pupils know exactly what they have to do to improve. Pupils are expected to work hard and push themselves and the work provided ensures that they do. In almost all classes, pupils are very well managed and a purposeful learning atmosphere is established. In Key Stage 2, pupils take their work seriously and make good progress.

71 Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in the reception classes and many do not recover during Key Stage 1. However, the school's decision to appoint leaders for each two year band is already beginning to address the problem. Good teaching approaches are shared between teachers across all three classes and a more explicit form of lesson planning is being introduced. Monitoring of teaching and learning has been introduced. Many of the weaknesses have already been identified by the recently appointed head teacher and the by co-ordinator. As a result, provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved but this has not yet fed into the full ability range.

## **MATHEMATICS**

72 The results of National tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999 show that standards were above average and higher than in similar schools. The current Year 6 pupils are attaining average standards because fewer pupils are on course to reach the higher levels as they did last year. Trends over time show a picture of consistent improvement in Key Stage 2. The results of National tests for seven-year-olds in 1999 show that standards were below those found nationally, and were well below those in similar schools. Fewer pupils

than might be expected reach the higher level. Findings from the inspection mirror these judgements. Trends over time at Key Stage 1 show that standards in national tests have gradually fallen over the past four years.

73 Pupils make slow progress through Key Stage 1. They do not get off to a good start in learning basic skills in reception. Similarly, in one of the three mixed age Year 1/2 classes, pupils make faltering progress. This is because the teacher does not expect enough of the pupils or provide sufficiently challenging work. The rate at which pupils learn is also affected by a small number of pupils with behaviour problems in one of the classes. Despite this, pupils make satisfactory progress in two of the three classes. Those with learning difficulties are well supported and this helps them to make good progress. Those with behaviour problems are well controlled for most of the time. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils can order numbers to 100, recognise halves and quarters and use the correct mathematical names for common shapes, such as, square, circle and rectangle. They are beginning to represent information in block graphs and tables.

74 Pupils achieve well throughout Key Stage 2. This is largely because the teaching is good, particularly in Year 5/6. Grouping pupils by ability allows work to be more carefully matched to their needs. This benefits all pupils but particularly those with special educational needs. The pace of learning is adjusted to take account of their difficulties or lack of confidence and this helps them to make good progress. Another positive factor is effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, although not all teachers have equally introduced all aspects. Most pupils benefit from the mental starter at the beginning of each lesson. This not only improves their quick recall of number facts the sessions are enjoyable and helps them to develop positive attitudes to learning. This, together with the brisk pace of these lessons enables them to improve the speed and accuracy of their responses. The end of lesson discussion session is used well by most teachers to assess what pupils have learnt or found difficult during the lesson. This helps them to build effectively over time on what pupils know and understand. Good progress is made in all years at Key Stage 2, because almost all lessons are well planned and pupils are challenged. Skills are built up systematically. For example, Year 4 pupils break down numbers into manageable parts when adding and subtracting. Year 5 pupils understand place value in numbers to 1000 and carry out long multiplication accurately. By the end of the key stage pupils tackle quite demanding tasks, such as, converting decimals to fractions and percentages. Most pupils use a variety of strategies confidently to solve number problems.

75 Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1, but is unsatisfactory in one class. The main weakness is the low level of challenge in the work provided and the consequent lack of motivation shown by the pupils. Pupils are usually well managed but occasionally a small number of pupils with behaviour problems can unsettle the class and affect the learning of other pupils. Planning is not as sharp as it should be. This sometimes leads to a lack of clarity as to what is expected of pupils.

76 Teaching in Key Stage 2 is mainly good, particularly in Year 5/6, although occasionally more able pupils are given work they can already do. Teachers explain new ideas clearly and use resources well to engage pupil's interests. They follow this up by asking searching questions. This helps them to gauge pupil's levels of understanding and provides a firm foundation to move on. Pupils are drawn into discussions where they have to explain their ideas. This helps them to consider other ways of solving problems. Lessons move along at a good pace and no time is wasted. This helps to extend pupil's concentration and results in good attitudes to learning.

77 Teachers analyse the results of assessments and look for patterns. This helps them to track pupils' progress accurately. The coordinator is beginning to monitor teaching and learning. However, these measures have yet to raise standards at Key Stage 1. Mathematics is used effectively in other subjects, such as studying timelines in history, but not enough links are made with information technology.

## SCIENCE

78 Standards reached by pupils at the age of eleven are above average, both in the work seen during inspection and in the end of Key Stage 2 tests in 1999. Attainment was below average in 1996, had caught up by 1998, rose above in 1999 and is continuing to rise. These good improvements have come about because of the good teaching at Key Stage 2. In addition, previous test results are carefully analysed and weaknesses are identified. As a result, teachers have a shrewd idea of what pupils are likely to stumble over and use this information wisely to prepare them for the tests at the age of eleven.

79 The picture is very different at Key Stage 1. Standards reached by pupils aged seven are below average. Teacher assessments in 1999 also show that pupils' attainment is lower than it should be. This is partly because the teaching is not sufficiently challenging, particularly in the reception class and in one of the three mixed Year 1/2 classes. The progress pupils make is slow and is not carefully monitored. Some teachers expect too little of the pupils. For example, pupils are not required to record their work in notebooks, other than filling in a few simple worksheets. Under these circumstances, pupils have very limited opportunities to organise their observations and ideas and express them clearly sequenced writing and diagrammatic form. Not only are their scientific skills suffering but neither teachers nor the co-ordinator can see whether pupils' work is improving.

80 Standards are lower than they were at the time of the last inspection at Key Stage 1 and the targets set to bring standards up to scratch have not been reached. However, the previous inspection found that very few pupils at Key Stage 2 were reaching the higher levels. Currently, by the age of eleven, many of the pupils are working at the higher level and the targets set have been exceeded by a considerable margin. The previous inspection indicated that teachers did not encourage pupils to experiment and find out for themselves. Investigative skills are now built into teacher's planning and these are assessed during the year. Although pupils' experimental skills are not as strong as their good knowledge and understanding, they are now average and this represents an improvement on the last inspection.

81 Pupils' achievements in Key Stage 1 depend on the class they are in. Progress in one of the lessons seen was satisfactory and good in another. In these classes pupils were beginning to make sensible predictions about how ice would melt under different conditions. In addition, teachers explained and discussed whether the size of the ice cube mattered and why it was necessary to observe and record what was happening to the ice cubes every five minutes. The careful planning showed that teachers understood the scientific principles, which significantly helped pupils to understand the importance of a fair test. However, in another lesson, pupils walked round the school field looking for different creatures. There was no clear structure to the activity. For example, there was no plan of the route and pupils did not have any means of recording their findings. The discussion back in the classroom showed that pupils had learned very little. Such lessons result in pupils underachieving.

82 When pupils move into Key Stage 2 their science books are full of carefully recorded scientific experiences. As a result, pupils learn to think scientifically and make good progress. Teachers guide pupils' learning very skilfully and help them to understand new and often complex ideas. For example, Year 3/4 pupils are beginning to understand elements of pollination and seed dispersal. Pupils are encouraged to think hard and use new terms correctly. This helps all pupils to achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They are given good support from classroom assistants. In one lesson, for example, they had to sort mixed up pictures of the life cycle of a plant in the correct order. They were encouraged to think for themselves but support from classroom assistants was on hand. This worked well and led to the successful completion of the task. Pupils' understanding of what a fair test means develops effectively through Key Stage 2. By Year 6, they can plan and carry out their own scientific experiments and control the factors to ensure that the test is a fair one. Pupils use their numeracy skills well to measure and collect data and draw effectively on their writing skills to record their findings. However, pupils make very little use of information technology to record and analyse their results.



83 Too much of the teaching is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 1 but it is consistently good at Key Stage 2. Pupils are well managed in all classes and this helps them to settle to their tasks and work steadily, even when not directly supervised. Occasionally, the teaching in Key Stage 1 is good. When it is, the lesson plan shows exactly what the pupils are expected to learn and provision is made for more able pupils to extend their learning. In one lesson, for example, pupils were expected to use timers and record changes to ice cubes for themselves. This placed considerable responsibility on the pupils but they tackled the work determinedly and achieved success. Unfortunately, not all teachers expect enough of the pupils and their response mirrors that. At Key Stage 2, all lessons are thoroughly planned and challenging and pupils are given a clear picture of the progress they are making. For example, in Year 5/6, pupils are often given very rigorous feedback on their previous work to help them to improve. Teachers prepare and use resources imaginatively, for example, pupils are given different types of surface to test for friction. Pupils find the work interesting. This encourages them to pay attention, work with good concentration and develop good attitudes to learning science.

84 The co-ordinator has provided guidance to help teachers to plan their lessons but does not monitor pupils' progress throughout the school. The new head teacher is establishing the importance of monitoring teaching and learning and the school improvement plan shows that sweeping changes are on the way.

## **ART**

85 Pupils achieve well in art and reach good standards in both two and three-dimensional work. However, in the limited time available for art less work is done in fabric printing and weaving. Pupils' skills in drawing and painting and their appreciation of different art forms are built up steadily from year to year and are clearly visible in 'The Millennium Timeline' in the hall. This comprises of a series of attractive and varied collages, produced by groups from each class, showing influential people over that time. Pupils' social skills are also well developed through art.

86 Pupils in Key Stage 1, learn to observe and capture the arrangement of a group of natural objects, such as pine cones, stones and shells. They work confidently with clay to produce small pots, using different techniques. Pupils in Key Stage 2 produce accurate models of fruit, showing very good awareness of how to work the clay. The models reflect their good powers of observation. Pupils achieve well in painting in the style of different artists throughout the school. For example, in infant classes, pictures are patiently built up using small dots, in the style of Seurat. Paintings of Monet's garden, created by lower juniors, reflect the vitality of the French Impressionists. Older pupils vividly capture the tempestuous, swirling skies and landscapes of Van Gogh.

87 The teaching is good at both key stages. A well-constructed scheme of work encourages teachers to make pupils aware of art in other subjects. For example, the good quality work in Year 3/4 springs from a study of Ancient Egypt. It includes a wide range of expressive art forms including tomb paintings, woodwork coffins and clay engraved tablets. Much art is undertaken alongside design and technology work. This requires high levels of planning and organisation, which are strong features in the subject. Extra support, from parents and friends of the school, is available in most of the lessons. This ensures that pupils with special educational needs can watch and ask questions to help them to understand how to observe and achieve different effects. However, adults are sometimes too eager to tell pupils what to do and this suppresses their creativity. Children enjoy the art lessons and show a justifiable pride in their creations. In a minority of classrooms, however, the pupils' work is not well displayed. Plans to introduce a system to monitor the work of the school and pupils' progress have been made but this is not happening yet.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

88 Work seen in design and technology is typical of that produced by pupils of primary school age. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make steady progress. Most aspects of the subject are well covered and pupils develop a range of skills to cut, shape and assemble different materials. Pupils design and make their models to a good standard. However, in many instances, they do not evaluate their work as much as they should and there are few examples of pupils adapting and improving their work.

89 In Key Stage 1, pupils design and produce models, based on themes linked to nursery rhymes, which contain winding mechanisms. For example, they make paper bears with moving limbs operated by string. They learn about food technology through projects such as the preparation of party foods. The scheme of work guides teachers to provide worthwhile activities. This helps pupils to acquire the necessary skills and make steady progress through Key Stage 2. By the age of eleven, pupils learn how cogs and wheels can be used to make moving parts. They incorporate these ideas well in replicas made of wood and card. In food technology, good habits of hygiene are established and pupils apply their knowledge of mathematics well in measuring and preparing ingredients to bake chocolate cookies. Pupils also study structures and make models containing electric circuits. As a result, pupils become competent in cutting, assembling and decorating using different materials. Pupils achieve less well in the use of construction kits and there are very few opportunities for programming computers to operate mechanisms.

90 No design and technology lessons were seen at Key Stage 1 but teaching at Key Stage 2 is good. Topics are interesting, lessons are well structured and much adult support is provided. As a result, the success rate is high and pupils greatly enjoy their work. However, teachers direct much of the work and there are few opportunities for pupils to take their own ideas forward and learn from their mistakes. This restricts the development of pupils' capacity to solve problems. Lessons are very well organised and a good number of adult helpers are present. This allows for many different activities to take place at once with productive learning in each. Tasks are designed to encourage pupils to work together and this is successful in enabling pupils to work as team. The co-ordinator provides support for colleagues but has not yet established a formal method of monitoring the work of the school.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

91 Pupils make steady gains in learning as they move through the school and produce work that is broadly typical for their age.

92 Throughout Key Stage 1 pupils gradually become aware that the world reaches beyond their locality, develop geographical skills and a geographical vocabulary, and slowly acquire knowledge and understanding about Thirsk and places further afield. Mapping skills are given appropriate emphasis in both key stages. For example, pupils in Year 1/2 learn about islands from a study of the Hebridean island of Coll, and identify its location off Western Scotland. They follow a route correctly from 'Katie Morag's' house to 'Granny's house', and identify significant landmarks/geographical features, such as, a bay, road, mountain and farm. Pupils, from an early age, show a growing awareness of other places and how these are similar or different from their own locality. Through a study of jobs and services, pupils begin to observe, question, record and communicate geographical ideas and information.

93 In Key Stage 2, The local environment is used well to teach important skills in geography and to develop an awareness of environmental issues. The development of important skills using the local area is given a much higher profile than at the time of the last inspection. For example, Year 3/4 pupils compare Cod Beck with the River Nile, highlighting similarities and differences. Whereas Year 5/6 pupils consider which features about Thirsk might attract tourists to the area. They are beginning to understand the links between human activity and its effects on the surroundings. For example, they learn how people can both damage and improve a town, and what impact this can have. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use a wide

range of geographical skills and evidence to investigate different places. For example, they understand symbols on Ordnance Survey maps, photographs and questionnaires to make judgements about what places are like.

94 The teaching of geography is satisfactory across the school. Teachers bring the subject alive for pupils by presenting it in interesting ways. For example, Year 5/6 pupils are taught how to design pamphlets about the town of Thirsk which are likely to attract tourists. Such activities keep pupils interested and involved. Teachers have a secure understanding of the subject and use resources effectively to illustrate the teaching points. After explaining new ideas teachers use questions well to test pupils' understanding. Teachers give careful thought to the work provided for pupils with special educational needs. For example, tasks are simplified or additional help is given. This helps them to understand the work and make good progress. Information technology is insufficiently used to handle, classify and present evidence and there are no formally agreed procedures for assessment pupils' progress. The subject is soundly led and areas for development have been identified. One of these is the need to improve the use of assessment.

## **HISTORY**

95 Pupils make satisfactory gains in learning about the past as they move through the school. They gradually extend their knowledge and understanding through the studies of selected historical periods and reach levels which are broadly typical for their age.

96 Key Stage 1 pupils, by studying famous people, begin to develop a clear understanding of how times have changed. For example, they compare conditions in hospitals during the Crimean War with those today when learning about Florence Nightingale. In Year 3/4, pupils gain important insights into the character of historical periods by investigating such topics as Ancient Egypt and Victorian life. In Year 5/6 pupils turn their attention to building styles and important artefacts of the day when they learn about Ancient Greece. Pupils' understanding of the passage of time is enhanced through the use of timelines, important dates and significant historical events. For example, all classes in school have contributed to a colourful timeline around the school hall, which depicts the last 2000 years through pictures of famous people through the ages. Pupils in Year 5/6 make effective use of timelines to help them to learn about the history of Thirsk from its first recorded evidence in the Domesday Book to the opening of the James Herriot Museum last year. Historical enquiry is well represented through a study of Thirsk and its surrounding area. Walks in the locality, as well as a study of old photographs and documents, enable pupils to find out about their local town.

97 Since only one Key Stage 1 lesson was seen it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching. However, teaching is good at Key Stage 2. Teachers use resources well and organise their lessons effectively. These methods stimulate pupils' interests and lead to good attitudes to learning. For example, Year 3/4 teachers use a taped recording about the archaeologist, Howard Carter, to enable pupils to learn about the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb. The use of drama sensitively blended with shrewd questioning drew out pupils' ideas and feelings very effectively. Teachers know how to teach the subject well and ensure that pupils are provided with good levels of challenge. Lessons are well planned, pupils are well managed and lessons move along at a good pace. These factors ensure that pupils, including those with special educational needs, get the most from lessons. The school has a good range of historical artefacts to support learning and there are good links with other subjects, such as art and design and technology. However, links with information technology are under-represented. The acting co-ordinator takes care of resources and monitors teachers' plans but a system to monitor teaching and learning is not in place yet.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

98 Standards in information technology at the end of both key stages are below national expectations. This was a key issue in the last inspection and remains so, but clear progress has been made in addressing the weaknesses. The new co-ordinator has successfully identified the main strengths and weaknesses of provision within the school and has written a very clear strategy to move the school forward. Resources to meet the requirements of the curriculum will be fully in place in the autumn term, staff are being well trained and are developing their skills at an appropriate pace. The targets set by the school to enable the pupils to reach the required standard are challenging, but realistic and achievable.

99 In Key Stage 1, pupils in reception create a picture of a fish using a 'Colour Magic' program, whilst pupils in Year 1 match words to pictures using their skills on the keyboard. Pupils know that the keyboard can be used to write a short sentence and use the mouse to click on parts of the screen. In Year 2, pupils know that both words and pictures from the screen can be saved, but have not yet got the skills to do this independently. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their skills in word processing, but there is little evidence to indicate the development of skills in other areas of the information technology curriculum.

100 In Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 3 use word processing skills to change the size and style of print, adding a small picture with colour to their writing. Work in mathematics is represented as pupils create pictograms and line graphs. In Year 4, simple sentences are written with a picture added, with graphs created to reflect their favourite football teams or pop groups. Older pupils in Year 5 link their science work with computer skills as they produce a bar-chart showing the results of an experiment on friction. In Year 6, pupils use their developing skills to cut, paste, save and recall previously stored work. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their skills both in communicating and handling information. However, discussions with Year 6 pupils indicate that the development of skills in other areas of the information technology curriculum, for example in controlling, measuring and modelling using technology, have not been developed due to a lack of resources and staff expertise.

101 Not enough teaching of information technology was seen to make a judgement on how well pupils are taught. However, evidence from inspection indicates that teachers have worked hard to improve their own computer skills and this is now evident in the work being done by pupils and displayed in classrooms. Information technology is not used sufficiently in learning other subjects. Word processing is developing in English but there is little use of information handling in mathematics or science. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support from teachers and other pupils. This helps them to make good progress in learning basic skills, such as saving and retrieving files. Lesson planning does not often include the development of information technology skills, either as a specific exercise to teach a particular skill, or to support work in other areas of the curriculum.

102 The subject co-ordinator is providing good leadership and the work he has done in the last year is clearly evident. He has a secure grasp of what the school needs to do to improve standards and is very aware that increasing resources is only one part of the answer to achieving higher standards. Increasing expertise in the skills of all staff is under-pinning the school's rapid drive to improve resources in both computer hardware and software. The school has correctly highlighted the need to further improve standards in information technology and is well placed to meet its targets in 2001.

## **MUSIC**

103 Standards are satisfactory but not as high as they were at the time of the last inspection. The music specialist has left, but the school is keen to maintain the school's good traditions. A new teacher, with musical expertise, has been appointed to co-ordinate the subject and she has plans to move the subject on.

104 Pupils make steady progress and secure foundations for learning are laid in Key Stage 1. Pupils acquire a wide repertoire of songs and learn the names of instruments and how to play them imaginatively. For example, reception pupils use maracas to make the sound of hailstones. In Year 1/2, pupils learn that music can be written down using symbols, such as letters. They can follow different arrangements of letters to clap rhythm patterns at a simple level. Pupils' ability to recognise changing pitch develops well because the teacher plays ascending notes on a xylophone and asks them to listen and identify which note has been deliberately missed out. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for. In one lesson, the teacher helped a pupil who was struggling to clap the rhythm correctly. After a little encouragement, the pupil grasped the technique and was delighted to succeed. This is common in the school and partly explains why pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

105 Pupils continue to make steady progress through Key Stage 2. In lower juniors they begin to compose interesting musical pictures by selecting instruments to represent the different sounds heard in a poem. For example, Year 3/4 pupils blew across the top of milk bottles to make the sound of roaring flames breathed by a dragon. They learn how to evaluate their work by constructively commenting on another group's performance. The best gains are made in Year 5/6 where the teaching is often very good. In one lesson, the teacher skilfully guided pupils to listen to excerpts from 'Peter and the Wolf' and pick out how instrumental sounds created an impression of a character in a story. By prompting pupils to consider musical elements such as loud and soft, high and low and tempo, pupils were able to compose their own interpretation of 'Billy Goats Gruff'.

106 On balance the teaching of music is satisfactory but very good in the upper juniors. Lessons are well prepared and carefully organised and teachers are clear about what they expect pupils to learn. Teachers exchange classes for music at Key Stage 2. Those who teach music have expertise and enjoy the subject and this greatly benefits pupils' learning. In Years 5/6 particularly, the teacher's enthusiasm shines through and pupils are swept along. They are taught to use the correct posture and breathing. Such good teaching of the basic skills greatly influences the quality of the singing. Consequently by the age of eleven, pupils can hold their part well when singing two part songs. Similarly, pupils are taught to play instruments correctly and as a result, they provide sensitive accompaniment to their own singing. Pupils learn to play recorders, brass, woodwind and stringed instruments. These are valuable additional activities that help to maintain the subject's high profile.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

107 Pupils make steady progress through Key Stage 1, but achieve well in Key Stage 2 and reach high standards by the age of eleven. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership and provides exemplar lessons for her colleagues to see. The many outdoor and extra curricular activities enrich the curriculum and contribute to pupils' enjoyment of the subject.

108 The National Curriculum requirement that all pupils in Key Stage 2 swim safely for at least 25 metres was fully met in 1999 and the school expects that almost all of the pupils will achieve the same standard by the end of the summer term. Swimming is well taught and the behaviour of pupils walking to and from the pool, and whilst inside the pool, is commendable. Pupils enjoy their swimming and achieve high standards.

109 Pupils in Key Stage 1 understand why they must warm-up before exercise. By the age of seven, in games, pupils work in small teams to practise throwing and catching skills. In gymnastics, they practise a movement pattern to include stretched and curled shapes. Pupils are beginning to plan and perform their movements. All pupils use the hall space with a good awareness of safety. Pupils make sound progress throughout the key stage in the development of their skills. The behaviour of the majority of pupils is satisfactory and they enjoy their lessons.

110 In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in games and very good progress in dance. Pupils in Year 3/4 achieve high standards in dance and games because of excellent teaching. As a result, pupils work hard and enjoy their lessons. They respond well to the music from 'Jaws' in dance, producing movements of high quality. Very good progress in dance was a feature in the last inspection and remains so. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of good support in lessons. In Years 5/6, pupils make good progress in gymnastics. Their sequence of shapes is imaginative and well controlled. Pupils work hard in lessons and their behaviour is good because they are offered activities well matched to their abilities with the appropriate level of challenge. In games, pupils work well together and appreciate how to work as a member of a team.

111 The teaching of physical education is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Excellent teaching of dance and games in Years 3/4 is mainly due to specialist teaching which is very effective in enabling pupils to make very good progress. Excellent teaching occurs when the teacher plans lessons thoroughly, provides pupils with challenging activities and gives very good demonstrations of techniques. However, not all teachers plan their lessons to this high standard and not all teachers change into appropriate clothes for physical education lessons.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

112 Standards in religious education match the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for pupils aged seven and eleven and most pupils make satisfactory progress through the school. Standards have remained much the same since the previous inspection. However, weaknesses in assessment remain. This is partly because Key Stage 1 pupils do not record their work in books and it is difficult for the teachers or the co-ordinator to keep track of pupils' progress. However, the co-ordinator has put together very useful packs of items and booklets on each religion and provided clear guidelines for teaching the subject.

113 Pupils make steady progress through Key Stage 1, particularly in learning about Christianity. The school has a close relationship with the local church and visits are often arranged or the vicar visits the school. Teachers build on these experiences successfully. Using pictures and photographs as reminders, teachers ask probing questions to stimulate discussions. As a result, pupils develop a clear understanding of Christian festivals such as Easter and special occasions such as baptisms. Some pupils talk knowledgeably about the Holy Communion and most pupils understand the significance of Jesus' life and death.

114 Pupils make steady progress through Key Stage 2. They achieve particularly well in acquiring a detailed knowledge of Christianity and other religions, such as Judaism. The work is often challenging and pupils have to think hard. For example, Year 3/4 pupils are invited to sit in the 'hot seat' and have other pupils fire questions at them. They have to think quickly to justify why biblical characters behaved as they did, for example, Delilah betraying Samson. This approach is particularly valuable because pupils learn from the stories and come to terms with such ideas as trust and faith. However, the work in pupils' books shows a much greater emphasis on factual learning about religions. Opportunities for pupils to consider how peoples' faiths and beliefs can influence their lives is less pronounced.

115 Teaching is mainly satisfactory and sometimes good, particularly in Key Stage 2. Teachers in Key Stage 2 exchange classes to enable teachers who are confident and enjoy the subject to take the lessons. This enabled a Year 5/6 teacher to give a lucid explanation of Jewish beliefs. She then invited pupils to offer their own ideas about why, for example, members of the Jewish faith might carry round special written messages. Pupils responded very positively and sensitively, realising that religious artefacts are sacred and are kept as a constant reminder of the faith. Teachers make a special effort to check whether pupils with special educational needs understand the work. They are given individual help and teachers encourage them to explain to the class. As a result they try harder and make good progress. Teachers in Key Stage 2 expect pupils to handle complex ideas, work hard and at a good pace. This is helped by stating exactly what the pupils are expected to learn at the beginning of lesson and reviewing what pupils have learned at the end. In one lesson, the teacher introduced a string of new and tricky religious terms but drew parallels with pupils' own experiences so they could understand them. When the lesson was almost over, the teacher said, 'You have only two or three minutes left but I want you to write at least half a page about what you have learned today'. There was no question about it, that was exactly what the pupils did.