

INSPECTION REPORT

**BEDALE CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VC)
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bedale, North Yorkshire

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number:121479

Headteacher: Mr D Fishburn

Reporting inspector: Mrs L P A Clark
No: 25431

Dates of inspection: 12 - 15 February 2001

Inspection number: 192576

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Voluntary controlled

Age range of pupils: 5 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Firby Road
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr N Pocklington

Date of previous inspection: March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25431	Mrs L P A Clark Registered inspector	Art Religious education Areas of learning for the foundation stage	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements What should the school do to improve further?
19446	Mrs S Wood Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18911	Mr D Nightingale Team inspector	Science History Equal opportunities	How well is the school led and managed?
8420	Mrs V Roberts Team inspector	Information and communication technology Geography Special educational needs English as an additional language	
29426	Mr D Grimwood Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education	How well are the pupils taught?
28200	Mr P Stevens Team inspector	English Design and technology Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bedale Church of England Primary School is larger than average with 335 pupils on roll aged from 5 to 11 years. The school is situated on the edge of the small market town of Bedale and serves a wide area including the nearby airbase at Leeming. The number of adults with higher education qualifications is comparatively low. Children from service families account for a fifth of the school's intake and a third of the school's percentage of special educational needs. The rate at which pupils join or leave the school is higher than average with a turnover of 42 per cent in a three year period. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals fluctuates and is currently lower than the national average at five per cent. Thirteen per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational needs which is lower than average; just over one per cent have statements of special need which is broadly average. A very small number of pupils come from ethnic minorities. There is a tiny percentage of pupils at an early stage of acquiring English as an additional language. Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in the teaching staff with 40 per cent new to the school this academic year, leading to considerable changes in how the management of the school is structured. Attainment on entry to the reception classes has also changed and is now below average. The school has no nursery though many pupils have attended nurseries or playgroup before starting full-time schooling.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. As a result of good teaching of all age groups and very good leadership and management the school enables pupils, including those who join it only for a short time, to achieve well and to attain above average standards in many subjects. The school's motto 'Learning and Caring Together' is exemplified in all aspects of its work. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, religious education, art and design, design and technology, music and physical education are above average for seven and eleven-year-olds.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school.
- The school is very well led by the headteacher with the enthusiastic support of all the staff and an effective governing body.
- The school offers a very good curriculum with a strong emphasis on the creative arts, including drama, and physical education. It is very well planned to enrich pupils' personal, spiritual and emotional development.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and they want to come to school because they find the lessons interesting.
- The school works very well with parents and involves them closely in their children's learning. This helps to make the school a very pleasant and friendly community.

What could be improved

- Assessment should be used to identify weaknesses in learning for individual and groups of pupils in order to raise standards in mathematics and science to a similar level to English.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997. Since then it has improved at a satisfactory rate, in spite of many changes in the teaching staff, including senior teachers, who left for promotion

elsewhere. The last report found very few weaknesses and praised the quality of education provided by the school. The school has fully addressed the two key issues relating to English and as a result standards in English have risen. Standards have improved in mathematics and information and communication technology; they have remained the same in science. The quality of teaching is better overall than it was at the time of the last inspection. The school has maintained its significant strengths because of the high quality and continuity of leadership provided by the headteacher, ably supported by the governing body. The school is now very well placed to make very good improvement with the level of enthusiasm and commitment of the current teaching staff and those with management responsibility.

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	
	1998]	1999	2000	2000	
English	C	A	A	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	B	A	B	B	
Science	C	A	C	C	

This table shows that in the year 2000 national standardised tests for eleven-year-olds pupils attained well above average standards in English, above average in mathematics and close to the national average in science both nationally and compared to similar schools. Trends in national tests results are above the national trend. Inspection judgements are that seven and eleven-year-old pupils at present attain above average standards in English, and close to average standards in mathematics and science. Standards fluctuate according to the composition of each year group. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and by the end of the reception year attain broadly average standards in all areas of learning. Standards are higher in English than in mathematics and science and this reflects the school's successful strategies to raise standards in reading and writing since the last inspection and to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills through drama. Skills in literacy are developed well in other subjects whereas numeracy is used less extensively. Over time, pupils' performance in mathematics is above average. Standards are higher overall in mathematics because of the successful introduction of the national strategy for numeracy. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with those expected of seven and eleven-year-olds and again reflect the attention the school has paid to raising standards in this subject, often through incorporating its use in other subjects. Standards are broadly average in history and geography. Pupils attain above expected standards in religious education, art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. Some pupils attain very high standards in music in response to the extra-curricular tuition and activities.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to come to school and want to learn. They are well motivated.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour is good throughout the school and often very good in lessons in response to inspiring teaching. The pupils work and play together well and clearly respect each other's feelings.

Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils learn to be independent and self-reliant. They act responsibly. Relationships are warm and friendly and pupils trust each other. Pupils are encouraged to express their views and to analyse what they feel.
Attendance	Good. The attendance rate is above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good, enabling pupils to achieve well. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of the 82 lessons seen. It was good or better in 78 per cent of lessons, very good or better in 35 per cent and excellent in 5 per cent. Four per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory or had some unsatisfactory elements. All the excellent teaching took place in the junior classes where the quality of teaching is generally of a higher standard than in the infant classes. Some very good teaching was seen in the reception classes with very good support from additional staff. Half the examples of excellent teaching took place in literacy lessons where the quality of teaching is of a very high standard throughout the school. Where the quality of teaching is very good, as in English, religious education and physical education, pupils attain above average standards. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs or of those who have English as an additional language, is good and they make good progress. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are well supported with effective individual plans. Higher attaining pupils are not so consistently well supported but there are examples of investigative work in mathematics, science and history being used well to extend their learning. A significant feature of the good teaching is the careful planning, particularly evident in English and mathematics lessons, and the good use of resources. The marking of pupils' work is extremely thorough. In the few instances where unsatisfactory teaching occurs, it is often the result of inappropriate planning or poor use of time resulting in pupils becoming inattentive. The school meets the needs of all pupils very well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good; a rich curriculum that meets all statutory requirements yet includes additional subjects such as drama to enhance the provision for other subjects. The curriculum offers many opportunities for practical and investigative work, which benefits pupils of different levels of attainment.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Identified pupils receive good quality additional support to enable them to achieve well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Pupils receive satisfactory levels of support within lessons. The culture of the school ensures that successful efforts of pupils with language and social difficulties are celebrated.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Particular strengths lie in the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, personal, social and moral education. These are at the heart of the school's aims and are reflected in pupils' art and in the quality of their discussion in religious education lessons.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The school provides a very caring environment in which pupils can learn. The school does not use assessment sufficiently well to identify weaknesses in pupils' skills or knowledge apart from in the reception classes where it is used very well to determine what children should learn.
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The school works well with parents and provides many opportunities for parents to become involved in their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and senior management team provide very good and purposeful leadership, which gives a strong sense of what the school seeks to achieve. This is encapsulated well in the school motto 'Learning and Caring Together'. The role of the subject co-ordinators in monitoring standards and the quality of teaching is not well enough developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body is well organised and effective, particularly in the areas of finance and staffing.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school sets clear targets for short-term development based on a firm understanding of the longer-term objectives.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very good use of resources. Financial planning is very good and the effects of expenditure are carefully monitored. Educational decisions are firmly linked to the best possible value.

The school is well staffed by well-qualified teachers and support staff so that the National Curriculum, religious education and children in the reception classes are taught effectively. The school places a high priority on staff training in order to benefit children through teachers' improved knowledge and expertise. New staff and teachers in their first year of teaching receive good support. The accommodation is well maintained and the grounds and playing fields are imaginatively laid out to provide useful resources for science, physical education lessons and some extra-curricular clubs.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teaching is good and teachers have high expectations of pupils. • Children make good progress. • They like coming to school. • The school is very well led and managed. • Children behave well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents would like to see the range of activities outside lessons improved.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views and with the satisfaction they express with what the school achieves. Just under 20 per cent of parents tended to disagree that the school provided an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The school in fact provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities, some of which take place at certain times of the year because of daylight hours and the weather. Sports' activities, music, including an orchestra, and a lively information and communication technology club contribute well to the curriculum, as do educational visits within school time.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Pupils' attainment in the year 2000 national standardised tests for eleven-year-olds was well above average in English, above average mathematics and close to the average in science both nationally and compared to similar schools. Trends in national test results indicate that the school's performance is improving at a faster rate than schools nationally. Taking the results of 1998-2000 together, performance is above average overall, with boys and girls attaining equally well. Inspection judgements of pupils' attainment in the present Year 6 suggests it is lower than this and concurs with the school's assessment which places pupils' attainment at above average in English, and close to average standards in mathematics and science for this particular group of pupils. In the year 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds, pupils attained lower standards than usual, attaining below average standards in reading, close to national standards in writing and well below average standards in mathematics. Boys attained lower standards overall than girls because more boys than girls had special educational needs in this year group. The school is aware of the relatively low ability of this year group, as confirmed by the accurate teacher assessments. Inspection judgement is that attainment is above average in English, and close to national standards in mathematics and science for pupils in the current Year 2.

2 Pupils achieve well, for the attainment of the majority of pupils in language, communication, literacy and mathematics is below average when they begin school. They are well taught in the reception classes and many children attain the level expected of their age by the time they begin Year 1. During the inspection there were no discernible differences between the attainment of boys and that of girls though it was noted that more boys than girls had special educational needs. Pupils' attainment differs quite widely from year group to year group, depending on the proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school during any particular year. Pupil mobility can affect up to 50 per cent of particular year groups and approximately 43 per cent of pupils in the present Year 6 have joined the school since the reception class. The school monitors their attainment closely and gives additional support when it is needed so that they achieve as well as others. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well and make good progress as a result of the specialist support they receive.

3 Standards are higher in English than in mathematics and science. This reflects the attention the school has paid to raising standards in this subject since the last inspection and the success of its strategies to raise attainment in reading and writing throughout the school. Considerable staff changes within the last two years have meant less consistency in the leadership and management of mathematics and science. Over time, performance in mathematics is stronger than in science and partly reflects the impact of the national strategy for numeracy. There are improvements to be made in science to ensure consistency. Although the procedures for assessing and evaluating pupils' work have improved, and marking is often of a high standard, they are not used sufficiently well to track the progress of year groups or to target what individual or groups of pupils need to learn. Similarly, pupils' attainment in the national standardised tests is not sufficiently well analysed to give an indication of where pupils' strengths and weaknesses lie so that the teaching and learning can be precisely planned.

4 Standards are higher in English because the school recognised that younger pupils needed to focus on the structure of words and sentences before moving on to more extended writing. Greater consistency has been achieved between classes because of this and because of stringent monitoring of the way the national strategy for literacy is taught throughout the school. Monitoring is at an early stage of development in mathematics with the recent appointment of a new co-ordinator. Parents are quite closely involved in helping their children learn to read and write. The home-school diary provides a good means for discussion with space for parents, pupils and teachers to comment and share views on books. Literacy is also well taught through other subjects such as

history, art and design, and information and communication technology. Teachers make relatively fewer opportunities to develop numeracy through other subjects.

5 Standards in information and communication technology are in line with those expected for eleven-year-olds. Although overall standards are similar to those reported in the last inspection, pupils attain more consistently in all areas of learning. They receive more direct teaching and information and communication technology is successfully integrated into other subjects such as history and science where it is used particularly well. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Standards in religious education have improved and pupils now attain above the level expected of their age in the locally Agreed Syllabus for seven and eleven-year-olds.

6 Standards are above average in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. This is an improvement since the last inspection and reflects the school's concern to balance the more formal teaching of literacy and numeracy with practical subjects. Standards are also above average in extra-curricular music. Pupils attain expected standards in history and geography. Much of the work seen in lessons was of a high standard but the particular group of pupils in the present Year 2 and Year 6 depresses the overall standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7 Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They are very keen to learn, showing much interest in their lessons. Pupils clearly understand what is expected of them and strive to please their teachers. They listen attentively and answer questions quite confidently. Pupils are keen to offer ideas in discussions. They listen very well to each other's presentations of poems, enjoying the neatness of some of the rhymes and the inventive use of language. When working independently, pupils concentrate well, settle quickly to their tasks and work sensibly with a real sense of purpose. In an excellent drama lesson, pupils became completely absorbed in their discussions and presentations and offered constructive criticism in a most mature and supportive way.

8 The pupils clearly know that the school expects good behaviour. They are encouraged to show respect for each other, the resources and buildings. Pupils' behaviour is good and often very good in lessons. This is the result of very good teaching that interests and inspires pupils to learn. The school is an orderly community and most pupils move around the building sensibly. Although there are occasions when pupils behave inappropriately, teachers quickly address the problem without distracting from the focus of the lesson. Most pupils understand the impact of their actions on others. There is one recorded fixed term exclusion in the last academic year.

9 Relationships are very good throughout the school and teachers provide very good role models for the pupils. Pupils know the daily routines of the school and respond well to responsibility, sensibly and unobtrusively operating the overhead projector and CD player, for example, in assemblies. Pupils are very polite and treat visitors courteously, opening doors and volunteering to show them the way. Pupils have the confidence to suggest ideas for fund-raising to raise money, for example, to develop the information and communication technology suite. In turn, the school trusts pupils to organise the making and selling of buns and biscuits at break-times. This contributes to the very friendly atmosphere which parents also agree is one of the features they really like about the school. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection and the school continues to be a very responsive and caring community. There have been very few instances of bullying and parents feel that any tensions or misunderstandings are quickly and effectively resolved.

10 Children in the reception classes respond very well to school. They settle in quickly and feel very confident in their classrooms and when doing physical education in the hall. They welcome visitors in an open and friendly manner. They clearly enjoy coming to school and find their activities very interesting.

11 The school's attendance figures are good and above the national average. The regular attendance of pupils enables teachers to build on previous lessons with continuity and this has a positive impact on the overall attainment and achievement of pupils. The vast majority of pupils consistently arrive at school on time thus ensuring that the school day starts promptly. The attendance figures have dropped slightly since the previous inspection. The school does find that more families are taking holidays during term time but they regularly emphasise that this can be detrimental to pupils' learning. Absences are always followed up quickly. Registers are completed quickly at the start of each session.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

12 The quality of teaching is good overall confirming the parents' opinion. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of lessons. It was good or better in 78 per cent of lessons, very good or better in 35 per cent and excellent in five per cent. Four per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching at the school is higher than that found nationally and shows good improvement since the last inspection when the quality of teaching was judged to be good or better in half of lessons and very good in one fifth. The improvements in the quality of teaching are spread throughout the school but as at the last inspection, the standards of teaching in the classes of junior pupils are generally higher than in the classes of infant pupils. In infant classes good or better teaching occurs in 56% of lessons with very good teaching in 13%, while in junior classes the percentage of good or better teaching is 85% with very good or better teaching occurring in 45% of lessons. All the excellent teaching takes place in the junior classes.

13 Improvements in teaching since the last inspection can be traced to a number of factors. The careful and extensive monitoring of teaching by, particularly, the headteacher has led to teachers focussing more precisely on the learning objectives of the lesson. The process of targeting learning objectives for groups of pupils of different abilities within a class is good in literacy and numeracy. Half the examples of excellent teaching occurred in literacy lessons. There has been a considerable change in staff, with two thirds of the staff appointed since the last inspection. This change of personnel has led to the improvement in quality of teaching of some subjects, notably, English and physical education. This has led to levels of attainment improving and in physical education improving from below national expectations to above.

14 Where unsatisfactory teaching does occur, it is usually the result of imprecise planning, leading to learning objectives being unclear, or poor use of time. In a science lesson for younger juniors inadequate planning meant that the teacher was unsure of what she wanted to achieve in the lesson with the result that pupils learnt little. In two lessons for lower juniors the discussion part of the lesson went on for too long, reducing the time for practical activities, and leading to the discussion becoming unfocussed and pupils becoming restless and inattentive.

15 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and these pupils make good progress, benefiting from the good planning for their needs and individual help from support staff. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are well supported with effective individual plans which enable them to progress in appropriately small steps. Higher attaining pupils are not so consistently well supported but there are examples of investigative work being well used to extend their learning. A good example concerned two Year 6 pupils who, having found the angle sum of a triangle, used this knowledge to devise a formula for finding the angle sum of any polygon.

16 Teaching in the reception classes is good and some very good lessons were seen. It has improved since the last inspection. Teachers in the reception classes have a good understanding of the needs of young children. This ensures that the basic skills in all areas of learning, especially literacy and numeracy, are taught effectively. Reception classrooms are well organised and stimulating. Classes are very well managed and activities carefully planned to help children's learning. Pupils are given many opportunities to speak and listen in a supportive, controlled

atmosphere where teachers use open-ended questions well to extend pupils' responses and thinking. Teachers make very good use of well-qualified support staff who help the progress of individuals and groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs or who have English as an additional language. They work alongside, helping pupils to understand by re-phrasing questions or helping them to use resources to enable them to recognise different shapes, for example. They also use information and communication technology well to support the learning of pupils and this has the added advantage of building pupils' confidence in its use, putting them in the position to fully benefit from teaching later.

17 Teachers generally plan their lessons very well. This is particularly so in literacy and numeracy lessons where they use the national strategies to plan for all phases of the lesson and for work of different groups of pupils. This leads on occasions to excellent teaching and learning as, for example, in a guided reading lesson for older juniors when a group of higher attaining pupils used the text very well to support their strongly held views. This led to a passionate discussion about characters' motives. Teachers throughout the school are very positive in their approach to their pupils, building very good relationships between them. This helps to create an atmosphere where pupils feel confident to speak and share their views. This was particularly well illustrated in a literacy lesson for lower junior pupils, where they felt confident enough to share their poems and in a numeracy lesson for older juniors where pupils were quick to identify factors and multiples of numbers. As a result of this, pupils learnt from each other and enjoyed playing with language for special effect.

18 Teachers use the good resources of the school to support their planning by preparing well for lessons, making sure that pupils have the correct equipment to experiment with and the means to fully research a subject. Progress of pupils in infant classes in physical education is helped because they have sufficient, good quality equipment to exercise genuine choice and are able to develop skills in a number of games activities. Teachers make good use of resources to generate discussion. Very good learning occurred in an infant class when pupils, discussing why it is important to care for the environment, were awe-struck by the complexity of a swallow's nest. Particularly good, imaginative use is made of the overhead projector to illustrate clearly and exactly certain teaching points to whole classes of pupils. An example occurred in a class of older junior pupil who were shown exactly how to measure angles using a protractor, which was projected onto the screen. Teachers have very good class management and often adopt an adventurous approach to lessons. Older juniors are given the opportunity to build exciting, even vibrant, creative dance routines involving the whole class in co-ordinated movement and they do this very well, sustaining totally focussed concentration. Younger juniors responding to a very good demonstration by the teacher make very astute comments about paintings in their art lesson, suggesting that 'a flower like a rose could represent the flower of love.'

19 The marking of pupils' work is particularly thorough. Teachers invariably mark pupils' work and offer positive and encouraging comments. There are many examples of teachers, throughout the school, offering suggestions for ways to improve learning or for further study. Each pupil has individual targets in numeracy and literacy and although many are precise and helpful for pupils' learning, the quality is still variable and some are not so helpful. Pupils who join the school at different points of the year are well taught, for once their needs have been assessed, additional support is given to those who need it to enable them to catch up and so achieve as well as others. The attainment of pupils who join the school part-way through the year is assessed well and they are given good, well-planned support to enable them to achieve as well as others.

20 Teachers make good use of praise to encourage pupils and build their self-esteem. Pupils benefit from the good subject knowledge of a specialist music teacher and from the creative flair of teachers who are interested in art and design. Overall the good quality of teaching means that nearly all pupils achieve well and make at least satisfactory progress while some make good or very good progress.

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

21 The school provides a very good curriculum for its pupils. In meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum, it has maintained the important enquiry aspects of such subjects as science, mathematics, geography and history. Teachers expect pupils gradually to undertake more responsibility for their investigations. In design and technology, for example, pupils make land-yachts to their own specifications, using the knowledge and understanding they have gained in science. Where possible, the school ensures that pupils undertake practical work as well as learning from listening and writing. In physical education, for example, all pupils develop their swimming throughout their time at the school, and have many opportunities to express themselves through dance. Consequently pupils learn as much from being active as they do from listening. In doing so, pupils show a high degree of enthusiasm and interest. The school enriches pupils' experiences beyond the requirements of the National Curriculum. Within lessons, pupils' English and personal development is taken another step through the excellent use of drama. Here pupils not only gain confidence in speaking and performing in front of an audience, but also develop their understanding of history for example by enacting life in other times.

22 The curriculum for children in the reception classes is well planned and suited to their needs. Different areas of the curriculum are planned to support each other so that children both learn and consolidate new skills through different but complementary practical activities.

23 The school's strategies for teaching the skills of literacy and numeracy skills are effective. Teachers develop pupils' literacy well through subjects other than English. For example, pupils sometimes present scientific reports in the style of a newspaper. They are encouraged to read non-fiction to improve their knowledge of history and are expected to present what they have learnt in range of ways including using information and communication technology. Pupils write letters arising from their awareness of local environmental issues and teachers regularly use computers to develop pupils' means of communication, such as when recording their poems or making pictures in the style of Andy Warhol. Teachers help pupils to make good use of the digital camera, particularly in science. However, numeracy is less overtly planned for in other subjects, often occurring incidentally rather than in a systematic way.

24 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans focus successfully on the needs of pupils. Targets are well chosen to develop pupils' skills but do not always contain the measure of time in which they will be achieved. Parents are kept well informed and their views and those of their children are taken into account at review. The provision for special educational needs is under review and a well-targeted action plan to develop further monitoring is in place. The co-ordinator works very hard, supported by the headteacher and the governor responsible for special educational needs, to ensure good provision for all pupils, including pupils from a neighbouring special school who sometimes join classes. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are satisfactorily supported within class.

25 Approximately 20 per cent of parents tended to disagree that the school provided an interesting range of activities outside lessons. Inspection judgement is that there is a good range of well-managed extra curricular activities for specific times in the year in which all staff participate. Sports activities and music enhance the curriculum significantly. Pupils enjoy a high degree of success in swimming competitions and netball and chess competitions are on offer to pupils. The focus on the appreciation of music is a good feature of the school. Pupils in reception have their own 'music club' and members of the school orchestra perform regularly in school assemblies as well as in out of school activities. There is a lively information and communication technology club. Educational visits and visitors support the provision for most subjects.

26 The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Several themes such as relationships, feelings and self-esteem are explored. Discussion times are very effective in raising pupils' understanding of sensitive issues and teachers are talented in using these sessions

well. There is concerted action to raise the profile of this area of the curriculum. Sex education and the misuse of drugs are addressed appropriately where needs arise and parents' meetings support the school's approach to these topics.

27 The majority of links with the community involve the church and pupils take part in services and celebrations during the year, often providing the music. Links with pre- school groups, local colleges and other schools also benefit pupils by giving them a sense of the wider community. Staff from the secondary school visit the school and set up joint projects with Year 6 pupils, involving sharing information and communication technology facilities and taking part in a joint area sports day and swimming gala. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning and also helps to prepare them well for transferring to the next stage of their education. Links with the local special school benefit pupils and staff of both schools and stress the importance of social inclusion.

28 Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and has improved since the last inspection. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. This is particularly evident in school assemblies in the sharing of periods of prayer and reflection about the value of love in peoples' lives. The lighting of the candle and appropriately chosen music add significantly to the spiritual atmosphere of these occasions. Displays in the hall and around the school celebrate the values of beauty and colour in school life and the positive activities in the life of both pupils and staff. The school's provision for pupils' moral development is also very good. Christian teaching is at the core of pupils' spiritual development and contributes significantly towards their moral education. In Year 6, pupils clearly understand that the spirit is cleansed 'to get rid of the badness' when learning about the rituals and symbolism of other faiths. Teachers present good opportunities for infant pupils to understand the need to care for their world. In Years 5 and 6 pupils explore their own shortcomings and personally reflect on the 'sins' they would like to 'bin'.

29 The provision for pupils' social development is very good. The positive relationships between all staff and pupils are a feature of the school and as a result there is an air of recognisable good will in the school community. Older pupils support younger pupils who enter in reception; pupils in Years 5 and 6 play with infant pupils regularly and they organise and write their own playground rules. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The school continues to have close links with the village of Mettupalayam. The time spent by a member of staff there and a visit from the village leader deepens pupils' appreciation of the lives of other people. Pupils reflect well on the differences between their own use of water and those in less advantaged areas. Art, drama and music contribute significantly to pupils' cultural development, as do the stimulating activities encountered in science and information and communication technology. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a notable feature of the school

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30 Pupils are well cared for. The school continues to provide a very caring environment in which pupils can learn. They are given good support and guidance. There is good attention to health and safety with regular checks and assessments of risks. Child protection procedures are securely in place. Pupils are known and valued as individuals and they feel confident to approach any adults if they have worries or concerns. In the reception classes, children who are joining the school and their parents are given several opportunities to visit and to get to know the school before starting full-time education. Lunchtime is well organised and relationships with supervisors are happy.

31 The school monitors attendance carefully and has very efficient procedures to check any patterns of absence. Parents understand their responsibility to inform school of reasons for absence and usually do so on the first day. Pupils' personal development thrives through the individual attention they receive. Teachers know their pupils well and quickly recognise any change in behaviour or attitude. Assemblies celebrate special achievement each week and are used well to commend extra effort shown by individual pupils. The school operates a 'buddy' system, which

further supports pupils with specific needs. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and provision for their personal needs is included in their individual educational plans. The school monitors the attainment of pupils who join the school during the course of a school year closely and gives additional support when it is needed so that they achieve as well as others. It helps them to quickly settle into school and to feel a part of its community.

32 The monitoring of behaviour throughout the school is very good. Pupils know what the school expects and achieve a high standard. The school clearly does not tolerate anti-social behaviour, and there are very good systems to follow should any inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour occur. A weekly assembly celebrates good behaviour and pupils receive a certificate for home and are asked to colour a flower to add to the display in the main hall as part of their recognition.

33 The school does not use assessment sufficiently well to identify weaknesses in pupils' skills or knowledge apart from in the reception classes where it is used very well to decide what children should be taught. In mathematics and science, for example, although regular assessments are made at the end of each topic or unit of work, these are not used to improve the planning of what pupils need to learn. National tests are not analysed to determine where the areas of weakness lie and so the school does not have information it can use to improve teaching, learning and achievement in these subjects. Procedures for assessment are good in literacy and as a consequence overall attainment is higher. The school's assessment procedures are in the process of change following the recent appointment of a new co-ordinator. In a short time he has reviewed and updated the assessment policy and is developing systems to ensure a consistent approach to the gathering of data. With the use of a computerised assessment system, the co-ordinator is beginning to build up detailed tracking files to enable individual pupils' progress to be recorded. This is an area that has not been sufficiently developed since the previous inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

34 Parents think highly of the school and are very satisfied with what it provides and achieves. They are delighted that their children like going to school and they think that they make good progress and are encouraged to become mature and responsible. They feel that the teaching in the school is good. Although this is similar to the findings of the previous inspection, parents themselves feel that the school has continued to improve and they warmly support it.

35 The school provides parents with considerable opportunities to become involved in their children's learning. Parents receive information regularly from interesting newsletters. The home-school diaries are a useful two-way communication and parents, pupils and teachers enjoy the witty cartoon characters on the front covers to depict the class teacher. Parents also like the fact that they contain curriculum information and a diary of school events. This enables parents to support their children's learning and examples of this were evident in classroom displays where parents wrote about historical artefacts for their children to read. The school holds information evenings for parents on aspects of the curriculum such as numeracy and drugs education. These are appreciated by parents and are generally well attended. Parents also enjoy and appreciate opportunities to share in their children's achievements through watching school productions or attending sports day.

36 The parents are well informed of their children's progress through annual written reports. These are of good quality. Parents have opportunities to look at their child's' work and discuss their progress and overall development in more detail at regular consultation evenings. A recent survey carried out by the school indicates that parents are overall very satisfied with the arrangements for parent's evenings. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept fully informed of their children's progress and are involved in regular reviews. They are consulted at all stages to ensure a full understanding of their child's needs.

37 The school encourages parents to help in school in a variety of ways such as hearing pupils read, or supervising baking and work with information and communication technology. Parents also help regularly in the school library. This benefits pupils' learning, particularly in literacy. The school has a "Parents as Partners" scheme which is very carefully managed. It supports the few parents who help regularly in school and gives them an opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences. The school makes parents feel very welcome, and they feel comfortable and valued for their work by the pupils and staff. The Friends Support Group organises a range of social and fund raising events to help provide additional resources for learning. Resources such as overhead projectors, musical instruments, a laminator and CD player, purchased by parents, considerably enhance teacher's presentation of new material and so greatly benefit pupils' learning. The school fully appreciates and values the help and support of the parents and continues to look for ways to improve their involvement in their children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

38 One of the main reasons for the success of the school is the very good leadership provided by the headteacher. His very clear vision for the type of education that the school should provide for its pupils is shared by the senior teachers and supported by all staff. This is clearly expressed in the school motto: "Caring and Learning Together". There is a strongly shared commitment throughout the school to providing a caring place for children to become active learners. The development of teachers' expertise and ability to take responsibility is an important aspect of this learning together. As a result children learn well through the broad range of interesting activities with which they are provided.

39 The deputy headteacher and senior teachers form an effective team with the headteacher in the day-to-day management of the school and in considering areas for longer-term development. The senior teachers monitor the work of the school through a good range of procedures such as observation of lessons, looking at samples of pupils' work, reviews of planning and informal discussions. This monitoring is often clearly focussed on an aspect of the school that is of particular interest or concern, for example the attainment of boys. Subject co-ordinators are knowledgeable and organise developments in their subject effectively. They have made important contributions to the development of planning to ensure that pupils learn skills and acquire relevant knowledge systematically. Although co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning their role is not extended enough to involve them in the regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and the standards achieved by children. This means that they do not have a broad enough picture of their subject to help identify clearly what needs to be further developed. This is an area that has been highlighted for further development by the headteacher, particularly as he recognises the talents that several of the recently appointed staff bring to their subjects.

40 The governing body meets its major statutory duties well through a very effective committee structure and the appointment of individuals to oversee key aspects of the school such as numeracy and special educational needs. Governors are well informed, appropriately critical and committed to the school and the welfare of all within it. They share the values of the headteacher and staff, and work individually and collectively to the benefit of the school. The Finance and Personnel Committee effectively act as a strategy group, which provides the direction for the work of the governing body and helps in shaping the broad policy of the school. Governors know what the school does well and are aware of aspects that could be improved. The governor's annual report to parents and the school prospectus do not include all of the required information.

41 A good school improvement plan very clearly establishes the priorities for development. These are firmly based on fulfilling the school's aims, raising standards through improving teaching and developing the management skills of staff. Priorities are set out well so that it is clear who is responsible for relevant action and how the success of each target will be judged. Financial planning is very good. Money is well spent on pupils who have special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language. The Finance and Personnel Committee have excellent

procedures for ensuring all aspects of the budget, including additional grants, are considered. The committee has a working party to consider ways of generating additional income. By working closely with the headteacher priorities are successfully financed. Throughout the year the budget is carefully monitored and any necessary decisions made. The evaluation of the effectiveness of spending is rigorous and the Finance Committee is looking more closely at comparative information to see whether or not the school provides value for money. Their figures show that the school does provide good value for money and the evidence of the inspection supports this.

42 Financial and school administration are very good. Administrative staff maintain records to a high standard, provide relevant information to the headteacher, staff and governing body and ensure that financial procedures are followed meticulously. The efficiency with which the school office is run enables the headteacher and staff to concentrate on the central purpose of teaching pupils and developing their learning. Information technology is used effectively to support administration and in developing children's learning.

43 The school is well staffed by suitably qualified, and in some cases well qualified, teachers and support staff so that the National Curriculum, religious education and children under the age of six are taught effectively. The school places a high priority on staff training in order to benefit children through teachers' improved knowledge and expertise. Induction of new staff into an understanding of the school ethos and of the school's routines is good. Teachers in their first year of teaching receive good support.

44 Accommodation is well maintained and cleaned and provides an attractive and stimulating place for children to learn. Every available space is used and attractive displays and an 'art gallery' celebrate pupils' achievements. A wildlife area has enhanced outside areas and provides a particularly useful resource for science lessons and some extra-curricular clubs. Resources to support learning are satisfactory overall. There is very good provision for physical education and resources in mathematics, art, religious education and for children with special educational needs are good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

45 In order to improve standards further the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) use assessment to identify weaknesses in learning for individual and groups of pupils in order to raise standards in mathematics and science to a similar level to English.
(Paragraphs 3, 33, 71, 76)

Other minor issues that should be considered by the school are:

- extend the role of subject co-ordinators to include monitoring of teaching standards to ensure that there is consistency of learning between classes in each year group.
(Paragraphs 4, 39, 71)
- develop more strategies for using numeracy in other subjects.
(Paragraphs 71, 76)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	82
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	30	43	18	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	335
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	18

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	45

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.27
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	25	18	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	19	17
	Girls	17	18	16
	Total	34	37	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (92)	86 (94)	77 (88)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (86)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	18
	Girls	18	16	17
	Total	36	34	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (92)	79 (96)	81 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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
	2000	27	21	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	21	25
	Girls	19	17	18
	Total	39	38	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (82)	79 (76)	90 (93)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	20	16
	Girls	19	19	19
	Total	37	39	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (84)	81 (76)	73 (87)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	299
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	
Black – African heritage	0	
Black – other	0	
Indian	0	
Pakistani	0	
Bangladeshi	0	
Chinese	0	
White	1	
Other minority ethnic groups	0	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	23.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	62

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999-00
	£
Total income	557,615
Total expenditure	554,394
Expenditure per pupil	1,558
Balance brought forward from previous year	27,978
Balance carried forward to next year	31,199

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	335
Number of questionnaires returned	136

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	46	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	46	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	49	6	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	49	15	1	1
The teaching is good.	57	40	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	47	7	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	26	5	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	33	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	45	46	7	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	53	40	4	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	44	2	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	44	18	3	2

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views and with the satisfaction they express with what the school achieves. As regards the reservations expressed by some parents about the range of activities provided outside lessons, the school does in fact provide an interesting range of extra-curricular activities, some of which take place at certain times of the year because of daylight hours and the weather. Sports' activities, music, including an orchestra, and a lively information and communication technology club contribute well to the curriculum, as do educational visits within school time.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

46 Children achieve well in the reception classes. Most children enter school with below average attainment in spoken and written communication, mathematical skills and personal, social and emotional development. By the time children transfer into the next stage of their education, most meet the standards expected in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. A very small number exceed these expectations. The quality of teaching is consistently good and there are some very good features, which enable children of different levels of attainment to give of their best. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

47 There are notable strengths in the provision for reception children. The two adjoining classrooms are spacious and used well to provide a wide range of different activities for children to use independently. As the class sizes are very small, children receive a lot of individual support from the teachers and nursery nurse, which enables them to learn effectively. Not a moment is wasted and the management of children is very good. The large outside play area is imaginatively designed and is used well to develop children's skills in climbing and balancing and provides scope for creative play. Different areas of the curriculum are planned to complement each other so that children subconsciously reinforce what they have learnt whilst undertaking new activities. They receive specialist teaching in music, which helps to develop their skills from an early age.

Personal, social and emotional development

48 Children's personal, social and emotional development is provided for well and children achieve well, learning to become more independent and to work and play together amicably. By the time they leave the reception classes they attain standards expected of their age. Children take the registers to the school office, filing it in the appropriate place. They treat visitors to their classroom courteously, inviting them to come in to 'the shoe shop' to try on some shoes. A special time is set aside each week for children to discuss together, reflecting, for example, on times when they were happy or sad. Teachers offer simple examples from their own experience to encourage children to share their thoughts. Sometimes, however, teachers interject questions or comments a little too soon and so children tend to respond with only one word or a short phrase in answer. Few children ask each other the question 'why' to elicit further response. Teachers encourage good social behaviour, praising those who wait patiently or who listen well. Children tidy up well and teachers have regular routines to ensure that this is done quickly and efficiently. Children show great willingness to work and to learn. An average attaining child pointed out, 'you can't shout out "it's me first!"'. Most children have a simple understanding of their own feelings and higher attaining children begin to use more expressive language to explain what they mean.

Communication, language and literacy

49 Children enter school with below average standards in communication, language and literacy. They achieve well, reaching standards expected of their age group by the time they leave the reception classes. The levels of attainment vary widely; the majority communicate in short phrases and some play alongside each other, enjoying the company but not developing play through language. The quality of teaching is good overall and some very good teaching was observed. Teachers have a very pleasant manner with children, which encourages them to be interested in reading and remember words. Children clearly love to read out loud with their teacher and thoroughly enjoy identifying the action words in a poem, which they then vigorously enact. Using their knowledge of initial sounds to help them, higher attaining children readily see the pattern in a poem. Children use the highlighter pen quite awkwardly but with evident pleasure to colour in words for others to see. Teachers choose stories and poems very well to interest this age group. Wherever possible, children are encouraged to listen and to infer. For example, two higher attaining

children worked out that the poem was called 'Footprints' because 'a little bird left footprints in the snow.' It is expected that children will read and write and so they try their hardest. Although most children cannot write their names when they enter school, they make good progress, taking care to form their letters properly. Lower attaining children comment constructively on each other's work, one remarking encouragingly, 'that's a good tick'. In a very good lesson, the resources were very carefully devised to entice children to learn, leading to groups of higher attaining children, once they had opened a special envelope containing words, to ask of each other, 'what does this say?' before arranging them in order in a sentence.

Mathematical development

50 Children achieve well in mathematics and from an initial limited understanding of number, reach expected standards by the end of the reception year. When they enter school, most children are unfamiliar with counting rhymes and have difficulty recognising numbers or understanding how many more they need, for instance, to make one more than five. Mathematics is taught quite formally and children are expected to listen and to concentrate. They enjoy counting up to 20 and back, though lower attaining children often do not recognise the numbers in isolation. With support, children successfully identify small value coins but have difficulty when trying to feel the difference in shape and size. About a quarter of children are sure that 20p is worth more than 5p. The quality of teaching is good and teachers change activities briskly to keep children's attention, subtly changing how children are sitting to help maintain concentration. Resources are well prepared and readily available to be given out when needed. Teachers challenge higher attaining children to visualise number and to solve simple sums up to 10p without using actual coins. About two-thirds of children, however, find this difficult and lower attaining children, for example, become confused when counting out three 1p coins in order to make 3p. Children are all very quiet and well behaved and good use is made of support assistants to help children, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, to learn.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

51 Children's knowledge and understanding of the world increases significantly so that at the end of the reception year they attain the standards expected of their age. They thoroughly enjoy finding out which materials keep Teddy dry. Teachers encourage children to stand in front of the others and to talk about what they have learnt. Children listened with great interest as an average attaining child explained he had tested materials with a watering can, deciding that 'bubble-wrap was good' because the water 'didn't go through'. Children comment with pleasure on the resources and become quite absorbed in their tasks. They mimic adult speech and behaviour in role-play, adopting special voices and formulating their own rules. For example, the shopkeeper asks of the customer, identified by the special hat, 'Would you like to buy these party shoes?' They are fascinated to discover that birds, cats and frogs all have different kinds of feet as they laugh at the funny pictures in a poetry book. The nursery nurse takes every opportunity to develop children's awakening interest in the world around them, explaining that the sun wasn't shining when a lower attaining child commented 'it's cold today'. Special visitors, who come into the classroom to talk about their jobs, develop children's understanding of the roles of people such as the Vicar and the fire fighter in society. They remark on their special clothes and higher attaining children wrote that the fire fighter 'puts out fires and he rescues animals.' Teachers plan the work very well to help children to learn.

Physical development

52 Teachers use the facilities in the school hall very well to promote children's physical development. Children enjoy the large space and physical exertion. By the time they leave the reception classes they are likely to attain expected standards for their age. Most children can find a space and run round energetically without bumping into anyone. Most can walk on tiptoes though a small number find this difficult. In an imaginatively planned lesson, children pretended to put on Wellington boots and then ran round to find imaginary puddles to jump in. Many children, however,

found it difficult to 'watch out for the puddles' and tended to forget to jump. Lower attaining children find it difficult to jump with two feet together and to change from one move to another. The quality of teaching is good overall and work is well planned to develop progressive learning of skills. Children enjoy simple games and many are able to roll and stop the ball. They like the challenge of finding out how many times they can roll a ball between objects and bounce up and down with excitement whilst maintaining concentration. Children are very quick and efficient when putting equipment away. In the classroom, children concentrate well as they draw round their shoes, though just over half the children have some difficulty cutting out the shapes. Higher attaining children manage quite delicate work, deciding how to make a high-heeled shoe by attaching rolled card with sticky tape.

Creative development

53 Children achieve well in their creative development and reach expected standards by the end of the reception year. They learn to mix their own colours and most know, for example, that mixing red and yellow will produce orange, the colour of the week. Lively displays reinforce children's awareness of different colours. When painting different teddy bears, children try to mix accurately the range of colours they see from golden to beige to brown. Teachers work alongside children, helping them to observe precisely when drawing a delicate china shoe. The classroom feels very busy during such activities and teachers mingle with children, discreetly helping them, encouraging children to learn through doing rather than watching, trying to develop average and lower attaining children's limited verbal responses as they dig in the sand or do jigsaws. Children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are very well integrated in all areas of learning and receive good support.

54 The quality of assessment is very good and gives a very clear indication of pupils' attainment and development. Staff make a detailed notes each week on selected areas of learning, noting children's responses. Comments such as, 'sometimes finds it difficult to put questions into words' are then incorporated into the planning for the next week's activities. Tasks are very well prepared and teachers and support staff assess children's development noting, for example, that some 'struggled with scissors, persevered and succeeded.' Thus a very clear picture of individual children's attainment and achievement is built up throughout the reception year.

ENGLISH

55 By the age of eleven, pupils attain above average standards in English. This is very good achievement, because pupils have progressed from below average standards when they start school in the reception classes. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve very well. This is good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were below average for this age group.

56 Results of the year 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds were well above average both nationally and for schools with a similar intake of pupils. This continues the rising trend of previous years. The attainment of pupils in the present Year 6 class, however, is not quite so high as last year largely because of a small increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs and their attainment is above rather than well above average. Results of the year 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds were below average for reading and average for writing. Girls performed better than boys. Both reading and writing results were below the average for schools with a similar intake of pupils. These results were not typical of the school. Pupils' attainment differs quite widely from year group to year group, depending on the proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school during any particular year. The school monitors the attainment of these late arrivals closely and gives additional support when it is needed so that they achieve as well as others. The relatively poor results in 2000 can be explained by the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in that particularly year group. Most of them were boys, contributing to the comparatively lower performance of boys in the national tests in 2000. The range of evidence from the current inspection confirms a return to above average standards for seven year-olds, especially in writing

and continuing high standards for eleven year-olds. There are no discernible differences at present between the attainment of boys and that of girls.

57 By the age of seven, pupils' skills in speaking and listening are broadly average. Pupils tend to give short answers to teachers' questions but know precise language such as 'illustrations' and 'blurb' when discussing books. Most pupils are confident in conversations with an adult. Those whose writing is below average can provide detailed oral descriptions of how they made their 'motoring mini-beasts' with yoghurt pots and elastic bands. They can also act out a poem they enjoy. In most lessons, pupils listen very well unless they become restless in a prolonged stay on the carpet. This also benefits their attainment in other subjects such as music. By the age of eleven, pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average. They are thoroughly adept at using the language of words such as 'causal connectives' and 'impersonal writing'. They listen attentively and contribute fully to discussions. Pupils enjoy drama particularly and throw themselves into the parts of medieval servants, offering sensible and logical answers to the problem of moving a heavy carcass for their master. Pupils criticise one another's performances with precise, constructive comments.

58 Seven-year-old pupils' reading skills are above average. Lower attaining pupils hesitate a little but have strategies for tackling difficult texts confidently. They enjoy books that have fun with words. Average attaining pupils do not yet read aloud expressively, but they clearly understand what they read and can talk about characters in a book and offer suggestions as to how they might feel. Higher attaining pupils read quite difficult texts expressively and can discuss the plot and how characters interact with one another. These pupils can locate the information they need in the non-fiction library quite easily. Younger pupils in Year 1 enjoy reading, and higher attaining pupils are beginning to appreciate humour. By the age of eleven, pupils' reading skills are above average. Lower attaining pupils read aloud with expression. They still describe what characters look like rather than their personal qualities. Average attaining pupils have firm favourites for authors and recommend books quite knowledgeably. Higher attaining pupils can discuss their favourite books, which are often ones that frighten them or give full rein to their imagination. Their ability to contrast the features in non-fiction and fiction is limited and they have not yet developed the critical skills necessary to identify bias or prejudice in newspapers.

59 By the time they are seven years old, pupils' writing is above average. They begin to write at length and have a good understanding of how to plan stories. Higher attaining pupils write well-structured three-page accounts of their 'Snowy Day', for example, and convey how they felt very effectively. Those pupils whose attainment is average or above can write long sentences with ideas linked by words such as 'because' or 'when'. Pupils' ability to describe their characters is well developed, and higher attaining pupils use very good vocabulary such as 'distracted', 'eventually', and 'stranded'. Eleven year-olds' writing is also above average. The best examples include very detailed and descriptive retelling of stories such as of Baboushka, and very well thought-out accounts of the last days of 'The King of Bedale'. By this age pupils have a well-developed sense of humour, and put across in mouth-watering detail the temptations and pleasures of appraising chocolate cake. They also construct convincing arguments about a proposal to build on Bedale's open plain. Pupils at seven and eleven are advanced in their use of punctuation, but many do not pay enough attention to accuracy in spelling. Presentation and handwriting vary in accordance with teachers' expectations, but can be mature.

60 The quality of teaching is good overall. It is very good in junior classes and there is some excellent teaching of older pupils. The quality of teaching of infant pupils is more variable. Whilst most teaching is good there is greater variation between different classes and a small element of unsatisfactory teaching was observed.

61 Teachers of infant pupils concentrate well on developing basic understanding of word and sentence patterns, challenging higher attaining pupils to write more elaborate sentences. When suggesting a sentence to illustrate the letter Q in the alphabet book the class was jointly composing, an average attaining pupil suggested 'Queens normally live in castles'. In a very good lesson for this age group, the resources were very well prepared and imaginatively presented to

inspire pupils to write neatly. Teachers take pains to make reading and writing interesting and part of everyday experience. For instance, in one classroom, a 'Write what You Like' corner was filled with letters to the teacher or accounts of exciting events. A higher attaining pupil wrote about building a snowman, observing, 'When the rain and sun came he started to melt but he did stay there a very long time.' Parents are also encouraged to write brief accounts when they send in objects for display and pupils read these with interest. Teachers use different ways of presenting writing to encourage pupils, such as 'lift the flap' books. In a classroom café, laminated menus written and attractively designed by pupils add authenticity to their writing and encourage other pupils to read what they have written. In less successful lessons, the teaching is less sensitive. Instruction in handwriting, for example, is not always immediately followed by practice, which prevents pupils from making good progress. In unsatisfactory lessons, pupils sit for too long and consequently lose concentration.

62 The quality of teaching of junior pupils is very good overall and contributes to the above average standards pupils achieve. There is greater consistency between classes and lessons move at a good pace as they are carefully timed. Teachers encourage pupils to speak clearly and to read expressively; for example, when reading out loud their witty rhyming couplets to complete the list of objects found in a wizard's pocket. Average attaining pupils show a real feel for language as they declaim 'a box of bubbles that never pop' and higher attainers suggest more cynically 'a bill from the wand shop'. Pupils respond well to their teachers' lively delivery and infectious enthusiasm. In excellent lessons good humour was used very well to challenge pupils so that they worked eagerly and with a sense of fun. Teachers use resources imaginatively, for example, asking pupils to run to the circle in the playground with the correct word ending. This makes pupils think about word roots, so that the spellings of 'politics' and 'politicians' are linked. In one lesson, pupils learnt to read more perceptively as they were challenged to ask questions of each other and support their views from the text. The ensuing discussion brought the book alive as pupils debated fiercely their interpretations of character and motive, using quotations from the book to support their strongly held views.

63 Very strong leadership and a rich curriculum both contribute to the above average standards. All teachers employ the national literacy strategy effectively. The modifications they have introduced increase its effectiveness in enabling pupils to reach high standards in reading and writing. Pupils follow a carefully planned programme of work, devised by the subject co-ordinator, to develop their skills. Younger pupils concentrate on word and sentence construction before moving on to writing at length. Throughout the school, teachers demonstrate different ways of planning writing. This benefits lower attaining and average attaining pupils in particular as it gives them a structure for their writing. 'Guided reading', when pupils read and talk about a book in groups, takes place at a separate time and is used most effectively alongside pupils reading books on their own for pleasure. The way English is taught, therefore, offers a wide range of speaking, reading and writing activities, including excellent use of drama, to stimulate pupils to want to learn. Detailed planning gives a very clear focus for lessons, providing different work for pupils of different ages and levels of attainment within the class. Literacy is used very well in other subjects and the school's strategies to raise standards in writing are successful. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

64 The standards of attainment in mathematics of eleven-year-old pupils have improved since the last inspection and pupils achieve well. The trend over the last five years is one of general improvement although a big jump in standards in 1999 was not maintained in 2000. In the year 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds, the school's results were above average compared with results in all schools nationally and to schools of a similar intake. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils' attainment differs quite widely from year group to year group, depending on the proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school during any particular year. The school monitors their attainment closely and gives additional support when it is needed. On the evidence of the current inspection the standards are not quite so high for this

group of Year 6 pupils but they will be at least in line with those expected nationally by the time they leave this school. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and nearly all pupils make at least satisfactory progress while a smaller number make good or very good progress.

65 In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 the school's results were well below average when compared to all schools nationally and to schools of a similar intake. Performance over time, however, indicates that standards are generally in line and sometimes above those attained nationally. Standards for pupils currently in Year 2 are likely to be in line with those found nationally. There has been no significant difference between the results of boys and girls over time although the boys' results were particularly low in 2000 because of the high incidence of special educational needs amongst that particular group of pupils.

66 The quality of teaching throughout the school is good and results in the pupils learning well in lessons. The national numeracy strategy has been implemented well and teachers have a clear grasp of its detail. Its introduction has helped to ensure comprehensive coverage of all the areas of the mathematics curriculum. Consequently, seven-year-old pupils have a sound mental recall of addition and subtraction facts up to 20 when tackling problems with larger numbers. Many pupils are able to describe familiar two and three-dimensional shapes and recognise right angles. Higher attaining pupils are able to classify shapes according to whether they are symmetrical although some believe that changing the orientation of a shape changes its symmetry. By the time they are eleven, higher attaining pupils are able to measure angles accurately and calculate the sum the angles of a triangle. Many average attaining pupils achieve well and can cancel fractions to their lowest terms. They multiply and divide by 10 and 100, seeing the pattern in numbers. Using a calculator, pupils discover how to calculate square roots to two decimal places. Most pupils understand how to calculate the probability of certain events occurring though lower attaining pupils find this more difficult. Many pupils are able to add figures to two decimal places although they were not so confident with estimations based on figures containing decimal fractions.

67 Teachers generally have a good understanding of mathematics and are able, for example, to help pupils to avoid making many of the usual mistakes by giving a thorough introduction covering common errors. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly, including clear learning objectives and activities for pupils of different levels of attainment. They are particularly careful to plan activities for pupils with special educational needs, often relating these to individual targets; this helps individual pupils to learn and make progress. Although teachers' planning almost invariably identifies different groups of pupils, planned activities do not always extend higher attaining pupils. Higher attaining Year 6 pupils, who were asked to explore the possible nets of a cube, worked at the task happily but found it unchallenging. On another occasion a teacher had planned to directly teach the higher attaining Year 2 pupils but became distracted, helping another group, and left them to their own devices. These pupils showed very good attitudes by setting themselves a task. Teachers generally use questioning well to challenge and extend the thinking and learning of pupils. A teacher of pupils in Years 3 and 4 introduced pupils to points of the compass between north, south, east and west and asked 'If this direction is south-east, what is that direction?' Teachers use demonstration by pupils well to help instruct other pupils and to consolidate and assess the learning of the pupil doing the demonstration. Younger pupils watched engrossed as a fellow pupil demonstrated how he found right angles around the classroom.

68 Teachers make good use of resources to help pupils to learn. The overhead projector is used imaginatively, for instance, to show a class how to use a protractor. This gave a clear demonstration of how to measure angles accurately and resulted in pupils taking similar care when they came to do it for themselves. In a class of younger pupils, the teacher used a geoboard very efficiently to show how different shapes were formed. Calculators, designed for use with the overhead projector, are also used very well to teach pupils how to use their own, using a medium that catches their attention as well as offering a very clear demonstration. Other resources, such as 'Squeak the Mouse' engage the attention of younger pupils as they count in tens. By using these different methods, teachers make lessons interesting and set high standards of presentation by using sophisticated technology.

69 Time is usually used well, following guidance in the national numeracy strategy, and means that lessons proceed at a good pace. Occasionally, however, particularly in classes of younger pupils, introductory sessions are too long and so pupils become inattentive. Although the class management by teachers throughout the school, is usually good and is based on encouragement and praise and very good relationships, there are occasional instances of teachers not correcting pupils who call out and instead trying to talk over them. This leads to excessive noise levels and some inattention. Classroom support staff are used effectively to support pupils who need additional help or who have special educational needs. Sometimes, they make preliminary assessments of pupils' progress during the lesson and this is used very well to assess what pupils have learnt and what they need to learn.

70 Pupils enjoy mathematics. Older pupils often work silently, intent on completing their tasks because they want to succeed. Teachers encourage pupils to talk about what they have learnt. In a very good lesson, pupils listened equally attentively to lower attaining pupils explaining how they had made a net of a three-dimensional shape and to higher attaining pupils who attempted to show how they tried to join two similar shapes such as a hexagon or pentagon. Older juniors were absolutely fascinated as two pupils tried to explain how to fit a rectangle into a cylinder, offering helpful suggestions as to how to accomplish this accurately. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and sensitively, offering encouraging remarks and, in some cases, suggestions for further study or improvement. There are clearly good relationships between teacher and pupil as shown by comments such as, 'Oops what's gone wrong here?' Pupils are set individual targets, though they vary in quality. The better ones offer precise targets, with dates and when targets are completed. Some are vague or not so helpful: 'Get your hand up in mental mathematics', for example. Teachers often discuss areas of difficulty with individual pupils at break or lunchtimes and so pupils benefit from this personal interest and assistance.

71 The co-ordinator for mathematics has only been in post since September and has not yet had sufficient time to have had a major impact on standards. However she has been able to monitor teachers' planning and offer useful written feedback. Pupils' progress is regularly checked both through the school's own assessments and through the use of national standardised tests. The school is not yet making the best use of these, however, by analysing pupils' responses to find the areas of weakness. The co-ordinator has introduced mathematical displays, which are now a feature of most classrooms. These are invariably colourful and informative and challenge pupils to think about and to complete mathematical problems. As well as interesting pupils they are raising the profile of mathematics in the school. The use of numeracy is not particularly planned for in other subjects and so some opportunities to extend mathematical learning are lost. The use of information and communication technology to support mathematics is still an area for development, which is recognised by the school.

SCIENCE

72 By the time they leave the school at the age of eleven, pupils attain the standards expected for their age in science. The 2000 national test results for pupils at the end of Year 6 paint a similar picture. By the end of Year 2, the standards attained by pupils are also about those expected for their age. This is better than the results of assessments made by teachers in 2000, when they judged standards overall to be well below average compared to those of other schools nationally. The standards seen at this inspection were similar to those reported at the school's last inspection. Over the past five years standards have improved in line with the national trend but this has not been consistent each year.

73 The significant number of pupils who join the school during each school year influences the variation in results from year to year. The analysis of pupils' work and observations of lesson shows that pupils make good progress and achieve well given their initial low level of understanding. The school's practical approach to teaching science encourages children to investigate different

scientific properties and develop a better understanding of scientific ideas. By the age of seven, pupils have a sound understanding of appropriate scientific knowledge. For example, they know about the properties of different materials when they sort them by different criteria such as man-made or natural. Pupils develop a suitable understanding of senses through experiments, such as identifying objects by their smell. By the age of eleven, pupils have extended their ability to conduct investigations. Most children confidently set up experiments to test ideas and so improve their understanding. They use their previous knowledge to predict possible outcomes and establish that their test is fair by deciding what it is needed to change and what must remain constant. Through their different investigations pupils have extended their understanding of, for example, shadows, the effects of changes on water and of light and reflections.

74 The quality of teaching is good overall. In most lessons, teaching was good but it was unsatisfactory in one lesson. There are a number of strengths within the good teaching that contribute to the good progress made by pupils. Lessons are well organised with resources easily accessible and explanations about the tasks given well. This led to pupils working well together with a high level of co-operation as they collaborated effectively in conducting the experiments. In discussions, effective questions encouraged pupils to think about their answers and give sensible explanations. This helped them clarify their thoughts as well as helping the teacher ensure pupils understood what they were doing. Pupils' high level of interest and enthusiasm for the subject was reflected in their willingness to answer questions. Skilful questioning made pupils use their previous knowledge effectively in setting up experiments. Pupils clearly understood what it was they were expected to do and how to judge whether they had been successful. For example, in two lessons where pupils were making parachutes to assess the effects of air pressure and gravity they knew how to make the test fair and how this would give them accurate results from which to make decisions. Some of the lower attaining pupils found this harder but the teachers sensibly supported these groups with their investigation. Higher attaining pupils work independently and show initiative in how they set about the tasks. In some lessons, particularly with the younger pupils, teachers' planning clearly indicates how the task would be given more challenge for the higher attaining pupils. For example, when looking at materials used in building houses, the higher attaining pupils not only identified suitable materials, but also had to explain why they were suited to their purpose.

75 Where teaching was less effective there were weaknesses in the planning which did not provide the lesson with enough structure. This meant that pupils were unsure what was expected of them and the time available was not used effectively. In several junior classes reference is made in the planning to the appropriate levels of possible attainment but it does not clearly show what the higher attaining pupils will do to achieve the higher level. This means that in some lessons pupils find the work has not enough challenge, as it does not extend work they have done before. Pupils commented that an experiment to see if light travels in straight lines was boring, as they had done it before. In a few lessons teachers' explanations at the beginning of lessons lasted too long and pupils became restless, as they were eager to start the investigations.

76 The science curriculum uses national guidance effectively to provide a well-balanced range of activities. To meet the needs of pupils in classes with two age groups, the programme of work is sensibly planned over two years. Although regular assessments are made at the end of topics, not enough use is made of information from these and from other assessments, such as national test results, to improve planning so that it meets the needs of each group of pupils. The co-ordinator, who is well-qualified and enthusiastic, is aware of this and is beginning to look at ways this and other areas of teaching science could be improved. Science is used well to improve skills in literacy but is less well planned to complement work covered in numeracy. Planning for each topic is monitored regularly but the co-ordinator has not yet had enough opportunity to observe lessons and examine pupils' work to get a clear picture of the standards achieved by the children and of the quality of teaching and learning in classes.

ART AND DESIGN

77 By the time pupils leave the school, their attainment in art and design is above that expected of eleven-year-olds. Standards have risen since the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well. Good quality work is produced in all classes in painting and drawing and framed pictures in the 'art gallery' at the entrance to the school celebrate the best examples of pupils' work. Much of this good quality is due to the individual flair of teachers and their own interest in visual media. The co-ordinator helps to mount displays and retains a portfolio of good work. However, the scheme of work lacks detail, is based on processes rather than skills and therefore gives limited guidance. Much of the good teaching throughout the school arises from discussion and from sharing ideas.

78 Art is clearly valued and celebrated by the school. The resources for learning are good and are used well to teach pupils different techniques. Pupils' artwork is often linked to studying the work of a well-known artist. Thus younger infants, for example, try to imitate Jackson Pollock through randomly splashing paint on a large scale canvas. A Gaudi-style acrylic painted chair by pupils in Year 2 is of outstanding quality with its vibrant combination of colours blocked together and overlaid with the drizzled design. Younger juniors carefully examined the work of Mackenzie Thorpe, learning how the artist achieved his effects. Their pastel pictures imitating his work show a mature sense of style and perspective. Older pupils' landscapes show their developing skill in graduating shades using watercolours. Some of the work is a very high quality using blended streaks of changing colours within an intricately designed framework based on medieval illuminated manuscripts.

79 The quality of teaching is good and pupils learn well. Pupils are taught how to use a pencil to reflect accurately what they observed and also to paint without using any pencil outlines as a guide. The result is delightfully natural as seen in infant pupils' pale, watery coloured cats, which emerge from a background of blocks of pale green, blue and grey. Much of the inspiration for art comes from topics and themes in other subjects such as history. The younger pupils are given a choice of media when doing observational drawings of favourite toys, selecting from pencil, chalk, pastels and charcoal. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 use sketchbooks very well to practise their designs. The sketchbooks reveal a wide range of preparatory techniques including mixing colours to achieve a close match, photographs of themselves in Egyptian dress taken with a digital camera and then carefully drawn and enlarged to scale. This very careful preparation teaches a wide range of skills and encourages pupils to think about what they are doing. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work, explaining, for example, 'the yellow gives it that 3D effect.' Their preparatory washes using watercolours are also annotated. The comments indicate the extent to which they self-critically describe the effects they hope to achieve. For example, an average attaining pupil wrote quite candidly, 'I didn't finish this one but the ground was coming along well and the sky looks great' whereas a higher attaining pupil explained in more detail, 'I like the effect of it moving from dark to light and the texture. I have built up the pattern using silver and gold.' However, this practice does not extend throughout the school in any systematic or planned for way.

80 A wide range of teaching styles was seen, some more successful than others. In less successful lessons, teachers talked for too long and pupils became restless and lost concentration. In others, preliminary discussion was more purposeful and so pupils began to appreciate how colour can depict mood and proximity can suggest friendship. They observed, for example, when examining some paintings that the figures were 'larger than life' and noticed 'their faces show their feelings.' In the best lessons, teachers demonstrate techniques, helping pupils to learn how to smudge and blend colour to good effect. Pupils respond well to art and are justifiably proud of their achievements.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

81 Standards in design and technology are above expectations when pupils are seven and eleven. This is an improvement for seven year-olds since the last inspection and a maintenance of standards for eleven-year-olds. In both cases pupils have achieved very well, considering their attainment on entry to the school.

82 By the age of seven, pupils have already successfully developed good skills in cutting and sticking together. This has helped them to make highly individual Christmas cards, using their imagination and presenting messages made on the computer. Pupils have carefully cut and fixed paper bones together with paper fasteners as part of their study of the human body. This involves both care and patience. One of their most successful projects has been to make 'moving minibeasts' using yoghurt pots and elastic. By the age of nine, pupils are already planning their work in stages. They successfully use what they learn from studying model land-yachts to design their own. Their written reports show that they have taken into account such important scientific factors as the degree to which their materials are waterproof, the effects of friction, and the importance of designing a mast that will not affect stability. By the time they have finished their product, they have learnt a great deal about the relation of sail size to speed, suitability of materials, the effects of the size of wheels, and how to balance considerations of speed and stability. In this way, pupils use their scientific learning to make successful products. Again, designs are highly individual and show that pupils have gained further independence from the teacher. By the age of eleven, pupils can make their own bread, using a missing ingredient they supply themselves. Their reports and illustrations are detailed and very well presented, and involve good use of the computer. They have also developed the capacity to face a wide variety of challenges, such as to make a Tudor house using wood, saw, and glue, a maze, and a three-dimensional face with a flashing nose.

83 No lessons were available for inspection, because the subject is taught in half-term blocks. However, recent work on display and photographs of previous products were examined, and a discussion was held with pupils. It was evident that teachers cover a very good range of tasks with pupils, and encourage the more skilful and resourceful pupils to help others. Teachers attend to health and safety matters at all times, and make good use of computers at the design stage. Pupils expressed thorough enjoyment of the subject in an interview. This stemmed from teachers providing them with the opportunity to develop their independence. There are two main areas for improvement. First, it is difficult at present for planning to meet pupils' needs or to take advantage of what they have learnt to challenge them with even more difficult tasks. This is because no way has been developed to find out how pupils' skills are progressing. Secondly, teachers vary in their expectations of detail in written reports. Where they are done thoroughly, they make a good contribution to pupils' literacy.

GEOGRAPHY

84 As time spent observing geography was limited, discussion with teachers and pupils' and the examination of pupils' work and teachers planning form the basis of judgements made on standards of attainment. By the time pupils reach the age of eleven standards in geography are at expected levels. Junior pupils were judged to be above expected levels in the last inspection. Whilst standards are broadly average for this particular group of pupils, there remain good features in attainment within the work of some junior pupils.

85 By the time pupils are seven standards are maintained at satisfactory levels. They can direct visitors to key places in the centre of the town, draw simple maps, which illustrate these as symbols and use basic left and right directions. They begin to understand the four points of the compass in relation to direction. In their topic on water older pupils discussed how to conserve water. They understand from their personal surveys the levels of water consumption in their own homes and consider the possibilities of saving water by various means. They compare, how people from underdeveloped countries collect and transport water. In previous work on rivers pupils

produced clear illustrations of the water cycle and well-written records of the river sediment experiment.

86 The quality of learning is good and pupils achieve well. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress. Although geography is only allocated a relatively small amount of time within the overall curriculum, it is well organised and based on a planned topic each term. As a result, infant pupils come to know their locality well from carefully planned walks and learn how observe their area closely when making a tally of the shops and the number of different buildings they see. Teachers make their activities interesting by encouraging pupils to think for themselves when planning their own model street. As a result infant pupils soon grasp the concept of a map and learn how to simply plan for a 'bird's eye view'. Teachers build well on previous knowledge gained from simple mapping skills and have high expectations that pupils will investigate the findings of their surveys further. Consequently pupils think of more geographical questions to answer and are ready to answer many of those presented on display. Pupils' learning develops further in their mapping skills and they are able to identify particular features on a map as well as label those that feature on the course of a river. Teachers know their subject well and build in good opportunities for pupils' geographical vocabulary to increase. At the end of the key stage they are particularly inventive in their approach to 'Who owns the water?', often using drama to help pupils to learn about environmental issues.

87 Pupils' attitudes to geography are good overall and this shows mainly in the presentation of their work. They enjoy their work. The use of well-organised topic books encourages pupils to take a pride in their work. Junior pupils enjoy practical activities and researching for information using the library and other resources, often continuing the work at home. In Years 5 and 6, pupils' photographs of drainage around the school were very well ordered.

88 The management of the subject is good. The recently appointed co-ordinator has clear target areas for development. Assessment of the subject and an audit of resources have been carefully itemised to ensure good provision.

HISTORY

89 Pupils attain the standards expected for their age in history by the time they leave the school at the age of eleven. These are similar to the standards those reported at the school's last inspection.

90 Pupils enjoy learning about the past. They expressed interest particularly in the opportunities to look at historical artefacts and to visit places of historical interest. The school's approach to teaching history encourages children to appreciate differences between times in the past and their own time. Much teaching and learning in history takes place in other subjects, notably, English, drama, information and communication technology and art. Through these, pupils gain historical knowledge through very practical means. This brings history alive for them and enables them to empathise with people in very different social and cultural times from their own. For example, older pupils' newspaper reports on Bess and the Highwayman are vividly brought to life by photographs pupils have taken of each other using information and communication technology. When learning about the Ancient Egyptians, boys and girls dressed up in suitable costumes, and struck suitable poses which they again photographed and used as the basis for their work in art and design.

91 Whilst observation of lessons was not extensive during the inspection, the quality of teaching in those that were seen was at least good and in two of the three lessons it was very good. Very effective use of resources was a notable feature of all these lessons. In a lesson with younger children the use of old and new toys inspired children to make sensible comparisons between the two. They clearly appreciated the difference and the teacher's evident care of the old toys gave pupils a sense of awe and respect for old objects. Teachers develop pupils' understanding of the

passage of time by helping them to record the ages at which they played with different toys to give a sense of history to their own lives. By the age of seven, pupils have knowledge of the past that is appropriate for their age. They learn about famous historical characters such as Guy Fawkes, Louise Braille and Mother Teresa and explain what they did and why they are remembered. They know that they find out about the past from different sources of information such as visits to museums, looking at books and talking to older relatives.

92 Teachers continue to use an imaginative approach to history in lessons for older pupils. A well thought out lesson used simple drama to explain the complexities of the feudal system. This was very effective as children began to use terms such as *fealty*, *homage* and *vassal* confidently and accurately as they readily imagined themselves to be servants to a great lord. By the age of eleven, pupils have developed satisfactory skills to find out about the past. They describe similarities between different eras, such as the role of medieval kings and Egyptian pharaohs, and they explain differences between their lives and the past well. Through visits to an archaeology museum in York they learn how artefacts can illuminate their understanding of the past, particularly the Viking period. Pupils describe the importance of other sources of evidence such as documents like the Domesday Book, diaries, pictures and buildings. Teachers are skilled at generating discussions, maintaining a fast pace and high level of interest through the quality of their questioning and the keenness of pupils to answer. As a result, pupils thought carefully and reached sensible, well-considered conclusions.

93 The history curriculum is well planned to provide a well-balanced range of activities using local events and resources as much as possible. The programme of work is sensibly designed to cover the two years pupils are in mixed age classes. Very good links are made with other subjects such as art and technology. History is used effectively to develop pupils' literacy skills. Assessment does not give enough information on how well pupils learned historical skills or help in planning tasks to challenge the higher attaining pupils. The co-ordinator, who is well qualified and enthusiastic, is aware of this and is beginning to look at ways in which teaching and learning in history could be enhanced. The co-ordinator has not yet had enough opportunity to examine pupils' work or to observe lessons to get a clear picture of the standards achieved by pupils and of the quality of teaching and learning in classes, though planning for each topic is monitored regularly.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

94 The provision for information and communication technology has improved significantly since the last inspection. Training for staff and the planning of a new computer suite has raised the profile of the subject across the school and standards for all pupils are at expected levels by the end of the key stage. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

95 By the age of seven pupils can use the keyboard and mouse with good control and operate programs, which develop their skills in literacy and numeracy. They create short pieces of word-processed work and use creative colours for work in art and design and technology. By the time pupils are eleven, they have a well-established range of skills, which allows them to edit and present their work using different fonts and layouts. They can import and retrieve graphics and readily save, retrieve and print their work. They retrieve data from a spreadsheet and plot and print two different graphs about two different groups. When they use the computer suite at the nearby high school, pupils use sensors to monitor water temperature.

96 Teaching is good overall. In lessons it varied from satisfactory to very good and led to pupils learning well. Teachers take opportunities in most subjects to incorporate information and communication technology. Although some teachers are more confident than others, overall their subject knowledge is good and as a result both infant and junior pupils' attainment benefits. Teachers plan lessons for infant pupils to teach basic skills, including using the mouse for different functions. Teachers plan more complex tasks for juniors; for example, teaching them to use the digital camera and to import images. This enlivens their work in drama, art and history. Teachers

select programs carefully to develop pupils' ability to solve problems, for instance to help them to plan new Egyptian cities and towns. They manage their pupils well when demonstrating new applications and consequently pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. As result, pupils acquire a firm vocabulary and refer to 'text box', 'options', 'edit', 'files and 'folders' with ease. Teachers ensure that pupils have good 'Intranet' behaviour, reminding pupils that their work is accessible to all and therefore spelling needs to be accurate and the use of language acceptable.

97 The attitudes of pupils are very good. They are enthusiastic in introductory sessions, listen well and junior pupils collaborate particularly well as they set up new tasks. They enjoy being part of the 'Crucial crew' and the 'Cool club'. Older pupils were very keen to solve problems for the initial exploration of the 'McDonald's challenge' as well as use a new application for publishing for their 'noisy diary'. Pupils' enthusiasm has helped to make parents equally keen to raise funds for items for the new computer suite. Junior pupils complete a self-assessment sheet of their skills in information and communication technology; this works well.

98 The management of the subject is very good. The enthusiasm and hard work of the co-ordinator has encouraged teachers to use information and communication technology positively in their planning. The networking across the school has given opportunities for work to be assessed and monitored informally as well as allowed pupils from different classes to communicate with each other. The co-ordinator has made the best use of present resources as well as those offered by the local high school until the school computer suite is completed. As result staff and pupils are in a firm position to take the best advantage of the new resources, as they become available.

MUSIC

99 Pupils attain above average standards in music. By the age of seven, pupils are composing and performing short rhythmic sentences. They can keep in time when accompanying one another. They use the correct technique for striking percussion, and are beginning to vary the volume with which they play. Most pupils sing in tune, and respond to being conducted, although they find it hard to sing and perform actions simultaneously. All pupils confidently sing in two parts in assemblies. By the age of eleven, they have developed enough knowledge of written music to play a piece from it. They recognise and respond to notes of different lengths and can sustain one line of music against another. Pupils progress satisfactorily through the school, so that they also compose effective free pieces, such as one about outer space. Here they concentrate on effects rather than rhythms. In doing so they are conscious of creating a satisfying beginning, middle and ending using a way of writing which involves shapes rather than notes. They concentrate when listening to music. In this way they develop awareness of different effects in music, such as those in Holst's Neptune, and adapt composers' ways of creating them to suit their own purposes. Thereby, pupils' listening and appreciating are making a satisfying contribution to composing and performing.

100 The quality of teaching is good. The subject leader undertakes all the teaching and uses her very good subject knowledge and musical expertise to develop pupils' basic skills across a satisfactory range of instruments. Her lessons are interesting and enjoyable, so that pupils join in musical activities with enthusiasm. She pays careful attention to the quality of pupils' performance and continuously makes very thorough notes on individual progress. She successfully manages her lessons so that pupils both have the freedom to experiment and develop the self-control to use instruments responsibly. She helps pupils of all abilities, including those with special needs, to achieve well in relation to the abilities they display on entry to the school.

101 The subject co-ordinator provides a rich variety of musical experiences in the classroom and her work is maintaining the standards of the last inspection. The range of musical activities outside lessons is very good. There is a large choir of forty pupils, which performs a wide variety of songs to a high standard. The large orchestra of thirty pupils, which includes many different

stringed, wind, percussion and keyboard instruments, is a credit to the school. Pupils play very well together, and tackle new pieces on first sight with extraordinary confidence. This stems from the many opportunities provided for learning different orchestral instruments as well as from the expert tuition of the co-ordinator. During the inspection week, one of the recorder groups with descants, trebles and tenors, made a beautiful contribution to an assembly. Music is adding vibrancy to pupils' work. Moreover, the school is preparing to make a very valuable contribution to the 750th anniversary celebrations of the day Bedale was given the status of a market town.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

102 By the time they reach the age of 11 pupils show levels of attainment that are above those expected nationally. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress. Standards in physical education have improved considerably since the last inspection when attainment was judged to be inconsistent. Progress was not sustained across the classes of younger pupils and the progress of pupils in Years 5 and 6 was unsatisfactory. The improvement in standards is the result of improved teaching with the biggest improvement occurring in the classes of pupils in Years 5 and 6. This has resulted in better behaviour and attitudes from pupils, allowing them to focus on their learning. There are better levels of activity and challenge with the emphasis in lessons being on high quality movement and physical effort. Good resources support the improved teaching. These allow a wide range of athletic and games activities. Having a swimming pool adjacent to the school premises means all pupils have swimming instruction for a term in each year of their six years at the school. Pupils are consequently confident in the water and the success of the school swimming team illustrates the high standards reached.

103 The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and in nearly half of lessons is very good. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly and have clear learning objectives allowing them to focus on the learning and progress of their pupils. Warming up sessions and the reasons for them are planned into every lesson and the effects of exercise on the body are stressed. Younger pupils know that the heart beats faster after exercise and by the time pupils reach Years 5 and 6 they know that the heart is a muscle, which is strengthened by exercise, that blood carries oxygen around the body and that increased amounts of oxygen are needed when exercise is vigorous. The good quality planning, coupled with very good management of the pupils' skills, means that teachers can be imaginative, even adventurous, in their approach to the subject. This is particularly well illustrated in lessons devoted to dance. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy exploring the movements of floppy bears or stiff soldiers and very few feel the need to look for support from other children. Teachers use demonstration well to show good practice and encourage pupils to evaluate their own movements. Pupils aged 8 and 9 learn traditional country dances like Brighton Camp and Pat-a-Cake Polka. They perform the routines precisely, working in pairs and larger groups, although pupils, almost without exception, chose partners of the same gender. They understand and use movements like: promenade, gallop, elbow swing and star turn. Teachers challenge and extend their pupils' thinking by asking pupils to devise their own endings to dances using a combination of movements they have previously learnt. Older pupils are able to create their own dance sequences based on literary works like H. G. Wells' 'The War of the Worlds'. They build extended routines involving individual and combined interpretative movements. The action is very controlled and expressive. Pupils and teacher work together, evaluating different groups' interpretations of the various sections of the dance, coming to an agreement on which sequence best fits into the whole class performance. Pupils in one class increased the dramatic effect by all dressing in black and painting their faces. Performances are sometimes videoed, as are gymnastic lessons, so that pupils have a further opportunity to evaluate their performance. Teachers make good use of praise to encourage pupils to extend their learning and build self-esteem, an approach which is particularly helpful for pupils with special educational needs. Although their approach is encouraging teachers continually stress quality, expecting high standards of movement, control and behaviour.

104 The co-ordinator is a physical education expert but many of the teachers have good subject knowledge. They dress appropriately for lessons, emphasising the importance of the subject and allowing them to adopt a physical approach so that they are able to demonstrate exactly how movements should be performed; an example came when a teacher showed the class how to perform a 'heel and toe' movement in a country dance lesson. They take the lead in vigorous warming up sessions. Good subject knowledge meant that a teacher of older pupils, doing circuit training, was able to show exactly how certain exercises are performed to avoid strain and maximise the beneficial effects. This direct approach means that lessons are conducted at a good pace and even in the lessons involving creative thought the physical aspect of the subject is not neglected.

105 The wide range of equipment, including the recently introduced Top Play material means that the school is able to offer a wide range of activities. For example pupils in athletics are able to learn how to throw javelins, the discus and the hammer as well as safely practising the high jump. The good quality resources are well used. When younger pupils transfer their balances and sequence of movements from the floor to apparatus this is so arranged that all pupils are able to practise at the same time and, at some time, use all the apparatus. Younger pupils challenged to choose an item to bounce and then later an object with which to strike this item have a generous choice of objects. The premises of the local secondary school directly adjoin those of the school and this means that pupils, using these facilities, can develop their skills in games like basketball.

106 Teachers use physical education well to support learning in other areas, not only are there opportunities for speaking and listening but also consolidating science work by studying the effects of exercise on the body and, for the youngest pupils, the naming of parts of the body. Teachers support work in mathematics when pupils in Years 1 and 2 help their learning on angles by turning clockwise and anti-clockwise through right angles. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make symmetrical shapes with their bodies. Visiting speakers extend the pupils' historical and geographical studies by introducing them to medieval dances and dances from Africa and India. Local cultural activities like Morris dancing are encouraged by a visiting Morris dancing team.

107 Pupils' attitudes, assisted by the good class management skills of teachers, are good and this helps their learning particularly in exciting activities like creative dance.

108 The programme for physical education is enriched by after school clubs for football, netball and aerobics. Pupils get the opportunity to extend their skills in competitive situations by representing the school at netball, football and swimming. Older pupils have the opportunity to indulge in adventurous activities, like bouldering, on a residential trip and orienteering and problem solving activities on the school field.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

109 Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is above the level expected in the locally agreed syllabus for seven and eleven- year-olds. This is an improvement on the standard seen in the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils, achieve very well.

110 Infant pupils know stories from the Old and New testaments and begin to understand their relevance to their own lives. They develop their understanding of right and wrong, producing their own versions of the story of The Good Samaritan in words and pictures. Much of the work at this stage is based on significant people and how their lives affected others so pupils learn about St Catherine and Mother Teresa, for example. Some of the work is imaginatively planned and round a colourful Catherine wheel, for instance, pupils inscribe the Saint's qualities such as 'gentle, brave, kind and unhappy'. Teaching and learning are good. Some of pupils' annotated drawings of the creation show a wonderful, colourful world filled with 'twittering, hissing and rustling' creatures. In a very good lesson, pupils began to discuss with their teacher why it was important to care for the

environment. They talked about why dodos were extinct and had many ideas for making posters, suggesting titles such as 'Care for God's World' or ' Don't Squash Daffodils' in response to their own wonder at the delicacy of daffodil blooms or the intricacies of the swallows' nest their teacher brought in to show them. In these ways, religious education becomes central to their understanding.

111 Junior pupils have a good knowledge of faiths such as Hinduism and Islam. The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils are encouraged to reflect and to respond individually. Much of their written work is very detailed and opportunities are given to pupils to express how they would feel. When writing about ritual ceremonies, a higher attaining pupil wrote, ' if I were at the River Ganges I would feel free, like I've got all the space in the world.' This empathy is reflected in the relationships between teachers and pupils. There is a high level of trust so that older juniors, for example, willingly and sensitively share with their teacher times when they have been bad. They discuss ways in which to make things better, suggesting among others, ' thinking good thoughts'. Teachers' marking demands high standards and prompts pupils to give much more detailed answers to questions, resulting in vivid explanations of the origins of a Hindu festival as in ' the gods and demons churned the oceans with the giant serpents to produce the divine nectar'. In an excellent lesson, younger juniors were made to feel like partners with their teacher and this both encouraged and inspired pupils to reflect on people who are influential in their lives on why they are special. Through such teaching, the values that religious education represents are very well conveyed.

112 The subject is well led and managed by a co-ordinator who plans the work competently and gives good guidance for putting the policy into practice. This ensures balanced learning across the different classes for similar age groups. This subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.